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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IBĀḌĪ TEXTUAL TRADITION IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Valerie J. Hoffman

(Professor Emerita, University of Illinois)

Abstract

The historical development of an Ibāḍī textual tradition in the Arabian Peninsula was not straightforward. Early Ibāḍīs adopted divergent approaches to the relationship of reason to questions of faith, the requirement of dissociation from grave sinners and from people of the *qibla* with divergent views, and the question of whether or not the Qurʾān is created. Theological divisions among Ibāḍīs sometimes had geographical echoes: between Baṣra and Kufa in Iraq, between North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and within the Arabian Peninsula between Oman and the Ḥaḍramawt, on the one hand, and Yemen on the other. For centuries Ibāḍīs identified sunna with the practice of the forebears of their school; its redefinition as the practice of the Prophet documented in hadith was part of Ibāḍism's re-imagining as a school (*madhab*) along Sunni lines in the 4th/10th–5th/11th centuries. This article traces the historical development of the textual tradition, from early epistles (*sīyar*) and reports (*ātār*) to collections (*ḡawāmiʿ*) of scholars' responsa, and, finally, the composition of enormous encyclopaedic works embodying scholarly consensus on all matters of faith and practice. The consolidation of Ibāḍī doctrine as currently standardized includes the fairly recent acceptance of the doctrine of the creation of the Qurʾān as part of a wholesale incorporation of North African Ibāḍī scholarship in Oman, as exchanges between the two main branches of Ibāḍism intensified in the 13th/19th century. Finally, the article finds that public policy in Oman continues to impact the way that Ibāḍism is interpreted and understood.

Résumé

Le développement d'une tradition textuelle ibāḍite dans la péninsule Arabique

Le développement historique d'une tradition textuelle ibāḍite dans la péninsule Arabique n'a pas été simple. Les premiers Ibāḍītes ont adopté des approches divergentes sur la question de la relation de la raison à la foi, sur l'exigence de se dissocier des pécheurs ayant commis de graves péchés et de dissocier les gens de la *qibla* avec des vues divergentes, enfin sur la question de la création du Coran. Les divisions théologiques entre les Ibāḍītes ont parfois un écho géographique : entre Bassora et Koufa en Irak, entre l'Afrique du Nord et la péninsule Arabique et, au sein de la péninsule Arabique entre Oman et le Hadramaut, d'une part, et le Yémen, d'autre part. Pendant des siècles, les Ibāḍītes ont identifié la *sunna* à la pratique des ancêtres de leur école ; sa redéfinition en tant que pratique du Prophète documentée dans le hadith faisait partie de la réinvention de l'ibāḍisme aux iv^e/x^e-v^e/xi^e s. en tant qu'école (*madhab*) suivant les normes sunnites. Cet article retrace le développement historique de la tradition textuelle, depuis les premières épîtres (*sīyar*) et les rapports (*ātār*) jusqu'aux collections (*ḡawāmiʿ*) de *responsa* des savants et, enfin, la composition d'énormes œuvres encyclopédiques incarnant un consensus savant sur toutes les questions de foi et de pratique. La consolidation de la doctrine ibāḍite telle qu'elle est actuellement normalisée comprend l'acceptation assez récente de la doctrine de la création du Coran dans le cadre d'une incorporation générale de l'érudition nord-africaine ibāḍite en Oman, alors que les échanges entre les deux principales branches de l'ibāḍisme s'intensifient au xiii^e/xix^e s. Enfin, l'article constate que la politique publique du Sultanat d'Oman continue d'avoir un impact sur l'interprétation de l'ibāḍisme.

الخلاصة

تطور تقاليد تقنيات النصوص الإباضية في الجزيرة العربية لم يكن تطور التقليد النصي الإباضي التاريخي في شبه الجزيرة العربية مباشراً. اتخذ الإباضية الأولى مناهج متباينة في علاقة العقل لمسائل الإيمان، وحكم البراءة عن أهل المعاصي والمخالفين من أهل الأمة، وفي مسألة خلق القرآن. في بعض الأحيان كان الاختلافات العقيدية أصداء جغرافية: في العراق بين البصرة والكوفة، وبين إباضية المغرب وإباضية المشرق، وداخل شبه الجزيرة العربية بين عمان وحضرموت من ناحية، واليمن من ناحية أخرى. في القرون الأولى تكلم الإباضية في السنة بمعنى سنة السلف الصالح في فرقهم؛ كان تغيير معناها إلى سنة النبي جزءاً من إعادة تخيل الإباضية كذهب وفقاً للمعايير السننية في القرون الرابع والخامس/العاشر والحادي عشر. تتبع هذه المقالة تطوع التقليد النصي الإباضي، بدءاً بسير القرون الأولى، إلى تأليف جوامع جوابات عالم معين، وأخيراً تكوين التأليف الموسوعية الهائلة التي تجسد الإجماع العلمي الإباضي في كل مسائل الإيمان والدين. يتضمن تكوين العقيدة الإباضية كما هي اليوم القبول الحديث لمبدأ خلق القرآن نتيجةً لإدماج التأليف الإباضية المغربية في سلطنة عمان في القرن الثالث عشر/التاسع عشر مع تكثيف التبادلات العلمية بين الفرعين الرئيسيين للفرقة. أخيراً تجد المقالة أن السياسة العامة في سلطنة عمان لا تزال تتأثر في مفهوم الإباضية.

Keywords

Ibadism, Oman, Arabian Peninsula, theology, doctrine, monotheism, *siyar*

Mots-clés

Ibadisme, Oman, péninsule Arabique, théologie, doctrine, monothéisme, *siyar*

الكلمات الرئيسية

الإسلام الإباضية، عمان، شبه الجزيرة العربية، العقيدة، علم التوحيد، سير

I. Introduction

What do we mean by the Ibāḍī textual tradition in the Arabian Peninsula? Ibāḍī works published in Oman today offer a well-defined set of doctrines backed up by centuries of authorities who present Ibāḍism first of all as a *madhab*, a particular way of practicing Islam, a school of jurisprudence and theology that is comparable, though not identical, to what Ibāḍīs call “the four schools” (*al-madāhib al-arbaʿa*) of Sunni Islam. Ibāḍīs claim to be the oldest school of Islam and to have been the first to compile a hadith collection and to compose a commentary on the Qurʾān and a book of jurisprudence.¹ They claim to follow the same four roots of jurisprudence as the Sunni legal schools and to preserve the true consensus of the earliest Muslims, a consensus that became corrupted in the other schools. Faith, according to the Ibāḍīs, must include obedience to all of God’s com-

¹ S. al-Ḥarītī, *Al-ʿuqūd al-fiddīyya*, 1974, p. 3.

mands in order to be valid; religious affiliation is given only to those who embrace correct doctrine and perform all religious duties. Nonetheless, Ibāḍīs are moderates who do not engage in violence against people of other sects. In theology, Ibāḍīs insist on the transcendent incomparability of God, who can never be seen, in this world or the next. God's absolute oneness and lack of reliance on anything else in all His perfections mean that His attributes have no objective reality—they are not real things distinct from His essence, but are merely descriptions of His essence. The Qur'ān, therefore, cannot be identical with God's attribute of speech, but is a created expression of it. God's omnipotence means that He is the creator of human acts, and that God gives people a specific power for each act they perform; they have no innate power. And finally, human reason is a sufficient foundation to know of the existence of the one God whom all must worship.

Ibāḍīs have a rich textual tradition, as is evidenced in the vigorous publishing program of Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Culture and of Oman's small, private publishing outlets, as well as the digitalization of manuscripts from private libraries by Oman's Ministry of Awqāf and Religious Affairs. The astonishing level of activity by these different groups is all based on the premise that there is a great need to make the Ibāḍī textual tradition available to the public. The level of interest among educated Omanis in traditional Ibāḍī texts is extremely high; it is hard to imagine a comparable interest in medieval religious texts among ordinary educated people in the West. There is also a strong interest in the lives of major figures in Ibāḍī history, especially those of Oman. All of this implies a well-defined sense of what Ibāḍī tradition is and how it is embodied in a large set of standard texts that provide Ibāḍīs not only with religious truths and practical instructions for daily life, but also with a firm sense of who they are and what sets them apart from other Muslims.

This tradition, however, did not spring up fully formed; its historical development is complex and full of twists and turns. We can discern, in Ibāḍism's earliest days, evidence of divergent approaches to the relationship of reason to questions of faith, the requirement of dissociation from grave sinners and people of the *qibla* with divergent views, attitudes toward people of the *qibla* who embrace anthropomorphic views of God, and the question of whether or not the Qur'ān is created. Theological divisions among Ibāḍīs sometimes have had geographical echoes, between Baṣra and Kufa, between North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and between Oman and the Ḥaḍramawt, on the one hand, and Yemen, on the other. Despite the claim that the Ibāḍīs were the first to compile a collection of hadith, the identification of *sunna* with the practice of the Prophet rather than of the school's forebears was part of what Wilkinson calls Ibāḍism's *madhabization*, its re-imagining as a school along Sunni lines, and the Ibāḍī Ḥadīth collection came to the Arabian Peninsula only in the 19th century, from the Maghrib, where it had been "arranged" in the 6th/12th century.²

² J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, pp. 392–427.

The historical development of the textual tradition can be traced from early epistles (*ṣīyar*, singular *sīra*) and reports (*ātār*) to collections (*ǧawāmiʿ*) of scholars' responses to questions, and finally the composition, beginning in the 5th/11th and 6th/12th centuries, of enormous encyclopaedic works embodying scholarly consensus on all matters of faith and practice. The consolidation of Ibāḍī doctrine as currently standardized includes the fairly recent acceptance of the creation of the Qurʾān as part of a wholesale incorporation of North African Ibāḍī scholarship into Ibāḍī scholarship in Oman, thanks to the towering reputation of the modern Algerian Ibāḍī scholar Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfiyyaš (1237/1820–1332/1914), as well as the intensification of interaction between the two main branches of Ibāḍism in the 13th/19th century.

Ibāḍism first developed in Baṣra in the 2nd/8th century among groups of Arabian origin, especially from Oman. The earliest Ibāḍī texts were produced there; some have been lost, while others have been found in private libraries, especially in North Africa. It seems that the Ibāḍī community in North Africa wrote to the sect's leaders in Baṣra for guidance, and that these early texts came into existence for that reason. Most of these texts remained unknown in Oman for centuries. The Ibāḍī textual tradition in the Arabian Peninsula developed somewhat later and separately from that of North Africa, after persecution in the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods led to the dissolution of the Baṣran leadership and the migration of many Ibāḍīs to Oman and Yemen.³ This article will trace the development of Ibāḍī theological literature and the process of consolidation of an Ibāḍī theological tradition in the Arabian Peninsula, especially with regard to the definition of faith and questions regarding association and dissociation (*walāya* and *barāʿa*), free will versus predestination, the description of God, and whether or not the Qurʾān was created. We follow the historical development of Ibāḍī texts in the region in order to clarify the way that they came to embody and perpetuate a set of doctrines and an articulation of group identity that was passed on through the generations—in other words, a tradition that lies at the heart of Ibāḍī self-identification.

II. Ibāḍī Origin and Identity

The issue that lies at the core of Ibāḍī origin and identity concerns the definitions of faith and the Muslim community. These became vital questions during the great *fitna*, the civil war of 35/656–40/661, which divided Muslims after the killing of the third Caliph, ʿUṭmān b. ʿAffān (d. 35/656), and the refusal of the fourth Caliph, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), to punish ʿUṭmān's killers. Some saw ʿUṭmān's sins as grave enough to impugn his status as a believer and warrant his assassination when he refused to repent, whereas others saw his killing as disproportionate to his crimes or as the heinous murder of a righteous man. Muslims articulated the question of the relationship between faith and acts in terms of their stance vis-à-vis ʿUṭmān and ʿAlī. Loyalty to ʿUṭmān and

³ For a brief introduction to Ibāḍism, see V.J. Hoffman, "Ibadism: History, Doctrines and Recent Scholarship", 2015, pp. 297–307.

belief in the virtue of all the Companions of the Prophet were the hallmarks of those who eventually became identified as Sunnis, who generally defined faith as an affirmation of the essential beliefs of Islam, regardless of whether a person performed deeds that conform to that belief, without going so far as to say that deeds are utterly irrelevant to faith, a stance attributed to the Murğī'a. Loyalty to 'Alī, enmity toward the earlier caliphs, and belief in the unique virtue of the family of the Prophet became hallmarks of the Šī'a. For the Ḥawāriğ and their offshoots, including the Ibādīs, correct behavior and fulfillment of religious duties are essential components of faith; those who neglect their duties or do prohibited things without repentance cannot be deemed Muslims or believers. Today's Ibādīs reject the label "Ḥārīğī" because it has become indelibly linked in the minds of most Muslims to violent extremists who condemned sinners as polytheists and apostates deserving death; nonetheless, until the late 13th/19th century Ibādīs did identify themselves as a sect of Ḥārīğism and as descendants of the Muḥakkima, those who, under the slogan "Judgment belongs to God alone", rejected the arbitration at the battle of Şiffin. The most distinctive doctrine of Ibādism is the distinction between two different types of infidelity (*kufr*), one that derives from neglect of religious duties or commission of prohibited acts and is called *kufr al-ni'ma* (ingratitude for blessing) or *kufr al-nifāq* (hypocrisy), the other being *kufr al-şirk*, polytheism or unbelief.⁴ Those who are guilty of *kufr al-ni'ma* or *kufr al-nifāq* should not be recognized as believers or Muslims, but neither should they be considered polytheists or subjected to violence, unless they are active supporters of tyranny.⁵

III. The Earliest Ibādī Texts

Given the centrality of righteous deeds to faith in Ibādī doctrine and the role of this question in the origins of the sect, it is no surprise that it is a major preoccupation of Ibādī texts, especially in the early period. The earliest Ibādī texts in the Arabian Peninsula are epistles or short treatises known as *şiyar*, which dealt with a broad number of issues, from law and theology to rules for the imāmate and local disputes.⁶ The earliest Ibādī *şiyar* were written not in the Arabian Peninsula but in Başra, and dealt with interpretation of the events of the first *fitna* and the related questions of defining Islam and

⁴ Although this is generally regarded as distinctively Ibādī and the basis of Ibn Ibād's separation from the other Ḥawāriğ, it is not exclusively Ibādī. P. Crone & F. Zimmermann (*The Epistle of Sālim Ibn Dakwān*, 2001, pp. 199–120) point out that the 6th/12th-century Algerian Ibādī 'Abd al-Kāfi wrote that both Ibādīs and Zaydis classify grave sins as *kufr nifāq* ('Abd al-Kāfi, *Al-mūğaz*, 1978, vol. 2, p. 117), and the 13th/19th-century Omani writer, Ğ. al-Sa'dī (*Qāmūs al-şarī'a*, 1983, vol. 6, p. 98), wrote that the Mu'tazila, the Šī'a, and even al-Şāfi'i (contrary to the practice of his followers) applied the term *kufr* to grave sin in the sense of *kufr al-ni'ma*, not in the sense of exclusion from the *millā*. In order to distinguish between *kufr al-ni'ma* or *kufr al-nifāq* and *kufr al-şirk*, I translate the word *kufr*, when it appears alone, as "infidelity", never as unbelief; I translate *kufr al-şirk* as "unbelief" or "polytheism".

⁵ V.J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibādī Islam*, 2012, pp. 10–12, 27–28.

⁶ A. al-Salimi, "Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Şiyar*", 2010, provides an introduction to this type of literature, including a list of the most important Omani *şiyar*.

faith. Abdulrahman al-Salimi and Wilferd Madelung have published a number of Ibādī texts from the late 1st to early 2nd/early 8th centuries, texts they deem unquestionably authentic Ibādī texts from that early period. They base their edition on modern Omani manuscripts, clarifying that no early manuscripts of any of these texts remain extant. Furthermore, “all the manuscripts on which the editors had to rely contain considerable corruption requiring emendation”.⁷ The published texts include two letters attributed to ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād, eponym of the sect, allegedly written to the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65/865–86/705).

According to the classic narrative of the formation of Ibādism, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād went with other Ḥārīḡī leaders to help ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 73/692) when he was besieged in Mecca in 64/683; they abandoned him when Ibn al-Zubayr refused to accept their condemnation of ‘Uṭmān. The Ḥārīḡīs returned to Baṣra and split into the three main sects of the Ḥawārīḡ: the radical Azraqīs, the moderate Ibādīs, and the Ṣufrīs, who were presumably somewhere between these two extremes. Wilkinson challenges nearly every aspect of this narrative.⁸ The person of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād is shrouded in mystery; there is no good evidence for the existence of an Ibn Ibād at the time of the formation of the sect, and the name Ibādī was not used by the group in its earliest history. Based on the discovery of a reference to Ibn Ibād as imprisoned during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136/754–158/775), Madelung proposes a later date for Ibn Ibād’s life.⁹

Cook and Wilkinson doubt that the *sīra* attributed to Ibn Ibād could have been addressed to the Caliph, although it is sprinkled with direct address to ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705); Cook suggests that the ‘Abd al-Malik to whom it was addressed was ‘Abd al-Malik b. al-Muhallab (d. 102/720), because some members of the Muhallab family had Ibādī sympathies.¹⁰ Wilkinson suggests that the letter was written to ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, son of the future Umayyad Caliph, not by Ibn Ibād but by a militant Ibādī leader.¹¹ This younger ‘Abd al-Malik died during his father’s reign (99/717–101/720), which, if Wilkinson is correct, would date this letter to the late 1st/early 8th century. Madelung agrees with Wilkinson’s identification of ‘Abd al-Malik as the son of the future Caliph, but maintains that the writer is indeed Ibn Ibād, based on his discovery of a reference to Ibn Ibād’s death in the early Abbasid period.¹²

Whatever the identity of the ‘Abd al-Malik addressed in the letter, the text indicates that he had written to Ibn Ibād indicating his approval of ‘Uṭmān and Mu‘āwiya

⁷ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 1.

⁸ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 2010, pp. 150–154.

⁹ W. Madelung, “‘Abd Allāh ibn Ibād and the Origins of the Ibādīyya”, 2006.

¹⁰ M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 1981, pp. 53–65.

¹¹ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 2010, pp. 203–205.

¹² W. Madelung, “The Authenticity of the Letter of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād to ‘Abd al-Malik”, 2012.

(d. 60/680), founder of the Umayyad dynasty, warning Ibn Ibād against religious extremism, and castigating the Ḥawāriğ. In response, Ibn Ibād provides his version of the history of the early caliphate and maintains that ‘Utmān b. ‘Affān and others who do not rule according to the Qur’ān are infidels (*kāfīrs*, citing Qur’ān, 5, “Al-mā’ida”, 44). He affirms that “we” dissociate from anyone who affiliates with ‘Utmān and his successors; “we are their enemies with our hands, our tongues and our hearts”.¹³ In response to ‘Abd al-Malik’s exhortation to avoid extremism (*ğulīw*), Ibn Ibād says extremism is to say untruths against God and fail to act according to the Qur’ān.¹⁴ He defends the Ḥawāriğ as obeying the Qur’ānic injunction to “fight the infidels who live near you” (Qur’ān, 9, “Al-tawba”, v. 123). “That is what the Ḥawāriğ have done, and we swear by God and the angels that we are enemies of those who oppose them and are friends of those who help them (...), though we dissociate from Ibn al-Azraq and his followers, for it appears to us that when they first went out [to fight], they did so according to Islam, but then abandoned it (*irtaddū ‘an-hu*) and became infidels (*kafarū*) after their faith”.¹⁵

The second *sīra* attributed to Ibn Ibād responds to another letter by ‘Abd al-Malik that praised ‘Alī and accused the people of Nahrawān¹⁶ of injustice against him. Ibn Ibād narrates the Ibāḍī perspective on ‘Alī’s caliphate, saying it was ‘Alī who oppressed the people of Nahrawān, who were “the best of the Companions”. He also blames al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī for “selling his religion” for gold and silver by submitting to Mu‘āwiya.¹⁷

Another early Ibāḍī *sīra* was that of Sālim b. Dakwān, which has become well known among academics in Islamic studies through the translation and commentary of Patricia Crone & Fritz Zimmermann.¹⁸ Nothing certain is known about Sālim b. Dakwān, although scholars agree that the *sīra* is a very early work. Sālim is presumed to be a contemporary of Ğābir b. Zayd (d. ca. 93/711) because Ğābir addressed a letter to him. References to someone by the name of Sālim b. Dakwān in Sīstān lead scholars to presume he grew up there, but nothing else is known about his life.¹⁹ Wilkinson points out that the omission in the *sīra* of references to any sources other than the Qur’ān indicates that Ibāḍism at this point was largely unstructured and operated on the basis of consensus,

¹³ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 26–25 (printed in descending page order).

¹⁴ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 25.

¹⁵ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 24–23 (printed in descending page order).

¹⁶ Al-Nahrawān is the site of a pivotal battle on the lower Tigris River in Iraq between ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and the Ḥawāriğ on 9 Šafar 38/17 July 658, where most of the Ḥawāriğ were massacred. The “people of Nahrawān” hold a special place in Ibāḍī memory as representing the highest aspirations of piety and martyrdom.

¹⁷ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 61–46 (printed in descending page order).

¹⁸ P. Crone & F. Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, 2001.

¹⁹ P. Crone & F. Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, 2001, p. 111.

without any dominant leader.²⁰ The *sīra* details ‘Uṭmān’s misdeeds and defends those who killed him, but points out that his killers did not treat his family as polytheists, but continued to grant them the rights of Muslims. The *sīra* thus attacks the Murǧī’a by insisting that faith includes the observance of all moral and religious obligations and abandoning all that is prohibited, and attacks the radical Ḥawāriǧ by pointing to the treatment of ‘Uṭmān’s family. The author differentiates between types of *kufṛ*, specifically between the *kufṛ* of *širk* (bald unbelief) and the *kufṛ* of hypocrisy, which includes those who profess faith in Islam but fail to act according to its laws. The *sīra* also articulates the principles of association or affiliation (*walāya*) with those who are faithful and dissociation (*barā’a*) from those who are not. Although Abdulrahman al-Salimi calls this *sīra* “the most important Ibāḍī document of the first half of the 8th century”,²¹ it seems to have been unknown in both North Africa and Oman until the 5th/11th–6th/12th century, so it had no impact on the development of Ibāḍī theology in those areas, but reflects opinions that are consistent with other Ibāḍī texts on the caliphate of ‘Uṭmān, the definition of faith, and association/dissociation.

IV. Ibāḍī *Sīyar* in the Next Generations

Abū ‘Ubayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma (d. ca. 145/762–158/775) is usually described as the second Ibāḍī Imam, the successor to Ġābir b. Zayd, although, as Wilkinson demonstrates, this standard narrative of early Ibāḍī history is a later construction.²² Abū ‘Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd Ḥāǧib b. Mawdūd al-Ṭā’ī (d. ca. 150/767), another important early Ibāḍī leader in Baṣra, wrote two *sīras* (one jointly authored, the other ascribed only to Abū Mawdūd) that emphasize that obedience to God’s commands is integral to faith, and even minor acts of disobedience lead to infidelity (*kufṛ*) through persistence in them, although the infidelity resulting from disobedience and the heretical beliefs of some of the people of *tawḥīd* (meaning those who call themselves Muslims) is less than the infidelity of unbelief (*širk*). The way out of infidelity is through repentance, which must include turning away from sin and following the path of obedience. Those who commit grave sins or persist in minor sins are doomed to an eternity in hellfire unless they repent and mend their ways.²³ The *sīra* of Abū Mawdūd also discusses the necessity of dissociating from all who are guilty of this lesser form of *kufṛ*, including tyrannical

²⁰ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. 209.

²¹ A. al-Salimi, “Identifying the (Ibāḍī/Omani) *Sīyar*”, 2010, p. 128.

²² The date of Ġābir’s birth is variously given as 18/639 and 21/641, while various dates have been given for his death, ranging from 93/711 to 104/722. Wilkinson argues that Ġābir’s death date has been made artificially and unrealistically late in order to accommodate the fiction that Abū ‘Ubayda was a direct student of Ġābir. Wilkinson argues that it is more likely that Abū ‘Ubayda studied with one of Ġābir’s students. Wilkinson explores the questions about Ġābir’s life and the legitimacy of labeling him an Ibāḍī in J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, pp. 185–200, 217–218.

²³ Both *sīras* are published in A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, the jointly-authored one pp. 104–197, the one ascribed only to Abū Mawdūd pp. 80–61 (printed in descending page order).

rulers. He decries the claim by non-Ibādī scholars that people must obey tyrannical rulers, ignoring their infidelity and deviation. “So beware lest this [error] enter upon you”, he enjoins. “Be just to yourselves and to the people!” Although obedience and affiliation to just imams are imperative, “there is no obedience to anyone but the one who obeys God”.²⁴ Nonetheless, he says, there is no obligation to issue public calls for dissociation from particular individuals who commit error unless someone publicly defends their wrong behavior.

The earliest Ibādī creed was written by Abū Ayyūb (alive in 192/807–808), an early pupil of Abū ‘Ubayda in Baṣra who hailed from the Ḥaḍramawt. After studying in Baṣra he returned to his homeland, where he debated with Mu‘tazilī theologians. He was in the Ḥaḍramawt at the time of the first Ibādī imamate, established in that region under ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā “Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq” (r. 129/746–130/748). He later returned to Baṣra, where he was closely associated with the third “Imam” there, al-Rabī‘ b. Ḥabīb (d. 170/786), putative author of the Ibādī hadith collection, and succeeded him as head of the Ibādīyya in Baṣra after 158/775. The creed he wrote in a *sīra* presumably addressed to the Ibādīs in the Ḥaḍramawt is called *Nasab al-Islām* (The Genealogy of Islam).²⁵ This text is worth a detailed analysis because it summarizes Ibādī teachings in the late 2nd/8th century. It begins, without preamble:

Allāh is our Lord, Muhammad is our prophet, the Qur’ān is our imam, the sacred house of God is our *qibla*, and Islam is our religion; it is part of faith, and faith is part of Islam. Piety is part of faith, and righteousness and faithfulness (*wafā’*) are part of faith. Each of these is part of the other in the perfection of faith.

The creed goes on to detail Muslim belief and obligatory practices, specifying aspects that continue to distinguish Ibādī from Sunni practices: there should be no *qunūt* in prayer; one should not say “*amīn*” after the recitation of the Fātiḥa; wiping of slippers instead of washing the feet in ablutions is not permissible; Friday prayer is held in garrison cities (*al-amṣār al-mumaṣṣara*), but is held outside these areas only if the land is ruled by a just imam. Funerary prayers are held for all the people of the *qibla*, regardless of their status in the faith. *Zakāt* should only be paid to those who are worthy of it, not to unjust rulers. Everyone should be treated according to his observance of religious precepts; one should affiliate with or separate (*firāq*) from people according to their deeds, with proper evidence. One must repent from all sins, great or small, and regret them and amend one’s ways to do what is right. If a trustworthy person testifies that someone has gone astray, one must dissociate (*barā’a*) from the one who has gone astray and manifest hatred and enmity for him, except in cases when God permits prudent fear (*taqiyya*) rather than manifestation of the faith (*iḥār al-da’wa*). One must affiliate with (*walāya*) the people of obedience; one should love them, respect their privacy, and help them to

²⁴ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 75–73 (printed in descending page order).

²⁵ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 328–309 (printed in descending page order).

do what is right. One must purify the heart of all hatred and envy and keep the tongue from speaking inappropriately. One must struggle against the soul (*nafs*) and resist the evil it commands and bar its way from the path of passion. One must observe the customs of justice and follow in the footsteps of the imams of guidance, and affiliate with them and know the preference God has given them, and deem deviant the imams of deviance and leaders of *fitna* and separate from them because of their disobedience to God. It is a duty to fight those who do not believe in the Day of Judgment and who oppress the pious after they hear the summons to Islam, and to argue against them. Fighting unbelievers and oppressors never ceases until unbelievers believe in God and oppressors acquiesce to God's command.²⁶ Then he addresses specifically theological issues:

Refute those who deny God's determination and dispute God's power (*sulṭān*) and say things are delegated to people. Oppose those who claim faith is words without deeds, and those who call monotheists polytheists, and anthropomorphists, and those who say God is finite, and those who say God will be seen, and those who nullify God's threat, who say the disobedient who profess the faith will enter paradise after going to hellfire. God deems all this to be a grave sin, deviance and loss.²⁷

In this short paragraph Abū Ayyūb summarizes the theological positions already formulated by Ibāḍīs in the 2nd/8th century: (1) on free will versus predestination, affirmation of God's determination and power over human acts; (2) against the Murǧī'a, the insistence that faith includes deeds; (3) against the radical Ḥawāriǧ, the affirmation that sinning Muslims remain monotheists and must not be called polytheists; (4) against anthropomorphists, an affirmation that God is not finite, and therefore not a body; (5) against the Sunnis, a denial that believers will see God in the afterlife; (6) again against the Sunnis, a denial that the sinners of Muhammad's *umma* will be rescued from hellfire. This paragraph is exceptional in its attention to theological matters. Most of the creed focuses on moral issues and the constitution of the community, which reflects the main concerns of the early Ibāḍī community. It goes into remarkable detail on ideal Muslim behavior and discusses the status of sinners and how to behave toward them.

God obligates the people of learning, insight and reflection to work for the sake of God's word and to implement His laws (...). There is no obedience to those who disobey God and who do not judge according to what God has revealed; they are infidels, unjust and corrupt.²⁸

Suspend judgment when there is doubt; take by clear proofs. Seek the knowledge of that for which there is no excuse for ignorance (...). Let God's grace be evident; praise God for it, acknowledge it, and be grateful to Him. Abandon haughtiness, boasting and pride.

²⁶ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 328–323 (printed in descending page order).

²⁷ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 323.

²⁸ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 322.

Avoid the morals of infidelity in public and in private. Come down from on high in relation to God and the people of His religion; be at peace with Him, show humility, prefer silence and submissiveness. Show your desire for Him and offer prayers of petition.²⁹

The creed even includes such matters as parting the hair, trimming the moustache, and using the *siwāk*, as well as the etiquette of bodily elimination. It prohibits suspicion and spying and enjoins honoring the rights of all Muslims and believers, maintaining love for them and praying for forgiveness for them. On the other hand, one should not love or seek forgiveness for those who disobey God except in cases of prudent fear (*taqīyya*), because God said, “Believers should not take unbelievers as friends instead of believers. Whoever does that, has nothing to hope for from God, unless this is done out of prudent fear (*illā an tattaqū min-hum tuqāt*); God admonishes you to fear Him” (Qurʾān, 3, “Āl ‘Imrān”, v. 28) and “except those who are forced, while their hearts are assured of faith” (Qurʾān, 16, “Al-naḥl”, v. 106). One must separate from, hate, make war against, and fight all kinds of people of disobedience, whether they are unbelievers (*ahl al-širk*) or sinners (*ahl al-aḥdāt*). One must call the people of the *qibla* and those who belong to other religious communities by the names that God called them, distinguish between them, and apply God’s laws (*ḥadd*) against them. If someone is content with the judgment of the Muslims and confesses his sins and repents, one should accept his repentance, but that does not nullify punishment for a crime.³⁰

Abū Ayyūb articulates what remains standard Ibādī doctrine regarding non-Ibādī Muslims or sinning Ibādīs, whom he calls hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*): It is prohibited to affiliate with them, seek forgiveness for them or love them, but one may marry them, and there is mutual inheritance between Ibādīs and non-Ibādī Muslims. Affiliation (*walāya*) is given only to those who verify their profession of faith through their deeds. But it is prohibited for the Muslims to fight non-affiliates as long as they show contentment with “Muslim”, meaning Ibādī, rule and justice. On the other hand, God commands that Muslims fight oppressors. The Prophet’s practice (*sīra*) regarding oppressors was to fight them for the injustice they had done until they returned to what is right. Abū Ayyūb goes on to summarize the Prophet’s policies regarding Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and polytheists, all in standard Muslim fashion. But he cautions that the name “Muslim” does not apply to all who call themselves such; it belongs only to those who preserve it, perfect it, and follow its straight paths with its lofty morals.³¹

Those who profess faith in the religion of God are in ranks (*manāzil*) that differ in God’s justice regarding affiliation (*walāya*), dissociation (*barāʾa*), and suspension of judgment (*waqf*). It is obligatory for those who carry out God’s orders among His servants to name people according to their rank, according to their deeds, and call them by their correct names and follow the correct rules for each rank. There are some who call people by a

²⁹ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 321.

³⁰ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 320–319 (printed in descending page order).

³¹ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 318–314 (printed in descending page order).

name and follow a rule pertaining to them before knowing their ranks (*manāzil*); that is an error and injustice. To assign to a rank those who do not speak its speech or do its deeds is injustice and oppression. That is their situation in this world, and likewise God will rank them in their ranks in the hereafter: “To all are assigned degrees according to their deeds, so they receive the recompense for their deeds; no injustice will be done to them” (Qur’an, 46, “Al-aḥqāf”, v. 19). And God said, “He punished them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the day they meet Him because they broke their promise to God and because of the lies they told” (Qur’an, s. 9, “Al-tawbah”, v. 77). So God named them hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*) for that reason, and because of their breaking His command He named them sinful (*fāsiqīn*). Infidelity (*kufṛ*) includes the people of *širk* and those among the people of the *qibla* who commit sins (*aḥdāt*) while professing Islam. They are two kinds of infidelity, the infidelity of unbelief (*širk*), to which attach the laws pertaining to unbelievers (*mušrikīn*), and infidelity through deeds (*kufṛ bi-al-a’māl*); [those guilty of the latter form of infidelity] are hypocrites, who enter by their profession [of faith] through the greatest gate and leave through the lesser hypocrisy by failing to obey God’s commands that He enjoined upon them, and by doing what God prohibited and committing forbidden acts. This is the infidelity of the people who profess Islam (*kufṛ ahl al-iqrār*) but judge according to something other than what God revealed.³²

Here Abū Ayyūb articulates the standard Ibādī doctrine of *al-asmā’ wa-al-aḥkām* (names and rules) and calls sinners in the Muslim community “hypocrites” who are guilty of a form of unfaithfulness (*kufṛ*) that falls short of unbelief (*širk*). Ibādīs later came to prefer the term *kuffār al-ni’ma*, those who are ungrateful for God’s blessings, instead of “hypocrites”. The Omani Imam al-Muḥannā b. Ğayfar (r. 226/841–237/851) wrote in a *sīra* addressed to Mu’ād b. Ḥarb that those who hold such unacceptable doctrines as the vision of God in the afterlife are *kuffār al-ni’ma*.³³

Those who are described as hypocrites or *kuffār al-ni’ma*, whether for doctrinal errors or failure to observe God’s laws, are subject to dissociation in this world and will enter hellfire in the next. Friendship and enmity in God are the firmest pillars of Islam, writes Abū Ayyūb. Indeed, Ibādī works often deal extensively with this subject. Although dissociation allegedly implies hatred, we might note that the Ibādī theologian of Kufa, ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī (d. 179/795–192/808), was a close friend and business partner of the leading Imāmī Šī‘ī theologian, Hišām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795–796).

Interestingly, Abū Ayyūb also speaks of those who occupy an intermediate status (*manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*), although later Ibādīs rejected this Mu’tazilī category:

[Those who occupy an intermediate status] enter Islam and manifest contentment with the Muslims, but in their absence they find fault in their religion and contradict their affiliation (*walāya*) by doing deeds that violate God’s sanctions, deeming permissible what He has prohibited. If they are admonished they apologize, and if they are called to

³² A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 313–312 (printed in descending page order).

³³ Al-Muḥannā b. Ğayfar, *Min al-imām al-Muḥannā b. Ğayfar ilā Mu’ād b. Ḥarb*, 1126/1714, pp. 623–634.

repent, they ask forgiveness. They manifest hatred for their faults and repentance of their sins, but then they return afterward to the very things for which they apologized and repented. That is their condition until death. They are called [to repent] if they backslide and their repentance is accepted if they offer it. The Muslims may associate with them (*muğāma'atuhum*) if they repent.³⁴

V. Defining the *Umma*

Clarifying the “names” (*asmā'*) of faith and types of infidelity, the rules (*aḥkām*) pertaining to each category, questions pertaining to affiliation and dissociation, and the rules for establishing a righteous imāmate were major preoccupations of early Ibāḍī writings.³⁵ This often involved rehearsing the narrative of the killing of 'Uṭmān and the civil war in the time of 'Alī from an Ibāḍī perspective, denouncing those who doubt the justifiability of 'Uṭmān's killing and the Muḥakkima's rejection of the arbitration at Ṣiffīn. Ibāḍīs were also keen to distinguish themselves from radical Ḥawāriğ by categorically rejecting *taṣrīk*, i.e. the categorization of “people of *ṣalāt*” or “people of the *qibla*” as polytheists. Hence, Ibāḍīs repeatedly insisted on the inviolability of the property of defeated members of the Prophet's *umma*, whose wives and children could not be enslaved. Ḥalaf b. Ziyād al-Baḥrānī (2nd/8th century)³⁶ wrote:

It is part of the religion of the Muslims to be just to people in general, even if their passions turn them toward injustice. They do not treat an affiliate unfairly. . . and they do not unfairly oppress an enemy of theirs regarding his rights. . . By their fear of God and courtesy toward Him, they act appropriately. We do not have the right to claim that those who obey God are infidels, nor to apply the name of believer to those who disobey God. . . Likewise, we may not group all of them together with the people of unbelief (*širk*) in name or regulation. . . By affirming [the truth of Islam], they are absolved from the name of *širk* and its regulations.³⁷

In one of the most interesting of these early *siyar*, Šabīb b. 'Aṭīyya, a somewhat controversial figure of the 2nd/8th century,³⁸ challenged the claim of the supporters of

³⁴ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 310.

³⁵ Besides the *siyar* already mentioned, early *siyar* discussing these themes include those of Šabīb b. 'Aṭīyya and Ḥalaf b. Ziyād al-Baḥrānī, discussed below; a *sīra* of Abū 'Ubayda and Abū Ayyūb that I have not been able to view, but is mentioned in al-Salimi, “Identifying the (Ibāḍī/Omani) *Siyar*”, 2010, p. 127; the *siyar* of Abū al-Mu'tir al-Ṣalt b. Ḥamīs (d. 278/891), published in S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ğawābāt*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 251–271 and vol. 2, pp. 269–319; and the *sīra* of Abū Qaḥṭān Ḥālid b. Qaḥṭān (3rd/9th century), published in S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ğawābāt*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 81–147.

³⁶ Raised in Bahrain, he left in search of a teacher. According to a frequently told story, he asked everyone he met about their doctrine, but failed to find what he considered the truth until he met Abū 'Ubayda. Some sources say he was with al-Ġulandā and participated with him in fighting the Abbasid invaders in Oman, but was absent from the battle in which the Imam was killed because of illness.

³⁷ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 306–223 (page numbers in descending order); the quotation is from pp. 298–296.

³⁸ According to al-Salimi and Madelung, he was originally from Ḥurāsān but, along with his brother Hilāl, he studied with Abū 'Ubayda in Baṣra. Both brothers were sent to Oman in 132/749 to advise and aid the

the Umayyads to constitute the *ǧamā'a* (community) to which the Prophet had enjoined adherence, in order to secure God's protection (*iṣma*) and success (*naǧāt*). Those who would become identified as Sunnis (*ahl al-sunna wa-al-ǧamā'a*) believed this meant that one should cling to the majority and its government. On the contrary, Šabīb argues, the *umma* at large was rife with injustice, enmity and tyranny, whereas Oman, under the rule of a righteous imam, enjoyed peace and harmony. The true *ǧamā'a* was not those who follow the majority, which had gone astray. The *ǧamā'a* of the Muslims is those who separate themselves at the command of their Prophet and uphold the laws of Islam, which required the killing of 'Uṭmān. "The blind", he wrote, "have gone astray by abandoning the *ǧamā'a* of those who killed him". He argues that those who enjoin pacifistic obedience to unjust imams violate God's command to fight aggressors. "Whoever abandons standing with the *ǧamā'a* on the Book of God, the Sunna of His Prophet, and the guidance of the two [caliphs] who came after him has abandoned the command of God". He disputes the common interpretation of the Prophet's warnings against division as a warning against the Ḥawārīǧ, who are accused of departing from the *umma*. On the contrary, Šabīb argues, the people of al-Nahrawān "and those who followed them in goodness are the people of the religion and the *umma* of Muḥammad", although the radical Ḥawārīǧ who practiced *tašrīk* are rightly excluded from the *umma*. In fact, Šabīb writes, those who have left the *umma* are those who abandon God's commands and alter the Prophet's Sunna by failing to stand up for justice and forbidding people to command the right and forbid the wrong.³⁹

Šabīb's restriction of the *umma* to those who obey God's commands and preserve the Sunna does not conform to standard Ibāḍī usage; generally, "the *umma* of Muḥammad" is identical to "the people of *ṣalāt*" and "the people of the *qibla*". It is possible that Šabīb did not intend to redefine the *umma*, but deployed this rhetoric merely to challenge those who would exclude his own community from the *umma*, just as he redefined the *ǧamā'a* to mean those who preserve the early standards of the community, rather than the majority. If he actually meant to define the *umma* in such a restrictive manner, we can only say that his definition of the *umma* did not become standard, as Ibāḍīs grant non-Ibāḍī members of the *umma* all the rights of those they considered

Imam al-Ġulandā b. Mas'ūd. Hilāl was appointed *qāḍī* and was killed with al-Ġulandā by the invading Abbasid army in 134/751. Šabīb remained in Oman, where "Ibāḍī scholars... were divided about him, some backing his claim to the imamate and others opposed" (A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, p. 6). Wilkinson writes, "Šhabīb became an important and controversial figure after al-Ġulandā's death. While not officially designated imam, he did claim the authority to tax the villages as a *muḥtasib*. Conversely, he did nothing to protect them, disappearing from the scene whenever a 'Sultan' appeared, according to later reports from al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī" (J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, pp. 241–242).

³⁹ The *sīra* was first published in S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ǧawābāt*, 1986, vol. 2, pp. 346–383, and is reprinted in A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 306–223 (page numbers in descending order).

true Muslims, except for the right of affiliation. This is clear from the consistent denunciations of the practices of the more radical Ḥawārīğ.

VI. Internal Controversies Reflected in the Texts

The early Ibādī community had several internal controversies that led the leaders in Baṣra to dissociate from or expel from their assembly certain individuals. The details of these disputes are found mainly in relatively late Ibādī sources in the Maghrib,⁴⁰ but we find their echo in the *siyar* of the Arabian Peninsula. The last Ibādī Imam in Baṣra, Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl (d. between 195/811–205/820), wrote two *sīras* “on the affair of Hārūn b. al-Yamān”, one to the Ibādīs of Oman and one to those of the Ḥaḍramawt.⁴¹ This was in response to a letter by Hārūn b. al-Yamān, forwarded to Abū Sufyān by some Ibādīs of Oman. Abū Sufyān took issue with Hārūn on several points. The first is that Hārūn argued that not all sins necessarily entail a status of *kufṛ*; some are forgivable lapses, and the result of some others is uncertain. He deemed it permissible to have doubts regarding the faith status of someone who commits a transgression short of what is subject to a *ḥadd* penalty, and to suspend judgment concerning such people, rather than either affiliating with or dissociating from them, regardless of what the community has decided. In support of his position, Hārūn argued that the Prophet and ‘Ā’iṣa’s family suspended judgment concerning her during the incident of “the Lie”,⁴² until God cleared her through a revelation.

Against these positions, Abū Sufyān argued that the Prophet explicitly said he had only known good in ‘Ā’iṣa, so he was not suspending judgment, but only awaiting God’s revelation out of respect for his Lord. Abū Sufyān rejected Hārūn’s tripartite division of sins in their relationship to *kufṛ*, insisting that any sin, no matter how minor, leads to *kufṛ* if one does not repent and mend one’s way, and such repentance is a condition of divine forgiveness. So, doubt and suspension of judgment concerning the status of sinners are impermissible; either one is a faithful believer who obeys all of God’s commands, or one is unfaithful (*kāfir*); there is no intermediate status.⁴³

On the one hand, Hārūn appears to be trying to mitigate the rigid boundaries imposed by the obligation of dissociation. On the other hand, however, he opined that it is impermissible to pray behind sinners or accept gifts from them, which contradicted Ibādī precedent. Abū Sufyān countered with examples of the founding fathers of

⁴⁰ In A. al-Darğīnī, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-mašāyih bi-al-Mağrib*, 1974, and more in A. al-Šammāhī, *Kitāb al-siyar*, 1987.

⁴¹ Abū Sufyān’s letter to the people of Oman is in S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ğawābāt*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 273–304. His letter to the people of the Ḥaḍramawt is in the same volume, pp. 305–321. Hārūn’s letter defending himself against Abū Sufyān’s accusations is in the same volume, pp. 323–336.

⁴² According to the story, ‘Ā’iṣa was accidentally left behind during a caravan stop and was rescued by a young man who found her. When she returned to the Prophet, riding on a camel behind the young man, rumors spread that they had had an adulterous affair.

⁴³ This *sīra* is published in S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ğawābāt*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 273–304. The section just described is on pp. 273–287.

Ibāḍism praying behind the worst perpetrators of atrocities. Furthermore, Hārūn argued that those who belong to the *umma* of Islam but describe God in an inappropriate manner, such as saying that God actually manifested Himself to the mountain in the Qur'ānic story of Moses (Qur'an, 7, "Al-a'rāf", v. 143), are unbelievers or polytheists (*mušrikūn*). When reproached, Hārūn defended himself by saying he was speaking of those who say God is composed of parts or who compare God to creatures. Abū Sufyān hastened to refute Hārūn's position, arguing that those who err in their interpretation of the Qur'ān but worship God in the manner of the Muslims are not to be called unbelievers. This, he wrote, is the way of the (radical) Ḥawārīg and the Ğahmiyya. Furthermore, Abū Sufyān wrote, "We have not heard any of the people of prayer go as far as [Hārūn] alleges". If those whom Hārūn accuses were told that God has an equal or a peer or an opposite, they would deny this and say He is the one, the unique, the unchanging (*al-wāḥid al-aḥad al-fard al-šamad*), who does not beget and is not begotten and has no equal. Abū Sufyān wrote that someone who interprets the Qur'ān wrongly is a liar who has invented something against God, but is not an unbeliever. He pointed out, "When Abū 'Ubayda was told that Muqātil (...) said that God created Adam in his form, Abū 'Ubayda replied that Muqātil lied, but he didn't call him an unbeliever. What I say is the same as Abū 'Ubayda". Abū Sufyān decided that Hārūn was led astray by pursuing analogical reasoning, which has no place in the religion of the Muslims, who only follow the Book of God and the way (*sunna, ātār*) of the pious predecessors.⁴⁴

These *siyar* point to early controversies among Ibāḍīs that, sometimes, reflected regional differences. The Ibāḍīs of Kufa, it seems, were more inclined toward using rational proofs than those of Baṣra, and, as in the case of Hārūn, it is suggested that this led some of them astray. Ibāḍī sources relate the story of Ḥamza al-Kūfī, who went to Abū 'Ubayda's house to discuss *qadar*. Abū 'Ubayda took him to see Abū Mawdūd, whom Ḥamza feared more. Ḥamza argued that good comes from God and bad comes from people, and God doesn't charge a soul beyond its capacity. Ḥamza claimed to have learned this from Abū Mawdūd himself, prompting the latter to exclaim, "I retract it, so turn away from it, as I have!" At first Abū Mawdūd was inclined not to take the matter further, but when Ḥamza told his views to women and "weak people", Abū Mawdūd openly disavowed Ḥamza and two others, 'Aṭīyya and al-Ḥārith, resulting in their expulsion from the community.⁴⁵

When al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb was the leading Ibāḍī in Baṣra,⁴⁶ it is said that two Ibāḍī theologians, Abū al-Mu'arriġ and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, used analogical reasoning to dispute some of his opinions, for which he expelled them from his assembly. They

⁴⁴ S. Kašif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ğawābāt*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 287–304.

⁴⁵ A. Darġinī, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-mašāyih bi-al-Maġrib*, 1974, vol. 2, p. 243.

⁴⁶ Ibāḍīs view al-Rabī' as the third Ibāḍī Imam in Baṣra, the successor to Abū 'Ubayda. In response to pressure on the Ibāḍīs of Baṣra after the death of the Caliph al-Manšūr in 158/775, al-Rabī' migrated to Oman, where he died in 170/786.

repented and were restored to the community, but after the death of al-Rabīʿ they reverted to their earlier positions. In accounts of this dispute, they are linked to ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī, Šuʿayb b. Maʿrūf, and Hārūn b. al-Yamān. All these leaders ended up in Yemen, where local Ibāḍīs accepted their teachings, in contrast to the Ibāḍīs of Oman and the Ḥaḍramawt.⁴⁷

VII. *Walāya* and *barāʿa* in Texts of the 3rd/9th–4th/10th Centuries

The topic of affiliation (*walāya*) and dissociation (*barāʿa*) became contentious among Ibāḍīs in Oman when a group of scholars led by Mūsā b. Mūsā asked Imam al-Šalt b. Mālīk to resign from office in 272/886 because he had become old and feeble. The Imam acquiesced and Mūsā appointed Rāšīd b. al-Naẓr in his place. While some felt the forced resignation was in the best interests of the community, others were outraged that a righteous imam who had done no wrong was removed from power and that an imam was appointed without “consulting the Muslims”. Although Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī claimed that no one dissociated from anyone else over this until after all the principals had died,⁴⁸ it is also said (with a great deal of plausibility) that Abū al-Muʿtir al-Šalt b. Ḥamīs al-Ḥarūšī (d. 278/891), author of a well-known *sīra* on this controversy, *Al-aḥdāt wa-al-šifāt*,⁴⁹ ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. after 272/886), Abū Qaḥṭān Ḥālid b. Qaḥṭān (d. after 890), and others who lived at the time did dissociate from Mūsā and Rāšīd. A few scholars approved of the deposal of the Imam, most notably al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī (d. 278/891) and his contemporary, Abū Ġābir Muḥammad b. Ġāfar. Quite a few felt they did not know enough to make a judgment on the matter, and therefore suspended judgment (*wuqūf*). What led to problems later is that scholars of what came to be known as the Rustāq school, led in the 4th/10th century by Ibn Baraka (d. ca. 355/966) and his student, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Bisyawī/al-Bisyāwī/al-Bisyānī, insisted that everyone dissociate from Mūsā and Rāšīd, and that whoever did not dissociate from them should be subject to dissociation. They held that whoever is ignorant of “the affair of Mūsā and Rāšīd” is obligated to ask someone who knows in order to obtain reliable information and form an opinion.

The man credited with articulating the doctrine of association and dissociation that became standard and ultimately ended the bitter dispute between the schools of Rustāq and Nizwā (though not in his lifetime) was a 4th/10th-century Nizwī scholar, Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad al-Kudamī. Abū Saʿīd devoted his three-volume work, *Al-istiḳāma*, to this subject. He wrote that although it is obligatory to affiliate with God, the prophets, believers and the righteous, knowledge of the status of particular people is not obligatory for all Muslims; it becomes obligatory only once one receives irrefutable

⁴⁷ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 2010, pp. 229–234. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyawī/al-Bisyānī describes the doctrines of those he calls al-Šuʿaybiyya in a *sīra* in S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ġawābāt*, 1986, vol. 2, pp. 138–141.

⁴⁸ N. al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-aʿyān*, 2001, vol. 1, p. 196.

⁴⁹ In S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ġawābāt*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 21–79.

evidence about the behavior of particular people. That is what God meant when He said, “Your only friend (*walī*) is God, as well as His messenger and those who believe” (Qur’ān, 5, “Al-mā’ida”, v. 55).⁵⁰ By affirming the group, a person affiliates with all believers; one need not know any of God’s affiliates by name or description. One may not decide with whom to affiliate by following what someone else says, and one should not accept what people say without solid proof. Likewise, it is unnecessary for a person to know any particular enemy of God; he need only dissociate from God’s enemies as a group, by their description as enemies of God. What is required of one who does not know the status of particular people is simply to oppose God’s enemies as a group; nothing else is required until irrefutable proof is given that a particular person is an enemy of God.⁵¹ (It is interesting to note that, although Ibn Baraka was an ardent opponent of Abū Sa’īd, he said the same in *Kitāb al-ta’aruf*.⁵²) No one, says Abū Sa’īd, is doomed because of ignorance, and no one is required to ask about particular people. Evidence given by way of hearsay is not reliable (*fī al-ḥaqīqa*) unless there are many reports, not just the testimony of individuals, or if there is a text about an individual in the Book of God.⁵³ Over time, Ibādīs came to embrace Abū Sa’īd’s views on the matter, but not before the dominance of the Rustāq school had alienated the people of northern Oman from Ibādism and contributed to the demise of Ibādism in the Ḥaḍramawt.⁵⁴ Over the centuries, Ibādīs compiled an enormous literature on the subject of affiliation and dissociation. Interestingly, almost all of them begin with similar wording, citing a *sīra* by Abū Sa’īd’s teacher, Muḥammad b. Rawḥ b. ‘Arabī (3rd/9th century): “Affiliation and dissociation are two obligations imposed by God Most High. The Qur’an spoke of it, and Sunna confirmed it, and it is demonstrated in the *atār* of the imams, who are God’s proof in His religion”.⁵⁵

VIII. Divine Determination in Early Ibādī Texts

On divine determination (*qadar*), the earliest Ibādī text is a *sīra* by Abū ‘Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd addressed to al-Faḍl b. Kaṭīr, presumably leader of an Ibādī community

⁵⁰ M. al-Kudamī, *Al-istiḳāma*, 1985, vol. 1, p. 14.

⁵¹ M. al-Kudamī, *Al-istiḳāma*, 1985, vol. 1, pp. 14–16, 29–31.

⁵² A. Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-ta’aruf*, 1984, p. 11.

⁵³ M. al-Kudamī, *Al-istiḳāma*, 1985, vol. 1, p. 16.

⁵⁴ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibādism*, 2010, p. xiv.

⁵⁵ M. Ibn Rawḥ, *Sīra fī al-walāya wa-al-barā’a*, p. 1. In his summary of the controversy over Imam al-Ṣalt, Nāṣir b. Abī Nabḥān (d. 1263/1847) comments, “Each side dissociated from the other, and the people followed these two groups, though most inclined toward the opinion of Abū Sa’īd, who was and remains the most learned Ibadī scholar in *fiqh*. . . Abū Sa’īd wrote *Al-istiḳāma* defending his opinion against that of Abū ‘Abdallāh [Ibn Baraka] al-Bahlawī, and he wrote *Al-mu’tabar*, a commentary on *Al-ḡāmi’* of Ibn Ġa’far, agreeing with Ibn Ġa’far on some things, but disagreeing with him on most things. Eventually, the people all followed the school of Abū Sa’īd”. Ġ. al-Sa’dī, *Qāmūs al-ṣarī’a*, 1983–1989, vol. 7, pp. 279–280.

outside Baṣra. They wrote, “We have heard that you (plural) have been afflicted by disputation on *qadar*. The people of truth, virtue, power, knowledge and counsel deem it best to refrain from discussing and arguing about it”. However, the authors continue, “God’s determination of good and evil is a reality”. The letter’s argument is made mainly through quoting relevant Qur’ānic verses, but it also argues that God’s foreknowledge of all things precludes the possibility that people could do anything other than what God knew they would do. “He has not given His creation [the power to] change His knowledge or escape it to something else that He doesn’t know”. Hence, “the inhabitants of hellfire [are its inhabitants] before they inhabit it and before they do anything. None of them will ever escape to another abode”.⁵⁶

Although the early leaders of Ibāḍism were in Baṣra, the most prominent Ibāḍī *kalām* theologian in the late 2nd/8th century was a Kufan, ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī. He attracted students from North Africa, who propagated his teachings in that region. When a schism developed in North Africa after the death of Imam ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam in 168/785, the Nukkār, who rejected the succession of his son, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, continued to follow the teachings of Fazārī, but his works were not followed in mainstream, “Wahbī” Ibāḍism, in either North Africa or Oman. Wilkinson calls Fazārī a “maverick” and says that Abū ‘Ubayda expelled him from Ibāḍī circles, although al-Salimi and Madelung doubt that Fazārī began teaching until after the death of Abū ‘Ubayda, and al-Šammāḥī (d. 928/1522) says Fazārī was among those who argued against some of the teachings of al-Rabī‘ b. Ḥabīb.⁵⁷ Fazārī and his business partner, the Šī‘ī theologian Hišām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795–796), moved to Baghdad around 170/787 and became involved in theological debates at the Abbasid court until 179/795, when Hārūn al-Rašīd banned these discussions and ordered the arrest of theologians. Fazārī fled to Yemen, where, it is said, he converted members of the Šufī sect of Ḥārīgism to Ibāḍism⁵⁸ and wrote a refutation of the Qadariyya that remains extant only through being embedded in a refutation of it by the Zaydī Imam Aḥmad al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (d. 322/934).⁵⁹

Fazārī’s refutation of the Qadariyya is really a handbook on how to debate with them. Hence, it aims not to explain his own views, but to disprove or render absurd those of his opponents. In an earlier work on *qadar*, preserved only in North Africa,⁶⁰ Fazārī argues that just as God has given some people better minds and bodies than others, so has He blessed some with belief and has not given this blessing to others. No

⁵⁶ A. al-Salimi & W. Madelung, *Ibāḍī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*, 2018, pp. 112–105 (pages in descending order).

⁵⁷ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. 276; A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, p. 1, where al-Salimi and Madelung say it is doubtful that Fazārī was ever a pupil of Abū ‘Ubayda in Baṣra, although in his article on Fazārī in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., Madelung says he was likely trained in Baṣra under Abū ‘Ubayda; A. al-Šammāḥī, *Kitāb al-sīyar*, 1987, vol. 1, p. 97.

⁵⁸ W. Madelung, “Al-Fazārī, ‘Abdallāh b. Yazīd”, 2016.

⁵⁹ *Kitāb al-nağāt*, published in W. Madelung, *Streitschrift des Zaiditenimams Aḥmad an-Nāṣir*, 1985.

⁶⁰ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, pp. 58–13 (page numbers in descending order).

creature has any right to argue against God for the rank given to it or for not receiving a favor granted to others. Likewise, infidels have no blame against them for not having been given the capacity (*istiṭā'a*) to believe, because capacity is a gift from God that He gives to whomever He pleases. A person is not punished for not having the capacity to believe, but because of the infidelity (*kufr*) they have shown.

All the acts of disobedience done by human beings are done because they are capable of doing them. They are not compelled (*mağbūrīn*), nor is it part of their nature (*mağbūlīn*), because whatever is part of a person's nature is created without his doing anything and without having any desire, choice or action; one's natural makeup is God's creation, like His creation of the heavens and the earth, night and day, and the sun and moon, which God causes to rise without any act on their part. . . This is not the way it is with human acts of obedience or disobedience.⁶¹

Fazārī thus distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary acts, using the term “act” (*fi'l*) only for the former. Compulsion means being forced to do something against one's will, but that is not the way it is with acts of disobedience, which are done out of desire or attraction or doubt. People perish because they choose their deviant passions that are made attractive to them. They are given the capacity to act according to their desires; God does not give them the capacity to act contrary to their desires. The disobedient have no argument against God for failing to intervene between them and their desires. The inability of the disobedient to obey is not comparable to the inability of a dead person or a person with an incapacitating illness, because the dead and incapacitated are unable to do or choose anything, whereas the disobedient perform acts of disobedience, and anyone who suffers a mental or physical incapacitation is blameless for failing to do acts of obedience.⁶² God does not punish anyone for what he is unable to do. The infidels have not accepted faith; God does not punish them for a faith of which they are incapable, but for the infidelity of which they are capable and which they do. The Qadariyya asked whether Abu Ğahl was able to believe. Fazārī replies that he was not able to believe without help from God, and he was unable to believe because he was occupied with unbelief, not because of an incapacity. Capacity (*istiṭā'a*) is power (*quwwa*), and power is capacity. It should be said to those who do not believe in God's determination of human acts: Are people able to do anything besides doing (*aḥd*) or not doing (*tark*)? They must say no, because a person cannot be obedient and disobedient at the same time. This is proof that people do not have the ability to do what they do not do. If the Qadariyya ask whether God imposes obligations on people that they cannot bear (*mā lā yuṭīqūn*), “the answer is that God does not impose any obligations on His servants that are beyond their ability to do or not to do, but we do not say that they are able to do and not do at the same time”.⁶³ God created both belief and unbelief, but their creation is not the same as belief and unbelief themselves, because the creation of

⁶¹ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibādī Theology*, 2014, p. 57.

⁶² A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibādī Theology*, 2014, p. 56.

⁶³ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibādī Theology*, 2014, pp. 55–54 (page numbers in descending order).

a thing is different from the thing itself. Belief and unbelief are the acts of human beings. God is their creator in the sense that He determines them (*al-muqaddir la-humā*). God is the one who makes faith faith and makes *kufr* *kufr*, and God names them; people are the ones who have movement and do (*mubāšara*) them; the Qurʾān affirms repeatedly that people are the ones who do [acts of] faith and *kufr*. If someone says God is the actor, that would mean God commands people to do His act, which is absurd and impossible. There is no command and prohibition regarding something that is not a human act.⁶⁴

IX. The Divine Attributes in Early Ibāḍī Texts

As al-Salimi and Madelung point out, the texts by Fazārī found in North Africa provide evidence of a surprising theological sophistication, including a distinction between God's attributes of essence and His attributes of act, which, if authentic, would indicate that this distinction was made earlier than usually supposed.⁶⁵ Fazārī wrote that nothing is like God in quality (*naʿt*) or deed. He is eternal (*qadīm*) from all eternity and to all eternity (*lam yazal wa-lā yazāl*). The meaning of His names is the negation of an opposite that is impossible for Him: "He is hearing" means that He is not ignorant of sounds; His seeing means that nothing is hidden from Him; "He is powerful" means that He is not impotent. His attributes of act include creating, bringing into existence, and providing. The difference between the attributes of essence and of act is that one can say of the attributes of essence that He does them from all eternity and that their opposite cannot be admitted. Besides attributes of essence and of act, Fazārī posits a third category, attributes that are "shared" (*muštaraka*) because they can be attributes of essence or of act. For example, *al-Ḥakīm* (the Wise) is an attribute of essence in the meaning of "He knows things" and an attribute of act in the meaning of passing sentence on someone.⁶⁶ The attributes are not real things; they merely indicate something that can be indicated. They are a way of talking about (*tarğama yutarğam bi-hā*) God Most High; if there is no describer to describe Him, there is no attribute, although what is described existed from all eternity according to the reality of these attributes before He created the creation. When He created the creation, He created these letters for them from which are composed His names and attributes. If these letters are put together in a different way, they are names and attributes of other than He. If someone can't understand this, Fazārī wrote, he should not be discussing theology at all.

Although Fazārī migrated to Yemen toward the end of his life, there is no evidence of this level of theological sophistication in other Ibāḍī works in Arabia in the 2nd/8th century. One of the earliest Arabian Ibāḍī expositions on the meaning of *tawḥīd* was written by the Omani Imam al-Muḥannā b. Ğayfar (r. 226/841 to 237/851).⁶⁷ Much of what he says is basic Qurʾānic teaching: God has existed from all eternity and will never cease

⁶⁴ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, pp. 28–27 (page numbers in descending order).

⁶⁵ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, p. 6.

⁶⁶ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, p. 183.

⁶⁷ Al-Muḥannā b. Ğayfar, *Min al-imām al-Muḥannā b. Ğayfar ilā Muʿaḍ b. Ḥarb*, pp. 623–634.

to exist; He is the maker of all things, establishing them as He wishes; He has no partner in His creation, no opposite in His dominion, no peer, consort or offspring. Moving somewhat beyond this basic Qurʾānic description, Muhannā writes:

He encompasses things and looks at them and knows them, but their spaces do not contain Him and vision does not perceive Him in this world or the next. He is not closer to one thing than to another. He does not need the help of a ray of light in order to encompass things. The shadow of darkness does not veil Him from knowing what is beneath the ground. He perceives sounds, even if they are many, without inclining toward them or listening to them. He sees things without glancing at them or turning toward them (...). We describe Him as He described Himself in His Book. We do not go beyond that or transgress by delimiting Him or describing Him as composed of parts, being subject to determination, or depicted in a form.⁶⁸

We already saw a denial of the possibility of seeing God in the afterlife in Abū Ayyūb's creed. In Muhannā's *sīra* we have perhaps the first rational argument against this possibility. Since God's might and majesty do not allow Him to be seen in this life, and God cannot change, His might and majesty must inevitably prevent His being seen in the afterlife. It is necessary to interpret (*taʿwīl*) anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the Qurʾān in order to avoid describing Him in a way comparable to creatures. Likewise, the word *nāẓira* in the verse "Faces that day will be radiant, looking (*nāẓira*) at/toward their Lord" (Qurʾān, 75, "Al-qiyāma", v. 22–23) must be understood not as looking at God, which is impossible, but as waiting for His reward and mercy. Although this argumentation is fairly rudimentary, it is reiterated in later Ibādī works, which also acquired more complexity over time.

Not much later than al-Muhannā's *sīra* is another exposition on Ibādī doctrine written by Abū al-Muʿtīr al-Ṣalt b. Ḥamīs (d. 278/891), which engages issues that were common in *kalām* discussions on God's attributes. Abū al-Muʿtīr writes:

If someone asks about the names and attributes of God Most High, are they He or other than He, the response is: If by the names and attributes he means the words that are heard and the letters that are written, they are other than He; they are originated and created. If he means their meanings, they are God Most High.⁶⁹

Abū al-Muʿtīr does not discuss the distinction between attributes of essence and of act. On the other hand, there is a curious question to which he responds:

If he asks, "Is 'He' a name or a body?", the answer is: "He" is not a body. As for your question, "Is 'He' a name?", if you mean is He Himself a name, the answer has already been given: If you mean what is heard and what is written, it is other than He; if you mean the meaning of what is heard and written, it is God Most High. Your question, "Is 'He' a name or a body?" does not require us to affirm one of these two meanings, because you have

⁶⁸ Al-Muhannā b. Ğayfar, *Min al-imām al-Muhannā b. Ğayfar ilā Muʿād b. Ḥarb*, p. 623. This portion is reproduced *verbatim* in al-Kindī, *Bayān al-šarʿ*, 1984, vol. 2, p. 132.

⁶⁹ S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ġawābāt*, 1986, vol. 2, p. 288.

asked about two meanings that must both be excluded from Him (...). It is as if someone said, "Tell me about so-and-so: is he a writer or a mathematician?", when he might not be either a writer or a mathematician.⁷⁰

X. Reasoning in Early Ibāḍī Texts

Although the early Ibāḍī leaders in Baṣra, such as Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Rahīl (d. ca. 200/816), rejected analogical reasoning and Fazārī's confidence in the ability of human reason to know about God even without a prophetic revelation,⁷¹ we begin to find these attitudes and approaches in Arabian Ibāḍī texts in the 3rd/9th century, especially in the work of Abū Sufyān's grandson, Abū al-Mundir Baṣīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. between 273/886–295/908). In a work titled *Kitāb al-raṣf fi al-tawḥīd*, likely composed, according to al-Salimi and Madelung, between 260/874 and 270/884,⁷² Abū al-Mundir defends the use of speculative reasoning to prove the existence and nature of God; indeed, he argues that it is a requirement for those who are intellectually mature. Because of the availability of rational proofs, there is no excuse for ignorance of God, even for those who have never heard the truths of religion.⁷³

Like other scholars of *kalām* in its maturity, Abū al-Mundir proceeds by establishing the origination of the world and that existence is of two types, eternal and originated. Eternal existence belongs only to God, the originator of all things. Nothing is comparable to Him and He has no opposite. What is meant by His names is nothing but God Himself, even if their meanings differ. Whatever language is used to describe the divine attributes, no analogy can be made between them and the attributes of creatures. "One should not imagine from a coincidence (*ittifāq*) of names that the divine attributes exist in bodies or that there is any similarity between the divine attributes and those of His creation".⁷⁴

Abū al-Mundir distinguished between God's attributes of essence (*dātī*) and of act (*fi'lī*); this is the earliest instance I have found of this distinction in an Ibāḍī text in

⁷⁰ S. Kāšif, *Al-siyar wa-al-ḡawābāt*, 1986, vol. 2, p. 288–289.

⁷¹ Fazārī held that human reason is able to know of the existence of God through the indications that exist in the creation of the heavens and the earth and their dependence on a creator, but a prophetic revelation is necessary for humans to know right from wrong (A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, p. 94). This conforms to what became the norm in Ibāḍī thinking: reason can discern certain truths about God, but not right from wrong. Thus, despite some similarities between Ibāḍī and Mu'tazilī thought on the role of reason in theology, Ibāḍīs are more like the Aš'arites in their belief that rightness and wrongness derive from God's *dicta*, not from something innate.

⁷² Baṣīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, *Early Ibāḍī Literature*, 2011, p. viii.

⁷³ Baṣīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, *Early Ibāḍī Literature*, 2011, pp. 10–12.

⁷⁴ Baṣīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, *Early Ibāḍī Literature*, 2011, pp. 7–9.

the Arabian Peninsula. He wrote, “The essential are those by which He is eternally described, whereas the *fi’lī* require an act with them”, and hence by implication are originated.⁷⁵

XI. Eastern versus Western Ibāḍīs

Interestingly, a distinction developed between the theology of the eastern Ibāḍīs and that of the western Ibāḍīs on the divine attributes. Abū al-Munḍir’s position became the norm among Ibāḍīs in the east: God’s essential attributes are eternal, but His attributes of act are originated in time. The Ibāḍīs of North Africa, on the other hand, as Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (d. 1332/1914) explained, “say that all the attributes of God are eternal and have been from all eternity, because one can say that God Most High is Creator from all eternity in the meaning that He will create, and Provider from all eternity in the meaning that He will provide”.⁷⁶ As Sālimī’s contemporary, Abū Muslim al-Bahlānī (d. 1339/1920), pointed out in his theological textbook, the eastern Ibāḍī position on the origination of the divine attributes of act is similar to the position of the Aṣḥarite school, whereas the western Ibāḍī position on this point is similar to the Māturīdite school.⁷⁷ However, Ibāḍī doctrine, in contrast to Sunni doctrine of either the Aṣḥarite or Māturīdite variety, denies that the attributes are real things. As Abū al-Munḍir wrote, “What is meant by these names is God; they are one, even if their meanings differ because of the names they are given”.⁷⁸ Fazārī stated that the attributes as descriptives are all created, even if they describe an eternal reality:

The attributes are merely an indication (*dalāla*) by which He is indicated (*yustadall bi-hā*), are a way of talking about (*tarǧama yutarǧam bi-hā*) God Most High. He has been according to the reality of these attributes from all eternity, before He created the describers and the attributes. The attributes are only from the describers; if there is no describer to describe Him by them, there is no attribute, although what is described exists from all eternity according to the reality of these attributes before He created the creation. When He created the creation, He created these letters for them from which are composed His names and attributes.⁷⁹

Ibn Baraka wrote, “The name and attribute are only an expression by which the named and described is mentioned; He is the one who is intended”. All of God’s names, he said, are originated. When asked whether God existed without a name, he replied, “If you mean that He existed and originated the names, yes. If you mean that God existed and had no known name, then no. God has always had the known names from all eternity (...). This is a distinction between what is known and what exists”.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Bašīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, *Early Ibāḍī Literature*, 2011, p. 9.

⁷⁶ N. al-Sālimī, *Mašāriq anwār al-‘uqūl*, 1995, p. 232.

⁷⁷ N. al-Bahlānī, *Al-‘aqida al-wahbiyya*, 2004, p. 134; V.J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibāḍī Islam*, 2012, p. 91.

⁷⁸ Bašīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, *Early Ibāḍī Literature*, 2011, p. 8.

⁷⁹ A. al-Fazārī, *Early Ibāḍī Theology*, 2014, p. 180.

⁸⁰ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, ms., pp. 4–5. Parts are reproduced in S. al-‘Awtabī, *Al-ḍiyā’*, 1991, vol. 1, p. 364.

With Ibn Baraka, Ibādī theology and law in the Arabian Peninsula came into full maturity. His articulations were reproduced over and over in later works.

XII. The Consolidation of Ibādism: Compendia (*ġawāmiʿ*) and Encyclopaedias

The *sīra* died out as the dominant form of Ibādī literary composition in the generation after Ibn Baraka. Already in the generation before Ibn Baraka, a new genre appeared: *compendia* (*ġawāmiʿ*) of legal and theological opinions on a wide range of topics. One of the first was the *Ġāmiʿ Ibn Ġaʿfar* of Muḥammad b. Ġaʿfar (3rd/9th century).⁸¹ The work adopts the standard order for comprehensive Islamic texts, beginning with a chapter on knowledge and the virtue of seeking it and proceeding to a chapter on what one must know and of what one may be ignorant, including a section on the divine attributes. The third chapter is devoted to *walāya* and *barāʿa*, citing the *siyar* of various *ʿulamāʾ* on the subject before moving on, in the fourth chapter, to the more typical order of discussion of legal topics, beginning with the rules of purity. His contemporary, al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī, also wrote a compendium, dealing exclusively with legal questions,⁸² and another similarly named scholar who was no relation, Abū al-Ḥawārī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥawārī (3rd/9th century), composed a compendium on religious duties.⁸³ These *compendia* quoted from the *siyar*, incorporating them into a larger and more comprehensive narrative.

Perhaps the first eastern Ibādī monograph on a single topic, Abū Saʿīd al-Kudamī's *Al-muʿtabar*, was a critique of Ibn Ġaʿfar's views. Abū Saʿīd's opinions are also collected in a *ġāmiʿ*. The compendium of his nemesis, Ibn Baraka, however, is perhaps the first comprehensive work of Ibādī theology and law in the Arabian Peninsula, and commands such authority that it is identified simply as *Kitāb al-ġāmiʿ* (the compendium), without any further identifiers, or even as *al-Kitāb* (the book).⁸⁴ Ibn Baraka's student, Abū al-Hasan al-Bisyawī/al-Bisyāwī/al-Bisyānī, also published a four-volume compendium, devoting the first volume to theology, the second to religious duties, the third to family law, and the fourth to other social laws.

The next step in the development of Ibādī literature in the Arabian Peninsula was the composition of massive encyclopaedias, beginning in the 5th/11th and 6th/12th centuries, which reproduced the writings in the *siyar* and *ġawāmiʿ* in a carefully organized, topical format. The writings of Ibn Baraka often take pride of place in these encyclopaedias; although his ideas on the obligation of dissociation from particular individuals were eventually rejected, his status as a scholar remained secure. The production of these massive works that preserved and incorporated earlier works represents a

⁸¹ Ibn Ġaʿfar, *Ġāmiʿ Ibn Ġaʿfar*, ed A. ʿĀmir, 1981, 3 vols. There are volumes that remain unpublished.

⁸² Al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī, *Ġāmiʿ al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī*, 1985, 3 vols.

⁸³ Abū al-Ḥawārī, *Ġāmiʿ Abī al-Ḥawārī fi al-adyān*, 1985, 5 vols.

⁸⁴ A. Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-ġāmiʿ*, 2007, 2 vols.

consolidation of Ibāḍī tradition in the Arabian Peninsula, especially in Oman. The first of these encyclopaedias was *Al-ḍiyāʿ*, a 24-volume work by Salama b. Muslim al-Ṣuḥārī al-ʿAwtabī (5th/11th century). This was followed in the 6th/12th century by the 72-volume *Bayān al-šarʿ* by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kindī (d. 508/1115) and the 41-volume *Al-muṣannafī al-adyān wa-al-aḥkām*, by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Kindī (d. 557/1162). All of these works have been published by Oman's Ministry of Heritage and Culture and continue to be consulted by students today. The continued popularity of the genre is indicated by the fact that new, much-used encyclopaedias were written in the 11th/17th century by Ḥamīs b. Saʿīd al-Šaqṣī (d. 1059/1649–1090/1679)⁸⁵ and in the 13th/19th century by Ğumayyil b. Ḥamīs al-Saʿdī (d. 1278/1861–1862).⁸⁶

XIII. The Createdness or Uncreatedness of the Qurʾān

And yet, that is not the end of the story of the development of the Ibāḍī textual tradition in the Arabian Peninsula. It had yet to develop on a key topic of Islamic theology, the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qurʾān.

Although the Ibāḍī position on the attributes of God is similar to that of the Muʿtazila, until little more than a century ago the eastern and western Ibāḍī positions on the creation or eternity of the Qurʾān differed from each other. Fazārī was the first Ibāḍī to discuss this topic and to maintain that the Qurʾān was created; all of God's Books, he wrote, are “bodies” (*aḡsām*) created by God. In Oman the question nearly caused a schism when Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 260/873) said the Qurʾān is created; his colleague, Muḥammad b. Hāšim, threatened to leave Oman so as not to live in the same country as someone who professed such a doctrine. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb replied that if anyone were to leave Oman it should be himself, since he was not Omani; he decided to retract his statement. He, Muḥammad b. Hāšim, and other prominent scholars gathered the next day and drafted a statement of their agreement: “God is creator of all things, and that everything but God is created. The Qurʾān is God's word, His book, and His revelation revealed to Muḥammad”. This minimalist statement was intended not to clarify, but to avoid controversy; no Muslim could disagree with it. Although they said that no one should dissociate from another person for saying the Qurʾān is created unless that person dissociated from those who disagreed with him, the scholars told Imam al-Muḥannā to severely punish anyone who propagated such a doctrine.⁸⁷

The earliest Ibāḍī text of the Arabian Peninsula to discuss the creation of the Qurʾān, and indeed perhaps the earliest Islamic text on the topic,⁸⁸ was a *sīra* by an Omani Ibāḍī, ʿAzzān b. al-Šaqr (d. 268/882 or 278/891), which argued that the Qurʾān is uncreated. The text is an imagined or real debate with a Ğahmī.⁸⁹ The crux of the Ğahmī

⁸⁵ K. al-Šaqṣī, *Minhāġ al-ṭālibīn*, 2006, 21 vols.

⁸⁶ Ğ. al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, 1983–1989, 21 vols; Ğ. al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, 2015, 91 vols.

⁸⁷ Ğ. al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, 1983, vol. 3, p. 210.

⁸⁸ So suggests A. al-Salimi, “Identifying the (Ibāḍī/Omani) *Sīyar*”, 2010, p. 137.

⁸⁹ ʿAzzān b. al-Šaqr, *Al-radd ʿalā man yaqūl bi-ḥalq al-Qurʾān*, pp. 404–407.

argument for the createdness of the Qurʾān is verse 43, “Al-zuḥruf”, v. 3, “We made it (*ġaʿalnā-hu*) an Arabic Qurʾān”. ‘Azzān responds that the verb *ġaʿala* can sometimes mean create, but often it does not, as he illustrates through numerous other verses of the Qurʾān. In this case, he argued, it does not. When the Ğahmī asks, “Tell us about the Qurʾān: is it God or other than God?”, ‘Azzān rejects the question, which requires one of two unacceptable responses, since God neither identified the Qurʾān as Himself nor said it is other than Himself. With an awareness of the importance of semantics in theology, ‘Azzān wrote that, rather than saying God is with His speech from all eternity, which could seem to imply a duality, one should say God is speaking from all eternity. When the Ğahmī asks whether God existed without anything else before the creation, ‘Azzān replies, “God existed with all His attributes when nothing created existed”. When the Ğahmī argues that the Qurʾān is a thing and God created all things, so the Qurʾān must also be created, ‘Azzān replies that God is also a thing, meaning that He exists, but He did not create Himself. ‘Azzān points out that the Qurʾān says the Queen of Sheba “was given everything” (Qurʾān, 27, “Al-naml”, v. 23), but she was not given Solomon’s kingdom. The Qurʾān also says God sent a wind against ‘Ād “to destroy all things” (Qurʾān, 46, “Al-aḥqāf”, v. 25), but their houses were not destroyed. And so, by a reasoned analysis of the Qurʾān, ‘Azzān defends the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān.

This remained the doctrine of eastern Ibādīs; both the statement of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb and his colleagues and the text of ‘Azzān are reproduced in later Omani works, such as the *Bayān al-šarʿ*.⁹⁰ The Ibādīs of North Africa, however, declared during the reign of the Rustamid Imam Abū al-Yaqzān (r. 241/856–281/895) that the Qurʾān is created.⁹¹ Today, this doctrinal difference between the eastern and western Ibādīs has entirely disappeared; they all embrace the createdness of the Qurʾān, a doctrine that the Mufti of Oman, Aḥmad b. Ḥamad al-Ḥalīlī, rigorously defends.⁹² When did this change, and how? Abdulrahman al-Salimi credits the Omani scholars of the generation of Abū Nabḥān Ğāʿid b. Ḥamīs al-Ḥarūšī (d. 1237/1822) with embracing the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān after receiving a *sīra* from North Africa on the subject.⁹³ Nonetheless, the opinions of Abū Nabḥān that are reproduced in *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa* do not accept the createdness of the Qurʾān. Rather, in a passage reproduced from his book, *Kitāb al-Iršād*,⁹⁴ Abū Nabḥān discusses whether one should dissociate from someone who says the Qurʾān is created.⁹⁵ However, his son Nāšir wrote:

⁹⁰ M. al-Kindī, *Bayān al-šarʿ*, 1986, vol. 1, pp. 163–164.

⁹¹ V. Cremonesi, “Un antico documento ibādīta sul Corano creato”, 1966.

⁹² A. al-Ḥalīlī, *Al-ḥaqq al-dāmiġ*, 2001, pp. 97–181; A. al-Ḥalīlī, *Burḥān al-ḥaqq*, 2017, vol. 3.

⁹³ A. al-Salimi, “Ibādism and the Creation of the Qurʾān”, 2015, p. 148.

⁹⁴ To my knowledge, this book remains only in manuscript form; according to A. Ḍiyāʿī, *Muʿġam mašādir al-Ibādīyya*, 2003, p. 437, a copy is held by Oman’s Ministry of Heritage and Culture, but no manuscript number is provided.

⁹⁵ Ğ. al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, 1983, vol. 3, p. 209.

Scholars of our people (*qawminā*)⁹⁶ and among our companions disagree over the Qurʾān. Most of the top scholars among our companions and most of the people of the Maghrib among our companions say it is created and that what is not God is created. It is attributed to God because He created it without the mediation of the tongue of any of His creation. So it is God's speech, the speech of God, just as God and His Spirit spoke to Jesus, just as one speaks of the sun of God and the sky of God and the earth of God (...) Some say it is uncreated, not meaning its letters or the words that convey the knowledge of their speaker. People do not need to know this question of whether or not the Qurʾān is created as long as they say it is God's speech and it does not resemble the speech of creatures and that God Most High does not speak with letters or in the language of creatures.⁹⁷

The mid-19th-century encyclopaedia, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, reproduces large numbers of Ibāḍī texts and sayings on all subjects, including the createdness of the Qurʾān. The majority of the texts point to rejection of the createdness of the Qurʾān, although the work includes texts by North African scholars that affirm its createdness, including one in which the Algerian Ibāḍī Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm al-Wārḡalānī (d. 570/1174–1175) flatly states that the Ibāḍīs agree with the Muʿtazila and the Šīʿa that the Qurʾān is created.⁹⁸

In the 13th/19th century, an intensification of contact between Ibāḍīs in the Maghrib and the east (Oman and Zanzibar) and the overwhelming esteem in which the Algerian Ibāḍī Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Aṭfiyyaš (d. 1332/1914) is held among all Ibāḍīs, who call him “the axis of the imams” (*quṭb al-aʿimma*), undoubtedly eroded the differences between the two branches. Wilkinson bemoans Aṭfiyyaš's impact in the field of law, as the largely oral and practical tradition of Ibāḍī *fiqh* in Oman gave way to strictures borrowed by western Ibāḍīs from Sunnism.⁹⁹ It was in the Maghrib that a hadith collection attributed to al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb was developed, as a strategy to defend Ibāḍism against Sunnism by competing with it on its own grounds. This collection was unknown in Oman until the 12th/18th century, and only received much attention when Aṭfiyyaš sent

⁹⁶ *Qawmunā* or *al-qawm* is generally a reference to non-Ibāḍīs of the *umma*, whereas “our companions” means Ibāḍī scholars.

⁹⁷ Ğ. al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, 1983, vol. 3, pp. 239–240.

⁹⁸ Ğ. al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-šarīʿa*, 1983, vol. 3, p. 222. The quotation is from Y. Warjlānī, *Kitāb al-ʿadl wa-al-inṣāf*, 1984, vol. 2, p. 147.

⁹⁹ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. xiii: “It is because dogma and legal interpretations remained sufficiently fluid to adjust to changing political and economic circumstances, through the concept of an ongoing living tradition based on consensus in interpreting the law, that the Imamate ideology persisted as a unifying force in Omani society”. One issue that illustrates the difference between Ibāḍī *fiqh* in Oman and the Sunni approach, which he argues was largely adopted in the “neo-Ibāḍī” revival of the 13th/19th century, is attitudes toward minted coins. Early jurists in Medina recognized that minted coins were more valuable than unworked gold, and therefore allowed repayment of borrowed coins by a larger weight of unworked gold. Sunni scholars, however, came to consider this a form of usury. Ibn Baraka, who was aware of Sunni opinions, continued to permit it based on a hadith related by Ibn al-ʿAbbās from Usāma b. Zayd. “That view prevailed until Muḥammad Aṭfiyyiš (d. 1914) overruled the Ibāḍī tradition by citing Sunni sources to show that Ibn ʿAbbās had subsequently repented of his opinion!” (*ibid.*, pp. 436–437).

Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī an enormous work that incorporated it. Hadith scholarship, writes Wilkinson, had never been part of Ibāḍī tradition in Oman.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, in the domain of understanding Ibāḍī origins, Wilkinson writes, “The model of historical evolution and rationalization of origins in Baṣra as given by the Maghribis became a straitjacket into which the much more fluid and flexible evolution in Oman has now been forced in order to explain its own origins”.¹⁰¹

However, one might argue that the now universal acceptance by eastern Ibāḍī scholars of the createdness of the Qurʾān adds coherence to Ibāḍī theology; there is an inherent contradiction between the belief that the attributes of God are not real things and the belief that the Qurʾān, which definitely is a real thing, is God’s uncreated attribute of speech. And so Aḥmad b. Ḥamad al-Ḥalīlī, the Mufti of Oman since 1975, devoted an entire volume to a reasoned defense of the createdness of the Qurʾān in his massive new theological work, *Burhān al-ḥaqq*.¹⁰²

Conclusion

We have outlined the development of Ibāḍī textual tradition in the Arabian Peninsula from the earliest phase, the *siyar*, to the development of *compendia* (*ḡawāmiʿ*), monographs, and, finally, encyclopaedias. As the *compendia* incorporated material from the *siyar*, and the encyclopaedias incorporated material from the *siyar* and the *compendia*, it is clear that we have a solid literary core through which Ibāḍī ideas and identity are expressed. We have also seen, however, that while some of the ideas expressed in these texts have remained fairly constant, such as the definition of faith, other ideas expressed have been subject to radical changes even after the corpus of the tradition appeared to be well established. This is most clearly seen in the acceptance of a formerly unknown hadith collection as a work of fundamental importance when it became broadly known through the work of Nūr al-Dīn al-Sālimī (d. 1332/1914), and in the acceptance, again largely through the work of al-Sālimī, of the doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān. That such a core doctrine could be so radically shifted through the influence of a geographically distant branch of the sect may perhaps challenge our notion of the meaning of a tradition. Nonetheless, these new elements are universally accepted by Ibāḍī scholars today.

The contemporary Sultanate of Oman, since the accession of Sultan Qaboos in 1970, is a good example of the continued susceptibility of religions to change. In order to avoid sectarian conflict in a country with a religiously diverse population, the Ministry of Awqāf and Religious Affairs banned from the mosques and schools all teaching that promoted the doctrines of a particular sect of Islam at the expense of another. The

¹⁰⁰ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, pp. 436–437. Wilkinson deconstructs the history of *Musnad al-Rabiʿ* and concludes that it is a fake that has served the Ibāḍīs poorly: *ibid.*, pp. 432–435.

¹⁰¹ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. 437.

¹⁰² A. al-Ḥalīlī, *Burhān al-ḥaqq*, 2017, vol. 3.

success of this policy is such that most Ibāḍīs in Oman today are completely unaware of the traditional Ibāḍī stance that non-Ibāḍī Muslims are not Muslims but *kuffār*. Although the mufti is well versed in traditional Ibāḍī texts, in an interview he denied that Ibāḍīs dissociate from Sunni Muslims and said that the differences between Ibāḍism and Sunnism were limited to unimportant, subsidiary matters.¹⁰³ This, of course, is a marked departure from classical Ibāḍism, a point he was willing to admit when pressed. Even an Ibāḍī professor of Islamic studies at Sultan Qaboos University objected to my writing that, according to classical Ibāḍī doctrine, non-Ibāḍīs Muslims are not Muslims or believers; it was only when I indicated specific page numbers in Ibāḍī texts that he was willing to concede the point. So, what constitutes Ibāḍism continues to change. Nonetheless, Oman's furious publication and digitalization of classical Ibāḍī texts demonstrate the centrality of these texts to Omani heritage and identity.

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TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG THE IBĀDĪS IN OMAN: IBN BARAKA'S NOTEBOOK (*TAQYĪD*) AND ITS CIRCULATION

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Abstract

Over the centuries, Muslim scholars have played a fundamental role to pass down both religious and secular knowledge from one generation to the next by preserving it orally and writing it down afterwards. Among the various methods of communication, this paper focuses on the art of “taking notes” or *taqyīd* in Arabic among the Ibādīs, with special reference to Ibādī scholar Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Baraka (known as Ibn Baraka, d. between 342/953–355/966)’s *Kitāb al-taqyīd*. After an overview of the Ibādī practice of writing, annotating and copying texts in Oman from the ninth century AD to the tenth century AD, the author will introduce the career of Ibn Baraka, as well as the importance of studying his *Kitāb al-taqyīd*. The author will demonstrate what we can learn from *Kitāb al-taqyīd* by analyzing its content.

Résumé

Transmission du savoir parmi les Ibādites d’Oman : les notes d’Ibn Baraka et leur circulation

Au fil des siècles, les érudits musulmans ont joué un rôle fondamental dans la transmission des connaissances religieuses et laïques d’une génération à l’autre en les conservant oralement, puis en les couchant par écrit. Parmi les différentes méthodes qui ont été suivies, cet article se concentre sur l’art de « prendre des notes » ou *taqyīd* en arabe chez les Ibādites, avec une référence particulière au *Kitāb al-taqyīd* de l’érudit ibādite Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Baraka (connu sous le nom d’Ibn Baraka et décédé entre 342/953 et 355/966). Après avoir donné un aperçu de la pratique ibadite de l’écriture, de l’annotation et de la copie de textes en Oman du ix^e s. au x^e s., l’auteur présente la carrière d’Ibn Baraka ainsi que l’importance d’étudier son *Kitāb al-taqyīd*. Il montre ce que nous pouvons apprendre du *Kitāb al-taqyīd* en analysant son contenu.

الخلاصة

طرق انتقال العلم بين الإباضية في عُمان: كتاب التقييد لابن بركة وتداوله أمودجا على مر القرون، كان لعلماء المسلمين أهمية كبيرة في نقل المعرفة الدينية والعلمانية من جيل إلى آخر عن طريق الوسائل المكتوبة. من بين وسائل الاتصال المختلفة، تركز هذه الورقة على فن “تدوين الملاحظات” (تقييد) بين الإباضيين، مع إشارة خاصة إلى كتاب التقييد للعلامة الإباضي أبو محمد عبد الله بن محمد ب. كتاب البركة (المعروف باسم ابن بركة، توفي 342/953-355/966). بعد لمحة عامة عن ممارسة الإباضيين في كتابة النصوص والتعليق عليها ونسخها في عمان من القرن التاسع الميلادي إلى القرن العاشر الميلادي، سيقدم المؤلف مسيرة ابن بركة، بالإضافة إلى أهمية دراسة كتابه آل-التقييد. سيشرح المؤلف ما يمكن أن تتعلمه من محتوى كتاب التقييد.

Keywords

Oman, Ibādism, Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*

Mots-clés

Oman, Ibāḍisme, Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*

الكلمات الرئيسية

عمان، الإباضية، ابن بركة، كتاب التقييد

I. Introduction

Much in the same way as the Sunnīs and the Šīʿīs, the Ibāḍī scholars and writers have transmitted religious and secular knowledge both in the oral and in the written form from one generation to the next. They have been fond of calling themselves “people of righteousness (*ahl al-istiḳāma*)”, and placed themselves as the only group the member of which would enter Paradise in the hereafter.¹ Not just showing authoritative and religious genealogy from the Prophet Muḥammad, they have also discussed and set detailed rules for the social life of their followers or “laymen”. Then, scholars have worked to ensure that the doctrines and rules they believe correct would be transmitted as such. Thus, examining their written works will reveal not only their scholarly fruits but also their methods of transmitting ideas and opinions among themselves in the preceding centuries.

Among the written forms, “aides-mémoire”, or lecture notes, has an important position in writing.² The content of aides-mémoire might be sometimes poor and even inconsistent. However, it plays a key role to transform the oral information into the writing, support the writers to make more systematic books. In other words, by shedding light on the lecture notes we can find out in detail a process of learning and writing, as well as the methods mentioned above. While many researchers in the various fields of Islamic studies have shown an interest in the transmission of knowledge via the written texts including lecture notes,³ little study has been done concerning the Ibāḍīs.

This paper focuses on such the art of “taking notes” or *taqyīd* in Arabic, with special reference to the tenth-century Ibāḍī scholar Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b.

¹ On their soteriology and naming themselves as the people of righteousness, Y. Kondo, *Seichoku*, 2021, pp. 46–48, 118–139.

² Aloys Sprenger called attention to the difference among oral, lecture notes, and compiled books by Muslim scholars in the context of the Prophetic Traditions (hadiths). A. Sprenger, *Das Leben*, 1865, vol. 3, p. 93.

³ See, C. Gilliot, “Introduction”, 2010, pp. xiii–xc. As Stefan Leder writes, transmission shapes a large part of Arabic literature; authors not only expressed their views in their own words, but also often quoted from earlier authorities. S. Leder, “Authorship and Transmission”, 1988, p. 67. There was an unwillingness to write down the Prophetic Traditions (hadiths) in the Muslim world, Sunni Scholar al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī (d. 463/1071) records both pro- and anti- sides of the opinion on preserving Prophetic traditions in written form. Al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡdādī, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*. See also, M. Cook, “The Opponents of the Writing”, 1997.

Muḥammad b. Baraka (known as Ibn Baraka, d. between 342/953–355/966)⁴'s *Kitāb al-taqyīd*. In the following section, the tradition of writing, taking notes, as well as the art of copying is illustrated among the Ibāḍīs from the eighth to the eleventh centuries AD. After a brief reference to Ibn Baraka's biography and *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, which is extant in manuscript form, the author will demonstrate the process by which Islamic knowledge was transmitted among the Ibāḍīs from the tenth century onward, analysing the *Kitāb al-taqyīd* and other related texts. This study will help us gain a better understanding of not only Ibāḍism, but also the intellectual milieu in the Arabian Peninsula during the concerned period.

II. Art of Writing among the Ibāḍīs

2.1. Tradition of Writing

Arabic sources preserved among the Ibāḍīs are evidence that the Ibāḍīs as well as other Muslim groups communicated with each other not only orally but also in the written form. For example, a certain Salama, who apparently lived and belonged to the (proto-)Ibāḍīs in the first half of the eighth century AD,⁵ is reported to have scattered some 40 pieces of parchment (*raqā'iq*), defaming the proto-Ibāḍīs, in a meeting place.⁶ The Omani scholar Mūsā b. Abī Ġābir (d. 181/797), one of "the bearers of knowledge" (*ḥamalat al-ʿilm*) from Iraq to Oman, wrote on behalf of his father to Ḥayyān al-A'raġ (d. after 99/718) seeking a legal response regarding repentance (*tawba*).⁷ Furthermore, in the ninth century AD, when there was a heated debate in Oman on the creation of the Qur'ān, the Omani scholars Abū 'Abd Allāh Sa'īd b. Muḥriz and Abū Ziyād al-Waḍḍāḥ b. 'Uqba wrote to a certain Maḥbūb al-Nazar seeking the Ibāḍī opinion on this. Further, al-Muġabbar and Sufyān, two sons of the Basran Ibāḍī leader Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl (d. between 192/815–207/822), wrote to Abū Ṣufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Ṣufra (d. in the middle of the 9th century AD) about the same issue.⁸ Although we seldom know what materials

⁴ In this study the author refers basically to al-Sa'dī's biographical work on Ibāḍī scholars regarding their year of death.

⁵ Ibāḍism emerged as a separate group by the second quarter of the eighth century AD. People who were active toward the end of the seventh century and in the first quarter of the eighth century AD were referred to as proto-Ibāḍīs by the Ibāḍīs who came later, as per John C. Wilkinson's studies. See J.C. Wilkinson, "The Early Development", 1982, pp. 136–138.

⁶ Al-Ġayṭālī, *Qanāṭir al-ḥayrāt*, 2008, vol. 1, pp. 127–128.

⁷ Al-Kindī, *Bayān al-ṣar'*, 1984–2006, vol. 3, p. 181. In Ibāḍī writings, Ḥayyān al-A'raġ is known to have studied under Ġābir b. Zayd and to have passed on Ġābir's views to the next generation. See Al-Šammāḥī, *Kitāb al-siyar*, 1987, vol. 1, p. 83.

⁸ Al-Kindī, *Bayān al-ṣar'*, 1984–2006, vol. 1, p. 152, reading al-Muġabbar instead of al-Muḥabb in the text. On the debate concerning the creation of the Qur'ān in Oman and the scholars concerned, see J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, pp. 271–277. Abū Ṣufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Ṣufra was one of the leading scholars after Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl's death. Abū Ṣufra seems to be in [most probably] Iraq when he got the writing from al-Muġabbar and Sufyān.

they used for writing, except in the above-mentioned Salama's case, we do know that the Ibādīs communicated with each other in writing.

There are written materials handed down among the Ibādīs. For example, North African scholar Abū al-Rabī' Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Wisyānī (d. in the 12th century AD) reports that the successor (*tābi'*), Ġābir b. Zayd (d. after 93/712)'s written collection (*dīwān*)⁹ was handed down to Basran leader Abū 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma (d. after 145/762), Abū 'Amr al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb (d. between 175/791–180/796), Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl by rotation, then to his son Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 260/873).¹⁰

2.2. Tradition of Noting Down

In addition to the writing tradition, the Ibādīs of Oman also followed the tradition of note taking or writing down (*taqyīd*). Taking notes was closely related to lectures (*samā'*). Regarding the tradition of note taking for instance, Mūsā b. 'Alī (d. 230/845), a key figure of Ibādism in Oman in the first half of the ninth century, took notes (*muqayyid*) from Mas'ada b. Tamīm (d. in the first half of the 9th century) about unloading goods from a ship.¹¹ The above-mentioned al-Muḡabbir [b. Maḥbūb] b. al-Raḥīl, wrote down (*qayyada*) his question and Mūsā b. 'Alī's legal response regarding a case in which a man said that he owed someone a debt but did not know the amount.¹² Furthermore, Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb reports that, one day he told Mūsā b. 'Alī that he found an opinion in a book regarding the permissibility of using Zoroastrian (*maḡūs*) style to make his building attractive (*yuṣarrifa binā'ahu*). Mūsā b. 'Alī was surprised to hear this opinion and ordered Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb to write it down.¹³

As far as the taking note in the lectures is concerned, sources reveal that Omānī Ibādīs in the ninth century, as well as other Muslims, organised lectures with the aim to transmit knowledge to their next generations, as indicated by expressions such as “Abū Ziyād's hearing from al-Rabī' [b. al-Ḥabīb]” and “Abū Mu'āwiya [Azzān b. al-Ṣaqr (d. 268/882)]'s hearing from Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb.”¹⁴ In this context, the lecture of Abū Ṣufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Ṣufra is worth mentioning; the contents of the lecture were presented/reviewed to (*ma'rūḍ 'alā*) by Abū 'Abd Allāh [Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb] and Abū

⁹ According to Amr Ennami, the word *dīwān* in Ibādī means chronicles, not a particular book, but a collection of books. A. Ennami, *Studies in Ibadhism*, 2008, p. 137.

¹⁰ Al-Wisyānī, *Sīyar al-Wisyānī*, 2009, vol. 2, p. 692. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb was a contemporary of the above mentioned scholars Sa'īd b. Muḥriz and al-Waḍḍāḥ b. 'Uqba. After the migration from Iraq to Oman, He saved as a judge at Ṣuḥār.

¹¹ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḡ*, 2015, vol. 11, p. 437. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether this taking note occurred during a lecture, from a manuscript, or even in a daily conversation. The above mentioned scholars Sa'īd b. Muḥriz and al-Waḍḍāḥ b. 'Uqba studied under this Mūsā b. 'Alī.

¹² Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḡ*, 2015, vol. 17, pp. 64–65.

¹³ Al-'Awtabī, *Al-diyā'*, 2016, vol. 3, p. 289.

¹⁴ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, pp. 192, 195.

al-Ḥawārī [Muḥammad b. al-Ḥawārī (d. in the 10th century)].¹⁵ It is obvious from this case that the lecture notebook was sometimes inspected and checked, as the term *‘ard*¹⁶ indicates.

The importance of submission or review (*‘ard*) seems a fairly well recognized practice among the Ibādīs in Oman in the ninth century AD. For example, al-Waḍḍāḥ b. ‘Uqba and Sa‘īd b. Muḥriz wrote a legal opinion to Mūsā b. ‘Alī concerning a mother, who was married to a non-Ibādī man, and whose son had passed away. Mūsā b. ‘Alī read it and did not change the opinion.¹⁷ Although the writer did not use the word *‘ard* in this case, it relates to the practice of submitting and reviewing. In Ibādī texts, there are expressions referring to “be reviewed to”.¹⁸ This custom of reviewing was apparently practiced by the Ibādīs to control the written content so that there seldom occur deviations from the Ibādī teachings and rules.

Thus, the general process of producing and composing a *taqyīd* in Oman must have been as follows: students attended a teacher’s lecture (*samā’*) and wrote down its contents, or scholars communicated with each other in their daily life and recorded the contents of their exchanges. Then, the students or scholars submitted their writing on a piece of paper or any other material to their teacher, or superior, also to their colleagues for review. Finally, when there was a reasonable amount piled up, it was compiled and bound together, which resulted in a binding material, *taqyīd*. In other words, noting down followed by review was originally a private matter, but to some extent it could also have an official or authorized character.

Scholars in Oman retained the custom of noting down in the tenth century and then on. For example, Abū Sa‘īd Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Kudamī (d. after 361/972), a contemporary of Ibn Baraka, cites a fragment of the “*taqyīd* of Ramṣaqī b. Rāšid”, one of al-

¹⁵ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, 2015, vol. 16, p. 119.

¹⁶ Georges Vajda classified the methods of transmission into eight modalities. Among them, *‘ard* can, as Vajda explains, almost replace the word *qirā’a*, and the method involves a disciple or any other person reading aloud from a book (notebook) or reciting it by heart before the Ṣayḥ. The Ṣayḥ in turn confirms the content with his copy or what he has conserved in his memory. See G. Vajda, “The Oral Transmission”, 2012, p. 2.

Gregor Schoeler remarks that the principal characteristics of Islamic teaching practice in terms of oral and written transmission of knowledge was that a teacher presented his material in a lecture (*samā’*) on the basis of written notes or from memory. The students either took notes during the lecture or, if they in turn wanted to transmit the material received in the lecture further, they produced a written version from memory or from somebody else’s records. Versions created could vary widely thus explaining the variant recensions of extant works. See G. Schoeler, *The Oral and The Written*, 2006, p. 40.

¹⁷ Al-Kindī, *Bayān al-ṣar’*, 1984–2006, vol. 3, p. 365.

¹⁸ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 195; al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, 2015, vol. 4, p. 45; vol. 5, p. 391; vol. 11, p. 11; vol. 15, p. 84. The importance of *‘ard* has been recognized in the Muslim world in general. Al-‘Awtabī cites the following dialogue between Hišām b. ‘Urwa and his father, ‘Urwa b. Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām (d. 94/712). ‘Urwa asks his son Hišām whether he has written it down. On hearing that he has indeed written it down, ‘Urwa then asks him to submit what he has written. When Hišām answered that he would not submit it yet, ‘Urwa said, “in that case, you have not written it yet”. See Al-‘Awtabī, *Al-diyā’*, 2016, vol. 1, p. 203.

Kudamī's teachers.¹⁹ We also find in Abū Bakr al-Kindī's *Al-muṣannaḡ taqyīds* of Abū al-Ḥawārī, Muḥammad b. Sa'īd [al-Kudamī], and Abū al-Ḥasan [al-Bisyawī], respectively, all of whom were distinguished scholars of that time.²⁰ Thus, it may be concluded that Ibn Baraka's *taqyīd* was part of the learning tradition and practice in Oman.

Finally, considering the method of noting down, eleventh- and twelfth-century scholar Abū al-Mundir Salama b. Muslim al-'Awtabī states that a man does not need to note down a case (*mas'ala*) from a scholar literally if the account does not deviate from its meaning, since the expression is a cover (*kiswa*) for the case. Al-'Awtabī goes on to say that even if the case gets dressed literally, such a method is permitted unless it deviates from case's meaning. Al-'Awtabī then presents Prophetic Traditions that support his argument.²¹

2.3. Tradition of Copying

Insofar as copying of manuscripts is concerned, the Ibādīs in Oman have copied texts since the early period of their activity there. A text concerning God's foreknowledge and human free will is cited in Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kindī (d. 508/1115)'s *Bayān al-ṣar'*. The beginning of the text reads, "I [i.e. the copyist] found a text written on a piece of paper (*maktūban fī ruq'a kitāban*), saying that it was handed down to Muḥammad b. Hāšim [b. Ġaylān]. Muḥammad b. Hāšim reports that Maḥbūb [b. al-Raḥīl] handed it to him for him to copy it, and hence, he copied it."²² This sentence proves that the Ibādīs had the practice of copying since the first half of the ninth century, at the latest.

As well as learning by heart, Ibādīs have valued copying in form of a text for transmission of knowledge. In Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Kindī (d. 557/1161–1162)'s *Al-muṣannaḡ*, Abū Muḥammad (either al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī (d. in the 10th century AD), or Ibn Baraka) says that whoever transcribes [religious] knowledge (*nasaḥ al-'ilm*) to learn, memorise, and follow it; it is better [for him] than prayer and almsgiving after performing the obligatory duties.²³

¹⁹ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḡ*, 2015, vol. 12, p. 460.

²⁰ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḡ*, 2015, vol. 5, p. 205; vol. 10, p. 252; vol. 11, p. 141; vol. 16, pp. 73, 116.

²¹ Al-'Awtabī, *Al-ḡiyā*, 2016, vol. 1, pp. 469–470. In the encyclopaedic legal works composed by the Ibādīs, we sometimes find similar legal cases. This reflects the practice of writing things down. By repeating and duplicating the cases, authors and composers apparently attempted to let learners grasp the nature of question underlying a case.

In the field of the transmission of Prophetic Traditions, there were two trends of transmission: the verbatim (*lafẓ*) transmission and the preservation of only the meaning/sense (*ma'nā*) of the text. See G. Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature*, 2009, p. 167.

²² Al-Kindī, *Bayān al-ṣar'*, 1984–2006, vol. 2, p. 96. Muḥammad b. Hāšim's father Hāšim b. Ġaylān was one of the leading scholars in the first quarter of the ninth century. He studied under Mūsā b. Abī Ġābir and Mūsā b. 'Alī studied under Hāšim b. Ġaylān.

²³ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḡ*, 2015, vol. 1, p. 276.

Ibāḍī texts also discuss the rules and the code of conduct for copying; they thus concern legal issues. Abū Bakr al-Kindī, for instance, writes that if a copyist copies a book and adds something that is not a part of the original to his copy intentionally, and then repents for the deed, question arises: whether the copyist's repentance should be accepted without deleting the part added, or the repentance would not be accepted unless the added part is deleted? The response reveals that adding what it is right and correct to the book is permitted, on the condition that he does not ascribe the added text to the original author of the book (*ṣāhib al-kitāb*) or to another person in an unsuitable manner; nor he is allowed to add it without the consent of the original author. Further, if the copyist has already added a part to the book, and the added contents are correct, there is no problem. However, if the added contents are wrong, or not established (*mutbit*) considering every aspect of its accuracy, the text cannot be accepted until he corrects the added contents. In case the copyist has already deleted the added text but people have already copied the produced manuscript and they could not delete them or they have already circulated it, the responder says, if the added text contains invalid contents concerning religious teaching and *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, the copyist must announce the error in the passage if possible. However, if the added contents are not connected to religious beliefs (*umūr al-dīn*), and the invalid content does not cover the truth in the text, the repentance of the person who added text would be accepted.²⁴

From these opinions, it may be concluded that Omani copyists as well as other copyists in Muslim societies had to follow a code of conduct while copying written material. While we are likely to find erratum in the text as well as blank and omitted letters, typos, and so on, they were very careful and did their best to transcribe, transmit, and even improve the value of the original text.

III. Ibn Baraka and His *taqyīd*

3.1. Ibn Baraka and His Works

Ibn Baraka is a key figure in the history of Ibāḍism in Oman.²⁵ Details about his life and career are not known; he lived in the 4th/10th century. He was born in Bahlā, an interior oasis town near Nizwā, one of the Ibāḍī centres, and he apparently spent most of his life in Oman. The internal evidence of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* shows that he studied under the Ibāḍī imam Abū al-Qāsim Sa'īd b. 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 328/940), grandson of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb. He also studied under Abū Mālīk Ġassān b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥiḍr and Abū Marwān Sulaymān b. Ḥabīb. Al-'Awtabī reports that Ibn Baraka wanted

²⁴ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, 2015, vol. 1, pp. 277–278.

²⁵ For general information of Ibn Baraka, see T. Lewicki "Ibn Baraka", *EP*, vol. 3, pp. 731–732.

to study under Abū Mālik, but the latter first rejected him in order to ascertain his aspiration for learning.²⁶ Also, Ibn Baraka was a contemporary of the above-mentioned Abū Saʿīd al-Kudamī.

Ibn Baraka played a significant role both in the political situation in Oman at that time and in developing Ibādī teaching. Since the end of the ninth century Omani Ibādīs had been involved in a serious controversy concerning the deposition of Iman al-Ṣalt b. Mālik al-Ḥarūṣī (r. 237/851–272/886). Ibn Baraka supported the view that those who had a part in the deposition deserved to be disassociated from the Ibādī community and expressed his views in his *Kitāb al-muwāzana*.²⁷

In addition to *Kitāb al-muwāzana*, Ibn Baraka also authored several other well known works: These are *Kitāb al-ġāmiʿ*, *Kitāb al-taʿaruf*, *Kitāb al-mubtadaʿ*, *Kitāb šarḥ al-ġāmiʿ*, *Al-sīra*, and *Kitāb al-taqyīd*.²⁸ Among them the *Kitāb al-ġāmiʿ* (*The Compendium*) is considered the first comprehensive and systematic Ibādī book that deals with the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).²⁹ The impact and influence of this book is clearly evident from the fact that later writers such as al-ʿAwtabī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Kindī, and Abū Bakr al-Kindī, who composed the voluminous works *Al-diyāʿ*, *Bayān al-šarʿ* and *Al-muṣannaḥ*, respectively, quoted almost verbatim from *Kitāb al-ġāmiʿ* in the sections on the classification of Prophetic Traditions, on analogy (*qiyās*), and on the abrogation of the Qurʾānic verses (*nāsikh wa-mansūḥ*).³⁰

Among the students who studied under Ibn Baraka were Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Zāhir, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥalīd, and Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Bisyawī (d. after 364/975), the author of *Ġāmiʿ Abī al-Ḥasan al-Bisyawī*.

3.2 The manuscript of *Kitāb al-taqyīd*

Among Ibn Baraka's works, his *Kitāb al-taqyīd* is the main source of the following section IV. It is preserved in al-Sālimī Library, Bidiyya, in the Sultanate of Oman.³¹ The manuscript has 433 pages. According to the colophon, its price was 2,400 dinars when the

²⁶ Al-ʿAwtabī, *Al-diyāʿ*, 2016, vol. 1, p. 390. The Ibādīs in Oman had established an institute for higher learning by that period. Kondo (2018) examines the learning system in the early primary stage in Oman. Y. Kondo, "Ibādī Policy on Education and Learning in the Premodern Period", 2018, especially pp. 224–228.

²⁷ S. Kāšif (ed.), *Al-siyar wa-al-ġawābāt*, 1986, vol. 2, pp. 383–420.

²⁸ For Ibn Baraka's works, see M.H. Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya*, 2016, vol. 1, pp. 199–205.

²⁹ Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's son Bašīr (d. between 280/893–290/903) makes a partial mention of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, but does not provide readers a more detailed discussion than Ibn Baraka.

³⁰ Al-ʿAwtabī, *Al-diyāʿ*, 2016, vol. 1; al-Kindī, *Bayān al-šarʿ*, 1984–2006, vol. 1; al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, 2015, vol. 1.

³¹ The Omani Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs generously allows manuscripts from some private libraries to be accessed online by the public. The reference number of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* is AS 250 in the online version.

See <https://elibrary.mara.gov.om/almktbat-alamanett/mktbtt-aliemam-nwr-al-den-alsalme/ktab/?id=324>

first owner purchased it in the Muḥarram of 963/December 1555. It was transcribed from the original in Ġumādā I 963/March 1556, and then finally came to the al-Sālīmī's possession.³²

Modern scholars have acknowledged the importance of this work. John Wilkinson, one of the Western pioneers on Ibāḍism, considers the work as a result of the memorization (*ḥifẓ*) of Ibn Baraka and says that the work deserves a major study.³³ Al-Salimi not only confirms the importance of the manuscript but also describes the general condition of the manuscript and points out some of the problems within it, such as the many interpolations in the manuscript, variations of the number of lines per page from page 316 onward, many lacunae in the pages, and most of the folios being corroded. It should be noted that there is only one copy of this work, as far as we know. Al-Salimi attempts to guess why no other copies of this manuscript have been found; he believes because this particular copy was so expensive, the purchaser sought to prevent his original from being copied subsequently by other copyists. Al-Salimi also points out that this manuscript "is not mentioned in the standard Ibāḍī/Omani works, and it may have been neglected, as have been many other similar works".³⁴

A close examination of the manuscript reveals that the manuscript is divided into two parts, and that the second part is apparently added to the first part by the copyist 'Umar b. Sa'īd, who states that he copied it by hand and added it to the selected prose (*mantūra*). The first part of the manuscript (pp. 4–315) contains not only Ibn Baraka's sayings and opinions but also that of others, as well as epistles dating before Ibn Baraka's time. In some places, we see the phrase "from the *Book of Brightness*" (*min kitāb al-ḍiyā*), namely, the one composed by al-'Awtabī. Thus, the first part may probably have been rearranged or collated again at least once after it was composed by Ibn Baraka.³⁵ The second part of the manuscript (pp. 316–431) includes the "actual *taqyīd*" (pp. 316–322; it consists of dialogues between Ibn Baraka who poses questions and Abū al-Qāsim Sa'īd

On the website, we can browse manuscripts preserved in private libraries not only in Oman but also in Algeria and in Zanzibar Island. While some manuscripts have already been edited, others continue to remain in the manuscript form. The contexts are invaluable in deepening our understanding of Ibāḍism.

³² For general information about the manuscript, see J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. xxxiii, and A. al-Salimi, *Ibāḍism*, 2016, pp. 12–13. A manuscript preserved in the Ministry of Culture and Heritage (since August 2020 Ministry of Heritage and Tourism), no. 1697, which is dated 531/1137, includes a fragment of the *taqyīd*. S. al-Šaybānī, *Al-sīrat al-muḍī'a*, 2015, p. 122. By comparing and analysing the contents of the two manuscripts, the process of compilation can be understood better.

Mubārak al-Rāšidī believes that the original version was larger than the extant volume of the manuscript. After a brief analysis of the content, al-Rāšidī focuses on Ibn Baraka himself and concludes that he did not go astray in terms of the contents of the lecture or the memorization; nor does it falsify in the transmission of the Tradition (*riwāya*). See al-Rāšidī, "Al-šayḥ al-'allāma", 2001.

³³ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. xxxiii. He says that his study on the *taqyīd* was merely a tentative reconstruction of its structure and contents.

³⁴ A. al-Salimi, *Ibāḍism*, 2016, pp. 12–13.

³⁵ The first part of the manuscript includes epistles to the people of Ḥurāsān, Ḥwārizm, and al-Manšūra, as well as Ibn Baraka's short work titled *The Book of the Beginner* (*Kitāb al-mubtada'*).

b. ‘Abd Allāh, and Abū Mālik Ḡassān b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥiḍr who answers. In addition, there are sections where Ibn Baraka’s role is reversed; he provides responses to the questions of a certain Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Zāhir (and others).³⁶ Some sections are arranged and named according to a certain topic. From this we might conclude that the work is not the original notebook of the lecture, but has been rearranged into a suitable form.

As far as the style of the second part, the dialogue, is concerned, many Muslim writers and scholars have composed their books in the form of dialogues. For instance, Abū Muqātil al-Samarqandī (d. ca. 208/823) composed a work titled *the Teacher and Learner* (*Al-‘ālim wa-al-muta‘allim*) in which Abū Ḥanīfa is identified as the teacher.³⁷ Further, Mālikī jurist Saḥnūn b. Sa‘īd al-Tanūhī (d. 240/854–855) composed *Al-mudawwana*, in which Mālikī scholars discuss Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795)’s opinions in dialogue style. A similar practice of composition in dialogue can be demonstrated among the Ibāḍīs. For instance, Abū Ḡānim al-Ḥurāsānī (d. in the first half of the 9th century) compiled *Al-mudawwana*, most of which consist of questions and answers between/among Ibāḍī scholars.³⁸ Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Kindī’s encyclopaedic work *Bayān al-šar‘* also retains a fragment of Abū Šufra’s *Ḡāmi‘* (*The Compendium*). We find that the chapter on payment in advance (*salam/salaf*) of his *Ḡāmi‘* is written in dialogue style.³⁹ All the above evidence reveals the fact that *Kitāb al-taqyīd* follows the Muslim style of compilation and arrangement.

In the following sections, the second part of the manuscript is analysed, particularly the sections in which Ibn Baraka appears as the questioner.

IV. From a Lecture Notebook to an Authoritative Work

Ibn Baraka’s *Kitāb al-taqyīd* is a valuable source for the study of the intellectual history of both Ibāḍism and the Muslim world; it gives us new impetus for and enriches the scholarly interpretation of the legal issues that were prevalent during Ibn Baraka’s lifetime. In addition, the juridical questions posed by Ibn Baraka and his teachers and students reveal the tensions between students and scholars, as depicted in Abū Ḡānim al-Ḥurāsānī’s *Al-mudawwana*.⁴⁰

³⁶ The name of Muḥammad b. Zāhir appears on page 377 of *Kitāb al-taqyīd*. We also find his name in Ibn Baraka’s *Ḡāmi‘* (vol. 2, p. 585).

³⁷ Al-Samarqandī, *Al-‘ālim wa-al-muta‘allim*, 1949, pp. 8–32.

³⁸ M. Muranyi (2018) discusses the process of compilation and contents of Abū Ḡānim’s *Al-mudawwana* in detail. M. Muranyi, *The First Compendium*, 2018, especially pp. 21–37.

³⁹ I. Bū Larwāḥ (ed.), *Min ḡāmi‘ Abī Šufra*, 2012, pp. 94–124.

⁴⁰ Cf. M. Muranyi, *The First Compendium*, 2018, p. 107.

4.1. From an Oral to a Written Work

Ibn Baraka remarks on his method of noting down points at the end of his *taqyīd*, as follows:

Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Baraka—may God be pleased with him and support him with protection! —said: What I included in this book are questions. I had noted them down from our Ṣayḥ Abū Mālik Ğassān b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥiḍr—may God be pleased with him!—and I memorised their answers as he gave legal responses about them to me. Sometimes I asked him about questions that I found in traditions (*ātār*) and I submitted (*a’riḍu*) them to him during that [moment]. Or, he explained it [i.e. the legal question] to me and I noted it down during his presence or absence. Sometimes I wrote the answer and submitted it to him and he, in turn, authorised (*yuḡawwizu*) it. Among them [i.e. records], there are some that I have not submitted to him; however, I hope that these wordings, even though they are mine, were not out of range of the meaning of the answer. I would not be safe from mistakes and errors. [I hope that] what one takes it [from this book] corresponds with the truth. I beg God to save me from any blame and hope that I am in accordance with what He is pleased.⁴¹

Ibn Baraka’s monologue on the process of composing the *taqyīd* enables us to imagine a class with a teacher and his or her students. The text indicates that Ibn Baraka and his disciples followed the method practised by their predecessors. In addition, Ibn Baraka confesses that he did not literally transmit his teacher’s words. Al-‘Awtabī’s report on the aforementioned method of taking notes reflects on this practice. Furthermore, it is interesting that Ibn Baraka included matter that he had not discussed with his master in the book; in other words, Ibn Baraka’s notebook contains some unauthorised material and his own individual opinions. Unfortunately, Ibn Baraka did not call the readers’ attention to particular sections or parts of unsubmitted cases; hence, it is difficult to point out his private opinions.

From *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, we can identify the scholars’ discussions and the intellectual situation of his time. It is interesting that contrary to *Kitāb al-ḡāmi’*, the text does not mention the opinions of non-Ibādīs, such as Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) and Mālik b. Anas. It indicates that the students first had to study the legal rules of their own school. In other words, *Kitāb al-taqyīd* contains essential knowledge for those who want to master the Ibādī law before they advance to a higher level of learning, namely the comparison of rules in one’s own school with that of the others.

At this stage, learners learn not only their masters’ opinions but also their predecessors’ rules, as well as local rules. Now, let us consider the dialogue between Ibn Baraka and Abū Marwān Sulaymān b. Ḥabīb. Ibn Baraka asked Abū Marwān about the requirement of repudiation (*ṭalāq*); he said that he found in a precedent (*aṭar*) that Abū ‘Uṭmān Sulaymān b. ‘Uṭmān, a famous Ibādī scholar in Oman (d. after 192/808), had an opinion

⁴¹ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, pp. 430–431; al-Ṣaybānī, *Al-sīrat al-muḍī’a*, 2015, p. 122.

that if a husband repudiates his wife by gesturing the number of times of the repudiation using his fingers to her, the repudiation occurs. Abū Marwān countered that the method of repudiation stated by Sulaymān b. ‘Uṭmān is not followed in practice.⁴² With regard to the making a payment in advance (*salaf* or *salam*), Ibn Baraka asked Abū Marwān about the practice followed by the people in al-Ġawf, a town located in the interior of Oman, who allowed buyers to pay for goods in instalments. Abū Marwān criticised the practice as being forbidden by the Prophet.⁴³ To my knowledge, the dialogue is unique in the writing tradition of Oman. It indicates that an area in Oman deviated from the Ibāḍī teaching; hence, it makes us reconsider the process of the popularisation of Ibāḍī teachings in Oman.

Further, *Kitāb al-taqyīd* illustrates how Omani scholars reacted to the Basran Ibāḍīs’ opinions.⁴⁴ For instance, Ibn Baraka asked Abū Marwān about the expiation for breaking the oaths (*kaffāra al-aymān*) for the poor and their attributions. Abū Marwān reviewed Abū ‘Ubayda’s opinion that the poor who were the recipients of the expiation were among the free non-Muslim subjects (*ahl-dimma*) and said that people other than him had another opinion, taking a part of Qur’ān, 2, “Al-baqara”, v. 61 “So they were struck with abasement and poverty”⁴⁵ as its ground for argument.⁴⁶ In another context, Ibn Baraka asks his teacher, probably Abū Marwān judging from the sequence, about almsgiving. According to Ibn Baraka, Abū ‘Ubayda had an opinion that alms should be given only to poor people among free non-Muslim subjects. Abū Marwān responded to Abū ‘Ubayda that “we”, namely, the Ibāḍīs in Oman, did not support Abū ‘Ubayda’s opinion since his argument could not be validated because of the lack of evidence (*‘adam al-dalīl ‘alā al-ṣiḥḥa*).⁴⁷ This dialogue reveals that Omānīs did not follow Basran opinions blindly, even when the scholar was an influential leader of the Ibāḍīs.

In relation to Omani scholars’ study on the Basran Ibāḍī opinions they handled a historical and crucial case on the granting of permission to give alms to and take alms from non-Ibāḍīs. This case was discussed among the Basran Ibāḍīs in the eighth century,⁴⁸ and the topic was related to the membership of the community.⁴⁹

⁴² Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 401.

⁴³ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 395.

⁴⁴ Ibāḍism in Oman had a close connection with Basra. According to al-Kudamī, Omanis did not follow ‘straightness’ (*istiḳāma*) in the eighth century; further, they did not follow the teachings of Ibāḍism. During this period, knowledge was limited and of no use (*mayyit*) in Oman, and there were neither preceding examples (*āṭār*) nor prominent Omani scholars. Hence, al-Kudamī writes, Ibāḍī jurists (*fuqahā’*) and scholars went to Iraq in search of knowledge. After returning from Iraq, al-Kudamī continues, these men taught the remaining Omanis. Al-Kudamī, *Al-istiḳāma*, 1985, vol. 2, p. 91.

⁴⁵ S.H. Nasr, *The Study Quran*, 2015, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 411. The issue was discussed among the Basran Ibāḍīs, see, al-Farāhidī, *Futyā al-Rabī’ b. Ḥabīb*, 2017, p. 119.

⁴⁷ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 425.

⁴⁸ Al-Farāhidī, *Futyā al-Rabī’ b. Ḥabīb*, 2017, p.134.

⁴⁹ E. Francesca, “Early Ibāḍī Jurisprudence”, 2005, p. 263.

Interestingly, sometimes, the responder prioritises his or her own memorisation. For instance, regarding a rich woman's swear for redemption and its amount, the questioner Ibn Baraka refers to al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb's opinion that the woman should pay 30 dirhams; Ibn Baraka states his own opinion, responding "I guess" (*aẓunnu*), that she should pay 15 dirhams. However, Abū Mālik rejected Ibn Baraka's personal opinion on the grounds that she was a rich woman and "this [opinion] is my memorisation from Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb".⁵⁰ Furthermore, Ibn Baraka's notebook reveals that they studied Ibn Ḡāfar's *Al-ġāmi'*. In other words, at the time, Ibn Baraka could refer to written materials even at a young age. In this case, Ibn Baraka asked Abū Mālik about Ibn Ḡāfar's statement that travellers can use alcoholic drinks (*nabīd*) and purify them using sand (*tayammum*) if they could not find water. Abū Mālik responds that his opinion was based on his memorisation from Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb; accordingly, the traveller must perform *tayammum* alone.⁵¹ In addition, Ibn Baraka posed a question to Abū Marwān about the case in which a man who had uttered a lie in front of the judge and later wanted to repent; Abū Marwān responded that the man must expiate his sin by redemption of *yamīn mursala*. Subsequently, Ibn Baraka replied that he found in a precedent (*atar*) that the man must expiate his sin by redemption of *yamīn muġallaẓa*; however, Abū Marwān said that his opinion was based on the memorisation of Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's teachings.⁵² Abū Marwān and Abū Mālik followed 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb as one of the authorities in the field.

Kitāb al-taqyīd reveals the close relationship between teachers and students, as well as explaining the method of learning in tenth-century Oman. Furthermore, although Ibn Baraka posed a question to Abū Marwān and received a response from the latter, Ibn Baraka was not satisfied with the answer. Hence, he submitted the same question to Abū Mālik.⁵³ In addition, Ibn Baraka posed some questions to Abū al-Qāsim Sa'īd b. 'Abd Allāh, and asked the same question once again to Abū Mālik to confirm or modify the answer.⁵⁴ Here, we highlight his practice (and that followed by Ibādīs) of checking and confirming opinions among several individuals.

4.2. Notebook as a Baseline for Advanced Authorship and Learning

As posed above, Ibn Baraka wrote several books. By analysing his *Kitāb al-taqyīd* and other books, researchers might demonstrate how Ibn Baraka accrued knowledge from his masters to produce his own works. How did Ibn Baraka consume and utilise his

⁵⁰ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 410. After examining the relation between writing and publishing in early Islam, Gregor Schoeler concludes that while writing finally claimed victory in Islam in practice, as among the Greeks and in Judaism, scholars in Islam felt that writing should at most have an auxiliary function in the transmission of knowledge. G. Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, 2006, p. 85.

⁵¹ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 422.

⁵² Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 411.

⁵³ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 423.

⁵⁴ For example, Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, pp. 316–317.

teachers' opinions? Further, how did *Kitāb al-taqyīd* further Ibn Baraka's endeavours to become an author? Let us find the answers to these questions from two of Baraka's works, *Kitāb al-ta'āruḥ* and *Al-ġāmi'*.

Ibn Baraka's *Book of Custom* (*Kitāb al-ta'āruḥ*) explains the local practices followed in Oman during the tenth century. Whereas *Kitāb al-taqyīd* is in a question–answer format, *Kitāb al-ta'āruḥ* is in a declarative form. The manuscript of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* (pp. 345–355, A) contains the same passage as in the *Ta'āruḥ* (pp. 112–136). In addition, following this part, there is an additional part in the *Ta'āruḥ*, the beginning of which reads, “we will quote (*sa-nadkuru*) for you the idea of practice on trade, sales, and transaction, which we memorised from the master Abī Mālik. We recorded it in the *Notebook* (*rasamnāhu fī Kitāb al-taqyīd*).⁵⁵ The concluding part (p. 137–) of the *Ta'āruḥ* corresponds with the contents of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* (pp. 361–366, B), which are in the catechism style and titled “the chapter of custom”.⁵⁶ Although the personal pronoun “I” is used in the *Ta'āruḥ*,⁵⁷ we conclude that Ibn Baraka himself wrote the additional part to the *Ta'āruḥ*, since the pronouns used in this part are mostly “we” and “our”.⁵⁸

Based on this discussion, we infer that Ibn Baraka literally made use of his *Taqyīd* by inserting it in his *Ta'āruḥ*. Although the *Taqyīd* examined in our manuscript and the edited *Ta'āruḥ* occasionally differ in terms of the occurrences of particles and phrases and paraphrasing, most parts of the two works correspond to each other. With respect to the relation between the main texts of *Ta'āruḥ* and *Taqyīd*, the author could not find any correspondence or modification of the contents of *Taqyīd* in his limited examination. Although we can explain the non-existence of any correspondence between the *Taqyīd* and the *Ta'āruḥ* as the difference in the genre of the text, further investigation of and comparison between the two works will reveal the exact writing process followed by Ibn Baraka.

For *Al-ġāmi'* (*The Compendium*), it is obvious that Ibn Baraka consulted written materials, including his notebook, while composing the work. In the context of one's testament to the poor, Ibn Baraka mentions that he “found in some pieces of paper (*ba'd al-riqā'*) on which I had written down [the cases and] answers of the master Abū Mālik”.⁵⁹ This statement is testimony that Ibn Baraka composed *Al-ġāmi'* after studying under Abū Mālik, as well as he read over his notebook when he wrote *Al-ġāmi'*.

Ibn Baraka seldom referred to his written sources, particularly in *The Compendium*, but simply mentioned his master's name; therefore, it is a challenging project, as in the case of *Ta'āruḥ*, to identify the content of *Taqyīd* in *Al-ġāmi'*. He did not mention

⁵⁵ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-ta'āruḥ*, 2013, p. 137.

⁵⁶ The handwriting in A apparently differs from that in B.

⁵⁷ For example, Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-ta'āruḥ*, p. 68 (*fa-innī u'limuka*).

⁵⁸ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-ta'āruḥ*, p. 73 (*al-dalīl 'alā anna Allāh ta'ālā ta'abbadanā bi-mā huwa yaqīn 'indanā mim mā na'limu bi-al-zāhir min al-ūmūr*), p. 75 (*afradnā, bayyannā, tawfiqnā*), p. 76 (*qaṣadnā, kullifnā, nahkumu*), and so on.

⁵⁹ Ibn Baraka, *Al-ġāmi'*, 2007, vol. 2, p. 587.

Abū al-Qāsim and Abū Marwān, but cited Abū Mālik's name 18 times. However, Ibn Baraka apparently did not cite Abū Mālik's opinion as it was cited in *Taqyīd*. It was taken for granted that the work did not cite Sulaymān b. 'Utmān's unsuccessful practice, and we cannot learn about the Ġawf people's practice of paying in instalments and enabling advance payment from *Al-ġāmi'*. Ibn Baraka seemed to have considered such opinions of secondary value and not worthy of transference to future generations. In addition, Ibn Baraka sometimes compared the opinions of others before submitting his own opinion. Further, *Al-ġāmi'* includes the opinions of not only Ibādīs but also non-Ibādīs, such as Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik b. Anas, and al-Šāfi'ī. Hence, it might be assumed that the work was designed for advanced learners who already have essential knowledge of Ibādī teachings.

However, we could point out a fruit or trace of learning. Here, the author considers the aforementioned problem of redemption as an example. Whereas Abū Marwān considered Abū 'Ubayda's opinion on the recipients of expiation to simply lack "the evidence for the validity" in the notebook, as cited earlier, Ibn Baraka did not stop thinking about this topic. Referring to Abū 'Ubayda's opinion based on the Qur'ān, 2, "Al-baqara", v. 61, Ibn Baraka stated that Abū 'Ubayda's argument based on the verse was "an interpretation that needs a study" (*ta'wīl fihi naẓar*). Subsequently, Ibn Baraka supported the major opinion of Omani Ibādīs, as follows:

The expiation for breaking the oath should be given for those to whom the almsgiving of tax is given, because the almsgiving and the expiation for breaking the oath are for the purpose of purification. For the almsgiving of tax is not a duty except for Muslims, the expiation for breaking oaths is not a duty except for those who are required to perform the almsgiving of tax, based on the equality of cause (*li-istiwā' al-'illa*).⁶⁰

Here, Ibn Baraka uses legal reasoning to explain in words the validity of a major opinion. We can consider his statement a result of his learning under Abū Marwān and others. By collecting the cases found in both the works and analysing them, we clarify the development and acceptance of Ibādī teachings in tenth-century Oman.

4.3. From a Notebook to Authoritative Compilations

The encyclopaedic works composed by al-'Awtabī and Abū Bakr al-Kindī were considered authoritative by the Ibādīs in the eleventh/seventeenth century at the latest. The Ibādī scholars Darwīš b. Ġum'a al-Maḥrūqī (d. 1087/1676) and Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Ġum'a b. 'Ubaydān al-Nizwī (d. 1104/1692) recorded and issued the legal responsa that the opinions and practices preserved in the encyclopaedic works such as *Al-dīyā'*, *Bayān al-šar'*, and *Al-muṣannaf* could be practised unless there was any rule or argument that rejected them.⁶¹ Hence, teachers and students might have prioritised these books and

⁶⁰ Ibn Baraka, *Al-ġāmi'*, 2007, vol. 2, p. 95.

⁶¹ Al-Maḥrūqī, *Ġāmi' al-tibyān*, 2011, pp. 30–31; and al-Nizwī, *Ġawāhir al-ātār*, 1985, vol. 1, p. 18.

been eager to effectively learn their contents. In this situation, as a matter of course, some knowledge was dropped from the system of compilation due to space limitations.⁶² Further, the recording of knowledge for transmission to future generations depends on the compilers' competence and intentions.

The authors of the aforementioned encyclopaedic works just refer to Ibn Baraka's *Al-ġāmi'* or directly cite "passages from Ibn Baraka" in the relevant text; they seldom explain and interpret its contents clearly. In addition, the contents and arguments provided in *Al-ġāmi'* were more comprehensible and elaborate, and sometimes more profound than those in *Taqyīd*. Thus, scholars and writers preferred using the latter as a reference until a certain time to understand both of the contents in *Al-ġāmi'* and hence the rules of Ibāḍism.

Kitāb al-taqyīd seemed to suit their needs. We can clarify this by comparing the circulations of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* and *Al-ġāmi'* and the incorporation of these books into encyclopaedic works. Regarding the circulation of *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, it was referred to not only in Oman⁶³ but also in other areas. In North Africa, Abū al-Qāsim al-Barrādī (d. the 9th/15th century) listed *Kitāb al-taqyīd* and *Al-ġāmi'* as the major writings of the Eastern Ibāḍīs.⁶⁴ Further, the books' contents seem to have been transmitted to the Ibāḍīs in Ḥaḍramawt,⁶⁵ and the scholars there referred to them. The eleventh-century scholar Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī, for example, cites the contents of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* two times in his *Al-dalīl wa-al-ḥuġaġ*.⁶⁶ One of the citations refers to praying on a ship. After citing the section as it is, al-Ḥaḍramī notes, "I wrote this section because I consider it right based on Abū Muḥammad *Taqyīd*" (*wa-qad katabtu hādā al-bāb li-mā istahsantu min taqyīd Abī Muḥammad*).⁶⁷ Further, in the section on repudiation (*ṭalāq*), al-Ḥaḍramī refers to the question of utterance of a husband to his wife as "ḥarām is on him". After introducing three opinions on its legal effects, that is, bring the repudiation into existence or facilitate expiation, al-Ḥaḍramī, chooses the opinion that the utterance

⁶² Al-'Awtabī cites al-Ḥalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī's (d. 170/786 or 175/791) sayings that selecting the knowledge is more difficult than collecting it, or good summary is a skill of intellect. Al-'Awtabī, *Al-diyā'*, 2015, vol. 1, p. 204.

⁶³ Anonymous, *Risāla fī ma'rifat kutub*, 2014, pp. 25, 40.

⁶⁴ Al-Barrādī, *Al-ġawāhir al-muntaqāt*, 2014, p. 236.

⁶⁵ Since the ninth century AD, there existed a close relationship between Oman and Ḥaḍramawt. For instance, Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb wrote an epistle to the Ibāḍī imam in Ḥaḍramawt, Aḥmad b. Sulaymān. Al-Kindī, *Bayān al-šar'*, 1984–2006, vol. 1, p. 64. Similarly, according to Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, another Ibāḍī imam in Ḥaḍramawt Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-'Azīz commented on the situation of the Oman Imamate along with other critics. Al-Šaqasī, *Manḥaġ*, 2006, vol. 1, pp. 61–62. In addition, some scholars from Ḥaḍramawt travelled to Basra and studied there in the eighth century, and Omani scholars got an opportunity to learn the opinions of those scholars. See al-Kindī, *Bayān al-šar'*, 1984–2006, vol. 26, p. 275.

⁶⁶ Wilkinson notes that the internal evidence provided in the works shows that the author was in Oman during the lifetime of Imam Ḥalīl b. Šādān (r. 406/1016–425/1034) (J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 2010, p. xxxiii).

⁶⁷ Al-Ḥaḍramī, *Al-dalīl wa-al-ḥuġaġ*, 2012, pp. 224–225; Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, pp. 428–429.

brings the repudiation into existence.⁶⁸ Thus, the *Taqyīd* was a useful reference for him or, in other words, it served as a baseline to learn and understand the opinions of Omani scholars better.⁶⁹

Further, when Ibn Baraka's *taqyīd* was incorporated into encyclopaedic works and became a part of authoritative opinions, some texts were cited as they were,⁷⁰ whereas others were modified to meet a particular form, that is, *mas'ala* style. However, in the course of transferring the text into encyclopaedic works, the compilers seemed to ignore out the *Taqyīd*'s sequence. In this manner, the *Taqyīd* in the encyclopaedic works lost its original values. We will examine the use of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* in the following three cases.

(1) Abū Bakr al-Kindī cut the contents of *Kitāb al-taqyīd* in the section on the partnership in agriculture of his *Al-muṣannaḥ*:

[Text A–1]⁷¹

In the *Taqyīd*, it follows the aforementioned sentence:

[Text A–2]⁷²

Apparently, the subject turns from a partnership of agriculture to that of animals and clothes. In a lecture, it is natural that the student asks his or her teacher something related to the topic; however, to compile well-organised works, the compiler had to omit the redundant text. Here, al-Kindī cut the text to maintain an orderly format.

(2) Similarly, Abū Bakr al-Kindī inserted the contents of the *Taqyīd* on the Imam's sin:

[Text B–1]⁷³

We read the following sentence in the *Taqyīd* before Text B–1:

[Text B–2]⁷⁴

Although it is not clear whether the speaker in B–2 was Abū Mālik or Abū Qāsim, Abū Bakr al-Kindī cut the preceding part of the statement in B–1. Abū Bakr al-Kindī applied the aforementioned method to cut the text.

(3) Al-ʿAwtabī discusses the suitable place of praying, as follows:

⁶⁸ Al-Ḥaḍramī, *Al-dalīl wa-al-ḥuḡaḡ*, 2012, p. 469; Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 427.

⁶⁹ Al-Ḥaḍramī uses Ibn Baraka's *Al-ġāmiʿ*, as well. Al-Ḥaḍramī, *Al-dalīl wa-al-ḥuḡaḡ*, 2012, pp. 234, 535, 606.

⁷⁰ For example, we find in al-ʿAwtabī's *Al-ḍiyāʿ* a section on the difference between appointment (*ʿahd*) and promise (*waʿd*), which is cited from *Kitāb al-taqyīd* without any unnatural interruption or modification. Al-ʿAwtabī, *Al-ḍiyāʿ*, 2015, vol. 4, p. 377; Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 329.

⁷¹ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, 2016, vol. 7, p. 537.

⁷² Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 391.

⁷³ Al-Kindī, *Al-muṣannaḥ*, 2016, vol. 7, pp. 463–464.

⁷⁴ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 318.

[Text C-1]⁷⁵

In Ibn Baraka's *taqyīd*, it is as follows:

[Text C-2]⁷⁶

In this case, while al-ʿAwtabī does not name the *Taqyīd*, it is probable that he read the part of the *Taqyīd* and summarises it, omitting the Basran Ibāḍī opinion and taking Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's.

We can hence conclude that the *Taqyīd* served to improve the authorship of later writers, and it became a part of the authoritative works; it sometimes appears as modified texts, as well.

V. Conclusion

The preceding sections clarified the textual tradition of Ibāḍīs in Oman. The Ibāḍīs in Oman often wrote down a master's lecture or daily discussion in the catechism form or as declarative sentences. They followed a certain tradition and commonly accepted rules when taking notes and copying. Although we cannot reconstruct exact dialogues since the writers seemed to prioritise the transmission of meaning over the literal transmission, we can clearly understand the scholars' discussions.

Such traditions were followed in the compiling of Ibn Baraka's *Taqyīd*, as well. It helps us imagine the dialogue that must have taken place between teachers and students as if it is occurring in front of us. The *Taqyīd* helps clarify the intellectual and social conditions of tenth-century Oman. It is clear from the text that Ibn Baraka studied the preceding opinions with his masters. He must have referred to his notebook while writing his *Ġāmiʿ*, much more than the present study showed the evidence. The *Taqyīd* was useful for the following generations, as a part of its contents survived in encyclopaedic works. However, while compiling the work, scholars cited and excerpted a part of *Taqyīd* regardless of the format and context of the *Taqyīd*. This resulted in the inclusion of independent but obscure content in the encyclopaedic writings. Therefore, works such as the *Taqyīd* were required to confirm the contexts and, thereby, complement the encyclopaedic works to promote better understanding.

The author of the current study believes that a further study of Ibn Baraka's *Taqyīd* and other works such as *Bayān al-šarʿ* should be conducted in order to confirm the above-mentioned tendency. We know that some Ibāḍī scholars wrote their own versions of *Taqyīd*; however, since they were unavailable, we could not refer to them. Discovering and accessing such materials will help us further explain the formation, development, and transformation of Ibāḍī thought and opinions and the process of textual production. Further, we should keep in mind that, as confessed by Ibn Baraka himself, there are opinions in the lecture notebook that did not receive a teacher's review. In other words, these are not authorised or established opinions. Due to limitations of

⁷⁵ Al-ʿAwtabī, *Al-ḍiyāʿ*, 2015, vol. 5, p. 51.

⁷⁶ Ibn Baraka, *Kitāb al-taqyīd*, p. 420.

space and competence, the author could not point them out in the lecture notebook nor find them in the later encyclopaedic works. By examining and studying *Kitāb al-taqyīd* further and comparing its contents with the contents of Ibn Baraka's *Ġāmi'* and works by other authors, we can identify which personal or unauthorised opinions became a part of the authoritative works.

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OMANI BOOKS & THEIR MAGHRIBI READERS: IBĀDĪ TEXTUAL EXCHANGES IN OTTOMAN CAIRO

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Abstract

Recent studies highlight how interconnected Ibādī communities in Africa and Asia engaged with the political and intellectual worlds of Islam and colonialism from the late-19th century forward. This article argues that interconnectedness of Ibādīs in that later period began in the early-to-mid 19th century as textual interactions between Maghribi and Omani Ibādīsm in Ottoman Cairo. Focusing on the library of an institution known as the Buffalo Agency (*Wikālat al-ġāmūs*), it uses Omani books sent to Cairo for Maghribi students to represent the increasingly overlapping worlds of eastern and western Ibādīs. These textual interactions in the first half of the 19th century laid the foundations of a much denser web of connections among Ibādīs in the "Age of Steam and Print" that followed it.

Résumé

Livres omanais et leurs lecteurs maghrébins : les échanges ibādītes textuels dans le Caire ottoman
Plusieurs études récentes montrent comment des communautés Ibādītes interconnectées d'Afrique et d'Asie se sont engagées dans les mondes politique et intellectuel de l'islam et du colonialisme à partir de la fin du xix^e s. Cet article met en évidence que c'est dès le début du xix^e s. que des échanges textuels ont pris place entre communautés maghrébines et omanaises dans le Caire ottoman. Se concentrant sur la bibliothèque d'une institution connue comme l'« Agence de la Bufflesse » (*Wikālat al-ġāmūs*), il s'appuie sur le cas de livres omanais envoyés au Caire à l'attention des étudiants maghrébins pour illustrer les mondes de plus en plus imbriqués des Ibādītes occidentaux et orientaux. Ces interactions textuelles de la première moitié du xix^e s. ont jeté les bases d'un réseau de relations entre Ibādīs qui deviendra beaucoup plus dense dans l'ère suivante, celle de « la vapeur et de l'imprimé ».

الخلاصة

كتب عُمانية وقراءها المغاربة: تبادلات إباضية نصية في القاهرة العثمانية
عدّة دراسات أخيرة تلقي الضوء على كيفية تعامل الجماعات الإباضية في إفريقيا وآسيا مع التطورات الفكرية والسياسية المتعلقة بالإسلام والاستعمارية بدايةً من أواخر القرن التاسع عشر. يزعم هذا المقال أنّ الروابط بين إباضية المغرب وإباضية المشرق (وخاصةً عُمان) تجد جذورها في تبادل النصوص في القاهرة العثمانية. تركيزاً على تاريخ مؤسسة إباضية معروفة بوكالة الجاموس، يوظف المقال نماذج من مكتبة الوكالة ليظهر التداخل التدريجي بين عالمي الإباضية في المشرق والمغرب. يمثل تبادل الكتب في النصف الثاني من القرن التاسع عشر جزءاً هاماً من القاعدة التي بُنيت عليها شبكة الروابط الكثيفة بين الجماعات الإباضية في "عصر طاقة البخار والطباعة" في آخر القرن نفسه.

Keywords

Oman, Maghrib, Buffalo Agency, Ottoman, Egypt, Cairo, manuscripts, Ibādīs, Ibādīsm

Mots-clés

Oman, Maghreb, Agence de la Bufflesse, Ottoman, Égypte, Le Caire, manuscrits, ibāḍis, ibāḍisme

الكلمات الرئيسية

عمان، المغرب، وكالة الجاموس، عثماني، مصر، القاهرة، مخطوطات، الإباضية

I. Introduction

Despite shared origin stories tracing their roots to the Iraqi city of Baṣra in the 7th century, the two communities of Ibāḍī Muslims in northern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula spent much of their early history with relatively little contact between them. Instead, their respective genres of literature, political theories of leadership, and lived realities followed two different trajectories. This largely separate history drew to a definitive close as the two spheres began to merge in the first half of the 19th century and to grow increasingly familiar with each other's textual traditions. Recent studies have demonstrated the increasingly dense networks of interaction among Ibāḍī communities in North Africa, East Africa, Egypt, and the Arabian Peninsula in the latter half of the 19th century. This was especially true with the advent of print technology and steam power as companions to Ibāḍī manuscript culture from the 1870s onwards, which helped to foster a sense of a global community of believers. Amal N. Ghazal and Augustin Jomier, in particular, have highlighted these transregional connections in the context of an Ibāḍī intellectual and political renaissance (*naḥḍa*). Ghazal has clearly demonstrated a network of communication linking Omani, Zanzibari, and the Maghribi Ibāḍī scholars and activists in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, although her work largely alluded to rather than demonstrated earlier connections.¹ Jomier has laid out a vast network linking Ibāḍī scholars from the early-modern era to the present. Until the period of the late-19th century, however, his focus was on intra-Maghribi connections.²

In this article, I seek to complement these existing studies of the late-19th century by pushing the chronology of this merger backward in time and by tracing earlier sites of interaction among textual traditions of Ibāḍīs in the Maghrib and their confreres in the Arabian Peninsula. I begin by briefly outlining some of the interactions between the eastern and western Ibāḍī communities up to the 19th century before then focusing on a particular site of interaction for these two spheres of Ibāḍism: an Ibāḍī trade agency and school in Cairo known as the “Buffalo Agency” (*Wikālat al-ḡāmūs*) that operated in

¹ A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform*, 2010.

² A. Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus”, 2016, pp. 14–39. For additional examples of transregional Ibāḍī connections, see: V. Hoffinan, “The Articulation of Ibāḍī Identity”, 2004, pp. 201–216; P. Sadgrove, “From Wādī Mīzāb to Unguja”, 2004, pp. 184–211.

Cairo from the 17th to the 20th centuries.³ I use examples of manuscript copies of Omani titles held in the Buffalo Agency's library to show how a movement of Omani books to a Maghribi readership in Cairo in the first half of the 19th century laid the groundwork for the much denser web of interactions between these spheres in the late-19th century "Age of Steam and Print" that followed it.⁴

II. A Word on Sources

The manuscripts cited here come from two main sources. The first is a list of endowed books that were still held in the Buffalo Agency's library as of the early-20th century. The author of this list, Šayḥ Sālim Bin Ya'qūb (d. 1991), was a Djerban historian and among the last students to stay at the Agency before its closure in 1956.⁵ The list is a manuscript in his own hand, which he compiled by reading through the endowment statements inside the manuscripts while in Cairo in the 1930s.⁶

The second major source is the Buffalo Agency's library itself, the recent history of which reflects the broader historical interaction between the Maghrib and Oman via Cairo. Some of the books in the Agency's library returned with Šayḥ Sālim to Djerba, while a few others ended up in the Dār al-Kutub National Library in Cairo. The majority of the manuscripts from the Agency's library became part of the personal library of its last director, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Itfayyīš (d. 1965). While he sent some of these texts to his family's library in Beni Isguen, Algeria, he appears to have kept most of them.⁷ Following his death, those manuscripts in his private possession were then inherited by his son Muḥammad Abī Ishāq. Finally, these were sold to Šayḥ Aḥmad al-Ḥalīlī, who is currently the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman. Digital facsimiles of the al-Ḥalīlī library serve as the second corpus of manuscripts on which I rely here. At the time of writing (September 2019), digital facsimiles of manuscripts in the al-Ḥalīlī library are available on the website of the Omani Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs.⁸ The shelfmarks of those texts vary slightly from the shelfmarks of the digital facsimiles with which I worked here. The facsimiles cited here and their accompanying shelfmarks

³ The history of the Buffalo Agency (17th–20th centuries) and the Ibāḍī community of Ottoman Cairo are the topic of my current monograph and this article draws from research for that project, tentatively entitled: *The Buffalo Agency: Ibadi Muslims in Ottoman Cairo*. I hope to expand on much of what appears here in the book-length study.

⁴ J.L. Gelvin & N. Green (eds), *Global Muslims*, 2013.

⁵ On Sālim Bin Ya'qūb's career and library, see: 'A. al-Buḡadīdī, "Al-Šayḥ Sālim Bin Ya'qūb", 2012, pp. 170–182; P.M. Love, Jr., "The Sālim Bin Ya'qūb Ibāḍī Manuscript Library in Jerba", 2017, pp. 257–280.

⁶ S. bin Ya'qūb, "Qā'ima li-al-kutub al-mawqūfa 'alā ṭalabat al-ibāḍīyya bi-wikālat al-baḥḥār bi-Ṭulūn bi-Miṣr al-Qāhira", 1930s[?]. These photographs of the manuscript were taken by Martin H. Custers during a visit to the library in the 1970s. He very graciously provided me with scans of these photos and it is to those scans that I refer here.

⁷ S. Siyūsiyū & B. Muḥammad (eds), *Fihrist maḥṭūṭāt ḥizānat mu'allafāt*, 2013, p. 45.

⁸ Available online at: <https://elibrary.mara.gov.om/en/omani-library/his-excellency-sheikh-ahmed-bin-hamed-al-khalili-s-library/> [Accessed 1 September 2019].

come originally from the Ibadica Centre for Studies and Research on Ibādīsm in Paris, France.

III. Some Early Textual Connections among Ibādīs

Ibādī Muslims across the globe trace the origins of their community to a movement in Basra during the 7th century, whence the community spread to several geographic regions in the following centuries. The two main geographic regions where Ibādī communities flourished were in a series of towns and villages throughout the eastern and central Maghrib and in the Arabian Peninsula, especially much of what is today the Sultanate of Oman. Ibādī communities in these two regions experienced remarkably different political histories. In Oman, Ibādī-led governments ruled on and off for over a millennium, with the last Imamate coming to an end in the 20th century. Although their history is far less well known, Ibādīs also appear to have had an extended political presence in medieval Ḥaḍramawt.⁹ By contrast, Ibādī communities in the Maghrib witnessed the collapse of their last Ibādī Imamate at the dawn of the 10th century following the conquest of northern Africa by the Fatimids.¹⁰

Despite these very different political trajectories, Ibādī communities in the two regions remained in sporadic contact with one another. In the earliest period this included the exchange of both people and written materials, although the Ibādī community in the east in this earlier period was more dispersed geographically. In all cases, only later literary evidence survives for these exchanges, as they appear in prosopographical sources from the Middle Period (11th-16th centuries).¹¹

Maghribi Ibādī communities wrote to their coreligionists in the east in the 8th century, for example, regarding the qualifications for the office of Imam following a dispute over leadership in the Maghrib. One of the respondents to that first letter was an Ibādī scholar living in Egypt, Šu‘ayb b. al-Ma‘rūf, who then traveled from Egypt to the Maghrib. The messengers carrying the letters then traveled on to Mecca, where they encountered two other important figures Abū ‘Amr al-Rabī‘ b. Ḥabīb and Abū Ġassān Maḥlad b. al-Ma‘rad. These two then jointly authored a response to the letter, in which

⁹ M. Rodionov, “Ibādīs in the Written-Oral Tradition”, 2018, pp. 108–111; R. Daghfous, “*Le kharijisme ibadite*”, 2018; S.A. Frantsouzoff, “Les ibādītes du Ḥadramawt”, 2018.

¹⁰ For an accessible introduction to this basic political and religious history, see: V.J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibādī Islam*, 2012, pp. 5–26. More detailed accounts can be found in: J.C. Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition*, 1987; id., *Ibādīsm*, 2010; V. Prévost, *Les Ibadites*, 2010; P.M. Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims*, 2018. On the formation of early Ibādī intellectual traditions in the east, see: A. Gaiser, *Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers*, 2010; id., *Shurat Legends*, 2016.

¹¹ By “literary”, I mean here compendia, whether prosopographical or legal, of textual exchanges among Ibadī communities. The examples of medieval contacts cited in this section are not at all exhaustive. For additional literary accounts of Maghribi-Omani interactions see: R.M. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm, *Al-Ibādīyya*, 1990; F. Djaabiri, *‘Alāqāt ‘Umān*, 1991; M. Dridi, “La communauté ibadite”, 2018; E. Francesca, “Law and Politics”, 2018.

they supported the leadership of Imam ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Rustam.¹² This insured the creation and continuity of a Rustamid dynasty in the Maghrib thereafter. Another of the earliest stories associated with exchange between the communities includes the arrival of an eastern visitor in the Ibādī-inhabited Nafusa mountains of Tripolitania. Abū Ġānim Bišr al-Ḥurāsānī (d. 2nd/8th centuries), the author of the earliest Ibādī legal compendium known as the *Mudawwana*, visited the same Imam ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in the late-8th century to hand deliver the manuscript to him. The copy of the *Mudawwana* was destined for the well-known (but not at all well-documented) Rustamid library known as *Al-mašūma*. Founded with financial support from Ibādī communities in the east, the library was supposed to have been quite large and included works by early Ibādī authors from the east.¹³ During Abū Ġānim’s brief stop in Nafusa on the way to see the Imam, so the story goes, a Nafusi colleague named ‘Amrūs b. Fataḥ asked permission to copy it. Abū Ġānim refused but ‘Amrūs copied it anyway in secret while his sister dictated it to him. Since the Rustamid library would be lost, the story serves to explain how Nafusa preserved the book for posterity.¹⁴ Following the collapse of the Rustamid dynasty in the 10th century, Ibādī communities in the Maghrib developed their own system of political and social organization, known as the *‘azzāba*, that further distinguished Ibādīs in the west from their confreres in the east.¹⁵ In the centuries that followed, they likewise developed their own corpora of legal, theological, and prosopographical texts largely separate from their Omani counterparts. At least some communication between the spheres of Ibādī Islam did continue, however, especially interactions during the *ḥaġġ* pilgrimage.¹⁶

IV. Middle Period Connections (11th–16th centuries)

The Middle Period saw the crystallization of an identifiable Ibādī tradition. This included both a definition of the community’s historical and contemporary boundaries, which distinguished Ibādīs from their Muslim contemporaries while at the same time

¹² Al-Darġinī, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt*, 1974, pp. 49–53. Al-Darġinī took this account from his predecessor Abū Zakariyā’ al-Wārġalānī and it was retold again by several later Ibādī authors. For an account of the entire ordeal and references, see: P.M. Love Jr., “Djerba”, 2012, pp. 305–307; esp. fn. 41.

¹³ On the *Mudawwana* of Abū Ġānim, see the entry by E. Francesca, “Abū Ghānim Bishr b. Ghānim al-Khurāsānī”, *EF*. On the manuscript tradition of the *Mudawwana*, see M. Muranyi, *The First Compendium of Ibādī Law*, 2018.

¹⁴ The story appears in al-Darġinī, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, 1974, p. 323.

¹⁵ F. Djaabiri, *Niẓām al-‘azzāba*, 1975; B. Cherifi, “La Ḥalqa des ‘azzāba”, 2005, pp. 39–68; V. Prévost, “Genèse”, 2006, pp. 109–124.

¹⁶ A. Jomier, “Les réseaux”, 2016, p. 26. Many scholars have noted that the *ḥaġġ* would likely have been how legal opinions and texts were exchanged between the two spheres for centuries. Some evidence for this interaction comes from what are known as the “Omani siyar” texts, on which see: S.I. Kāšif (ed.), *al-Siyar*; A. al-Salimi, “Themes”, 2009; id., “Identifying the Ibadi/Omani Siyar”, 2010; Danylo Radivilov, “Re-reading Omani Siyar”, 2015. I thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing to this form of textual exchange and for suggesting additional references.

adopting some of the features of their coreligionists in terms of standardizing their historical narrative, their own hadith tradition, and so on. This process, dubbed “madhabization” by John Wilkinson, includes the composition of the most important works of late medieval Ibādī *fiqh*, prosopography, hadith compilation, and theology.¹⁷ In other words, during this period Ibādīs emerge as an identifiable “madhab” among others, in part brought on by increasing interaction both between the spheres of Ibādīsm and between Ibādīs and non-Ibādīs. In both cases, however, the evidence for this communication remains largely limited to literary evidence in the sense that *narratives* of connections survive rather than much physical manuscript evidence. In two well-known cases from this period, the textual traditions of Oman and the Maghrib explicitly overlap. Two of the best-known works of Ibādī prosopography from this period, the *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* by Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Darġinī (d. 7th/13th centuries) and the *Kitāb al-ġawāhir* by Abū al-Qāsim al-Barrādī (d. 8th/14th centuries), suggest an increasing interest among Omani Ibādīs in their confreres in Northern Africa.¹⁸ A copy of al-Darġinī’s *Ṭabaqāt* from 758/1357 represents the oldest material evidence (to my knowledge) for a prosopographical link between the two spheres [Fig. 1]. At the same time, both instances of Omani interest in Maghribi textual traditions point to absence of regular contact between the spheres of Ibādīsm up until the 13th century.¹⁹

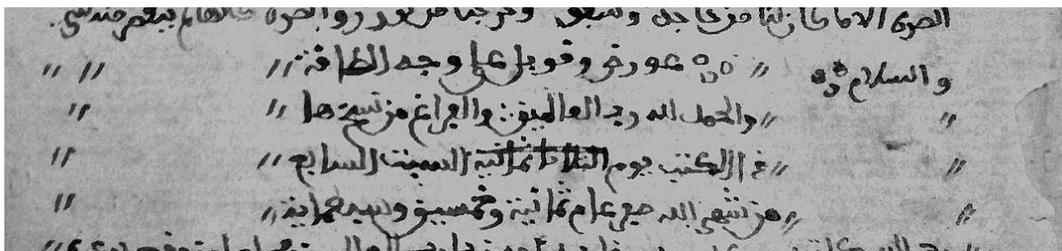


Fig. 1. The colophon from the earliest known copy of Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Darġinī’s *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* (dated 7 Šafar 758/30 January 1357). The colophon also notes that the work was both read aloud and collated. According to later tradition, al-Darġinī originally composed the work for Omanis following the request of an Omani visitor to the island of Djerba. Image source: P.M. Love, Jr., 2014.

According to al-Barrādī, al-Darġinī’s *Ṭabaqāt* was composed specifically for an Omani audience interested in learning more about Maghribi Ibādīs. The account, which al-Barrādī wrote was based on the oral testimony of local ‘azzāba in Djerba, says that in the 13th century

¹⁷ J.C. Wilkinson, *Ibādīsm*, 2010, pp. 413–437. On the formation of the prosopographical tradition, which draws on Wilkinson’s idea of madhabization, see P.M. Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa*, 2018, esp. pp. 4–8.

¹⁸ Al-Darġinī, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, 1974; Abū al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Barrādī, *Al-ġawāhir al-muntaqāt*, 2014.

¹⁹ A copy of the *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* held in the al-Quṭb library in Benisguen, Algeria (dated 758/1357) is to my knowledge the earliest extant manuscript of a prosopographical work connecting the two spheres. On this particular manuscript, see: P.M. Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa*, 2018, pp. 156–157.

al-Ḥāḡḡ ‘Aysā b. Zakariyā’ from the land of Oman (*min bilād Umān*) arrived [to Jerba carrying] with him books that he brought to the Maghrib including the *Ḥall* of Ibn Waṣṣāf, in the *Ġāmi‘* of Ṣayḥ Abū al-Ḥasan, the *Ġāmi‘* of Ibn Ġa‘far, and others. Among the things his brothers [in Oman] told him they desired of him was that he [say] ‘Compile for us a book containing the accounts of our earliest predecessors and the virtues of our pious forbearers among the people of the Maghrib regarding what happened to our *madhab* [there] (...) [Their history] is unknown to us and we do not have a sense of their stories (*āthāruhum*)’ (...)’²⁰

Al-Barrādī himself also composed a list of Ibādī books, which belongs to the manuscript tradition of the *Kitāb al-ġawāhir* and was divided according to their Maghribi and Omani origins.²¹ This suggests that in al-Darġīnī’s lifetime in the 7th/13th century, Maghribi Ibādī history remained somewhat obscure for the Omanis. By al-Barrādī’s lifetime, a number of Omani titles existed in private libraries in the Maghrib. Both authors were writing in Djerba, which points to a gradual increase in familiarity with Omani texts in the Maghrib over the course of that century. Al-Barrādī also utilized a few Omani sources for his work, as did many Ibādī authors writing from the 14th century forward. Ibādī authors from this point on also began to cite regularly *non-Ibādī* sources, which reinforces Wilkinson’s notion of madhabization. Perhaps the most famous North African Ibādī text, the *Kitāb al-siyar* written by Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Šammāḥī (d. 928/1522) sometime in early 16th century, clearly had access to both non-Ibādī and eastern Ibādī sources in writing his prosopography, as well.²²

V. The Buffalo Agency (17th–19th centuries)

The Ibādī trade depot, school, and library known as the “Buffalo Agency” (*Wikālat al-ġāmūs*) was the Ottoman-era iteration of what had likely been an extended Maghribi-Ibādī presence in Cairo.²³ The establishment of a *waqf* at the beginning of the 17th century in support of Ibādī students in the Tulun (Ṭūlūn) district insured the continuity of this particular institution for the next three centuries. The Agency’s location, just around the corner from the well-known Ibn Ṭūlūn Mosque, meant that it was surrounded by other Maghribi communities in Cairo, as well. The structure itself was a caravanserai (*funduq*) of three floors, with the ground floor housing storage units and the upper floors housing bedrooms and the library.

²⁰ Al-Barrādī, *Kitāb al-ġawāhir al-muntaqāt*, 2014, p. 19. Translation into English adapted from P.M. Love, Jr, “Writing a Network, Constructing a Tradition”, 2016, p. 134.

²¹ On al-Barrādī’s book list in the manuscript tradition of the *Kitāb al-ġawāhir*, see: P.M. Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims*, 2018, pp. 113–118.

²² Al-Šammāḥī, *Kitāb al-siyar*, 2009 (on non-Ibādī sources, vi. pp. 22–25); P.M. Love, Jr., *Ibadi Muslims*, 2018, pp. 120–126.

²³ On the Buffalo Agency, see: A. Muşlah, *Al-waqf al-ġarbī*, 2012; P.M. Love, Jr., “Ibadis on (and in) the Margins”, 2018, pp. 221–241.

Throughout the Ottoman period, Cairo served as a site of interaction among different Maghribi Ibādī communities from the Jebel Nafusa, Djerba, and the Mzab. Over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, this regular buzz of activity led to the Agency accumulating its own library around which a kind of *madrassa* formed. Until the mid-19th century, intra-Maghribi Ibādī contact at the Buffalo Agency eclipsed any Maghrib-Omani interactions.²⁴ That did not mean that the two spheres had no contact in these earlier centuries. One especially well-known instance was the visit by Omani scholar Nāṣir b. Ḥamīs b. ‘Alī al-Nizawī (d. 18th centuries) to the Jebel Nafusa in Tripolitania in 1103/1692.²⁵ His visit proved auspicious, as it led to him attending a regional meeting of Ibādī ‘*ulamā*’, in which scholars from the island of Djerba and the Jebel Nafusa agreed on several legal issues including the requirements for *waqf*. Fittingly, Nāṣir commissioned a copy of the Maghribi Ibādī work entitled *Qawā’id al-islām*, which ended up as a *waqf* book in the library of the Buffalo Agency—likely gifted as Nāṣir passed through on his way back home.²⁶ A manuscript in Nāṣir’s own hand may have also ended up in the same library.²⁷

The 18th century witnessed an increase in both the number of students visiting the Buffalo Agency and the number of manuscripts added to its library.²⁸ In this regard events at the Agency correspond to similar developments among other communities in 18th-century Cairo.²⁹ Despite political and economic turmoil reigning in Egypt during this period, book production increased significantly and this was no less true for Ibādīs than for others.³⁰ This stemmed in part from the economic prosperity of Ibādī merchants, who endowed or commissioned many of the works in the Agency’s library. It

²⁴ A. Jomier has emphasized continuing connections among Ibādī communities in northern Africa (including Cairo) both before and after the advent of colonialism. It deserves note, however, that these networks are almost exclusively intra-Maghribi until the latter part of the 19th century: A. Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus d’un archipel saharien”, 2016.

²⁵ On the occasion of his visit and those present at the meeting, see S. bin Ya’qūb, *Tārīḥ ḡazīrat Ġarba wa-masāḡidihā al-‘ilmīyya*, 2006, pp. 304–306.

²⁶ AK 185, *Kitāb Qawā’id al-islām* (dated 1105/1694). Copied by ‘Umar b. Ṣāliḥ b. Ḥalīfa b. Muḥammad al-Bur[qi?] in the Jebel Nafusa for Nāṣir b. Ḥamīs b. Sa’īd b. ‘Alī al-‘Umānī. On the Abū Ṭāḥir Ismā’īl al-Ġayṭālī and his *Qawā’id al-islām* see: M. H. Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya*, 2016, vol. 2, pp. 260–272.

²⁷ I qualify this statement with “may” because it is difficult to know for certain which of the manuscripts in the al-Ḥalīlī collection originally came from the *Wikālat al-ġāmūs* and which were acquired separately. The manuscript in question is: AK 013-015, *Tafsīr al-alfāz al-šara’īyya* (not dated but *terminus ante quem* late-17th c.). These three numbers are all the same text from the same volume. The colophon mentioning Nāṣir b. Ḥamīs as the copyist appears in the file labeled AK015, corresponding to f. 29.a.

²⁸ On which see P.M. Love, Jr., “Ibadis on (and in) the Margins”, 2018.

²⁹ This is the theme of N. Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 2004.

³⁰ André Raymond’s work demonstrated that despite political turmoil, the 18th century represented an important period of Egyptian artisanal and mercantile activity: A. Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire*, 1999. A still very useful overview of the political events of this century can be found in: D. Crecelius, “Egypt in the eighteenth century”, 1998, pp. 59–86. Most all work on 18th century Egypt relies heavily on the account by contemporary historian al-Ġabartī (d. 1822). See: al-Ġabartī, *‘Abd al-Rahman al-Jabartī’s history of Egypt*, 1994; D. Crecelius, ed., *Eighteenth Century Egypt*, 1991.

also reflects the growing availability of affordable, high-quality European (mostly Italian and French) papers in the Egyptian market.³¹ Despite a flurry of intellectual and economic activity, Ibāḍī interactions remained primarily intra-Maghribi in this century.³² The same economic prosperity that led to the growth of the Buffalo Agency's library also served to hinder connections between Maghribi Ibāḍīs and their Omani counterparts. Maghribi Ibāḍī merchants in Cairo benefited from the lucrative trade in Yemeni coffee, which moved through Egypt via the Red Sea on its way to Europe. Indeed, the patron of the second major *waqf* in support of the Buffalo Agency, Aḥmad al-Ġumlī, made his fortune through his dealings in the coffee trade.³³ The Ottomans guarded Red Sea trade jealously, which allowed them to maintain an almost complete monopoly on the coffee trade. One byproduct of what André Raymond called the “divided sea” was that traders from the Arabian Peninsula—including Omani Ibāḍīs—rarely appeared on the streets of Cairo.³⁴ Maghribi Ibāḍī commercial success ungirded the intellectual activity of Maghribi Ibāḍī students in Cairo, primarily through small *waqf* endowments of either money for their upkeep or books for their study.³⁵ The commercial division of the Red Sea insured that no similar symbiotic relationship between Ibāḍī students and Omani merchants formed. The situation changed following a series of events at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. By the end of the 18th century, Ottoman control over Egypt had largely been replaced by local Mamluks, who signed several treaties with individual European traders that allowed them direct access to the coffee market in the Red Sea. The French invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the subsequent occupation further weakened the Ottomans' ability to maintain control of the trade. Finally, the subsequent rise to power of Mehmet Ali and his openness to further European trade agreements put the nail in the coffin of Ottoman monopoly in the Red Sea.³⁶ Although this proved a disadvantage for the Ottomans, it appears to have contributed to growing communication between Maghribi Ibāḍīs in Cairo and their Omani coreligionists.

³¹ On paper in Ottoman Egypt, see T. Walz, “The Paper Trade of Egypt and the Sudan”, 2011, pp. 73–107. See also: A.M.Ş. İbrāhīm, *Al-ḥuṭūt*, 2010, pp. 149–264.

³² AK 083, a copy of the Omani work *Diwān al-sayf al-naqqād*, is an interesting exception given that its date of transcription appears to be 1147/1735 and it is written in Maghribi script. However, since the manuscript was owned by Sa'īd al-Şammālī (see below), it is difficult to know whether it was transcribed in Egypt or not. See M.H. Custers, *Al-Ibāḍīyya*, 2016, vol. 1, pp. 167–168. Exceptional financial resources did leave allow some Ibāḍī scholars in the Maghrib to acquire Omani books, as was the case with Mzabi scholar 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Taṣmīnī (d. 1223/1808), but examples like his stand out precisely because of their exceptionality. See: A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 2010, p. 42.

³³ A. Muşlah, *Al-waqf al-ġarbī*, 2012, pp. 52–54. The original *waqf* document from the Cairene court identifies al-Ġumlī as prominent merchant of coffee (*min a'yān al-tuġġār ft al-bunn bi-Miṣr al-maḥrūsa*). See 'A. al-R. A. al-R. 'Abd al-Raḥīm, “Waṭā'iq”, 1977, p. 102.

³⁴ A. Raymond, “A Divided Sea”, 2002, pp. 46–57.

³⁵ A. Muşlah provides a valuable list of endowments for the benefit of students at the Agency in an appendix, although he does not cite the source of the information. See: A. Muşlah, *Al-waqf al-ġarbī*, 2012, pp. 221–227.

³⁶ A. Raymond, “A Divided Sea”, 2002, pp. 53–56.

Maghribi Ibādīs at the Buffalo Agency gradually became exposed to more literature by Omani authors in the first several decades of the 19th century. An early example came in 1240/1824, when an Omani named Aḥmad b. Sayf al-Būsaʿīdī (of the same family as the Omani Sultans who reigned from the mid-18th century onward in Oman and later in Zanzibar), sent an Omani book to Cairo for the Ibādīs. He did so through a Maghribi named Yaḥyā b. ʿUmar al-Bārūnī, who was tasked with carrying the book back (probably from Mecca) to Cairo where the book was then deposited as a *waqf* in the Buffalo Agency's library.³⁷ The use of pilgrims for the transport of manuscripts was a theme of the 19th century.³⁸

For example, at least four other Omani titles were sent to the Maghrib and Egypt by an Muḥammad b. Nāṣir b. Ḥalaf al-ʿAlawī in 1273/1856–1857.³⁹ In these cases, however, the texts were Omani but the manuscript copies of them originated in a political extension of Omani power in the Indian Ocean, the island of Zanzibar. Alongside its role as a site of Omani-Maghribi textual interactions in the first half of the 19th century, the Buffalo Agency also housed manuscripts from this relatively new hub of Ibādī activity in the Indian Ocean.⁴⁰ This represented far more than a coincidence since Zanzibar had been under direct Omani control since the end of the 17th century. From 1832 to 1856, Zanzibar served as the capital city of an Omani empire. Omani presence there lasted until the mid-20th century and like Cairo, the island played an important role in connecting Northern African Ibādīs and Omani Ibādīs for over a century.⁴¹ As Ghazal and Wilkinson have both pointed out, for generations Ibādīs in Zanzibar continued to see themselves very much as “Omanis”.⁴² Ghazal has demonstrated in great detail the degree to which in the second half the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th “[t]he Maghribi Ibadī diaspora played a significant role in keeping the Omani elite in Zanzibar within the Arab Orbit”.⁴³

The endowment statements of these manuscripts of Omani texts sent by Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī from Zanzibar all appear in the hand of Sālīm b. Muḥammad b.

³⁷ S. bin Yaʿqūb, “Qāʾima li-al-kutub al-mawqūfa ʿalā ṭalabat al-ibādiyya bi-wikālat al-baḥḥār bi-Ṭulūn bi-Miṣr al-Qāhira”, p. 7. The book in question was the *Kitāb al-dalāʾil fi al-lawāzim wa-al-waṣāʾil* by Darwīṣ b. Ġumʿa al-ʿUmānī (d. 1086/1676), on which see: M.H. Custers, *Al-Ibādiyya*, 2016, vol. 1, p. 353.

³⁸ Both A.N. Ghazal and A. Jomier highlight the exemplary careers of two scholarly brother from the Mzab, Amuḥammad Aṭfayyīṣ (d. 1914) and his older brother Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf Aṭfayyīṣ (d. 1886) from the latter half of the century. Ibrāhīm's journey also included time in Oman, which was relatively unusual. See A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 2010, p.42; A. Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus d'un archipel saharien”, p. 26.

³⁹ See “Risālat Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-ʿAlawī (Zinḡibār) ilā al-Maḡāriba” in A. Muṣṣaḥ, *Al-waqf al-ġarbi*, 2012, pp. 210–212.

⁴⁰ AK 065, *Kitāb al-raḥma fi al-ṭibb* (ownership statement dated 1199/1784–1785).

⁴¹ A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 2010, pp. 1–20 and pp. 37–49; P. Sadgrove, “From Wādī Mizāb to Unguja”, 2004; A. Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus d'un archipel saharien”, 2016, pp. 30–34.

⁴² A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 2010; J.C. Wilkinson, “On being an Ibadī”, 2015.

⁴³ A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 2010, p.92.

Ḥamīs al-Mandārī. The first, a volume containing the first and second parts of the classic work known as *Al-kašf wa-al-bayān* by Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Qalhātī (d. 6th/12th centuries), notes that it was endowed for Djerbans.⁴⁴ The second and third books are a copy of the *Kitāb al-daqqāq* by Abū Nabhān Ğā‘id b. Ḥamīs al-Ḥarūšī (13th/19th centuries) and the Ğāmi‘ Abī al-Ḥasan al-Basyāwī (d. 4th/10th centuries), respectively.⁴⁵ In the copy of *Al-daqqāq*, a text by “the most outstanding scholar of the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century”, the *waqf* statement makes explicit the intended beneficiaries: Ibāḍīs from Nafusa, Djerba, and the Mzab living in Egypt.⁴⁶ In addition, the *waqf* statement also notes that the book was sent with pilgrims to Ibāḍī students under the direction of Sa‘īd al-Šammāḥī [Fig. 2]. Al-Šammāḥī, whose family had a long scholarly pedigree in both the Jebel Nafusa and Djerba, served as the director of the Buffalo Agency’s *waqf* in the mid-19th century.⁴⁷ He was a key figure of the 19th century Ibāḍī community in Cairo in other ways as well, since he also taught at the Agency and several years later served as the representative (*wakīl*) of the Ḥusaynid Bey and Tunisian (both Ibāḍī and non-Ibāḍī) merchants in Egypt.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ AK 026, f.1.a. Another *waqf* statement (crossed out) below the first notes it was (re-)endowed in in 1308 to the students at the Wikālat al-Ġāmūs. Interestingly, the text is in the hand of ‘Aysā b. Sa‘īd al-Bārūnī, presumably the son of the founder of the al-Bārūniyya library in Djerba.

⁴⁵ AK 028, *Kitāb al-daqqāq* (not dated, *terminus ante quem* 1273/1856–1857); cf. description in 28/12/2021 14:54:00. On copies of the *Kitāb al-daqqāq* see: M.H. Custers, *Al-Ibāḍiyya*, 2016, vol. 1, p. 285. The copy of the Ğāmi‘ Abī al-Ḥasan is mentioned in the catalog by Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb (pg.8) and may be the same manuscript as AK 129.

⁴⁶ V.J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibāḍī Islam*, 2012, p. 24.

⁴⁷ S. b. M. b. Ḥ. al-Šaybānī, *Qāsim b. Sa‘īd al-Šammāḥī*, 2015, pp. 16–29; A. Muṣṣlaḥ, *Al-waqf al-ġarbī*, 2012, esp. pp. 148–149 and pp. 216–217.

⁴⁸ His term as *wakīl* lasted from 1870–1883. His correspondence is today held in the Tunisian National Archives: (“Taqrīr wa-murāsālāt Sa‘īd al-Šammāḥī wakīl al-dawla al-tūnisiyya bi-al-Qāhira” ANT FPC/H/231/438). This correspondence is the focus of a chapter in my current book project on Ibāḍīs in Ottoman Cairo.

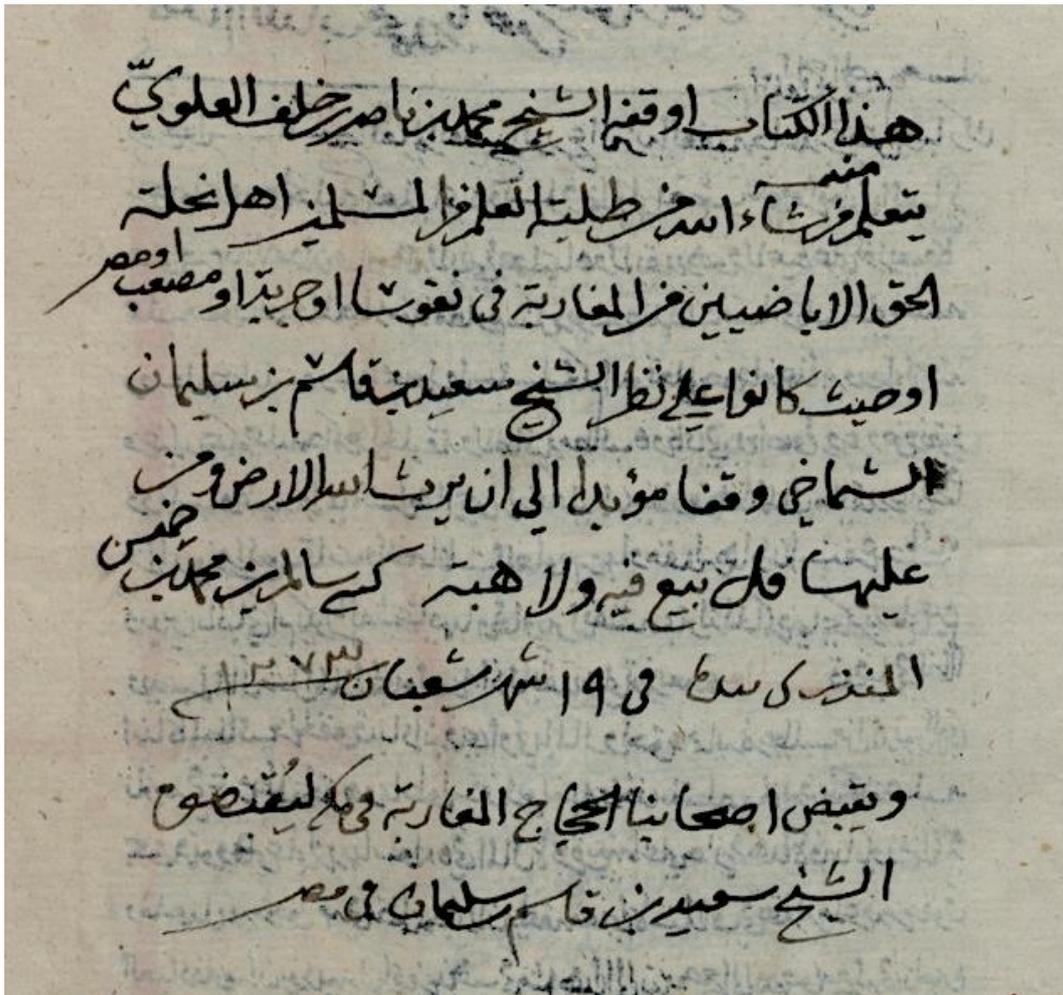


Fig. 2. An endowment statement from f. 2.a of AK 028, a copy of the *Kitāb al-daqqāq* by Abū Nabhān Ġā'id b. Ḥamīs al-Ḥarūṣī (died c. 1238/1822). The text notes that it was destined for the students under the directorship of Sa'id b. Qāsim al-Šammāhī, who served as the Buffalo Agency's director in the 1850s. Image source: Ibādica Research Center, 2019 (Reproduced here with permission).

The fourth text is a copy of the *Muḥtaṣar al-ḥiṣāl* by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Qays al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 5th/11th centuries). The endowment statement this time specifies the people of Nafūsa as the intended benefactors (*ahl al-istiḳāmā fī al-dīn bi-al-balad al-maḥrūs Nafūsa* [sic] *min buldān ahl al-Mağrib*):⁴⁹

⁴⁹ AK 113, f.1.b. The other side of the same folio (f. 1.a) also has an endowment statement in a Maghribi hand: "Qad šara ḥada al-kitāb waqfan mu'abbadan 'alā ṭalabat al-'ilm min al-muslimīn...[etc.]". This is a typical endowment phrase in other books from the Buffalo Agency.

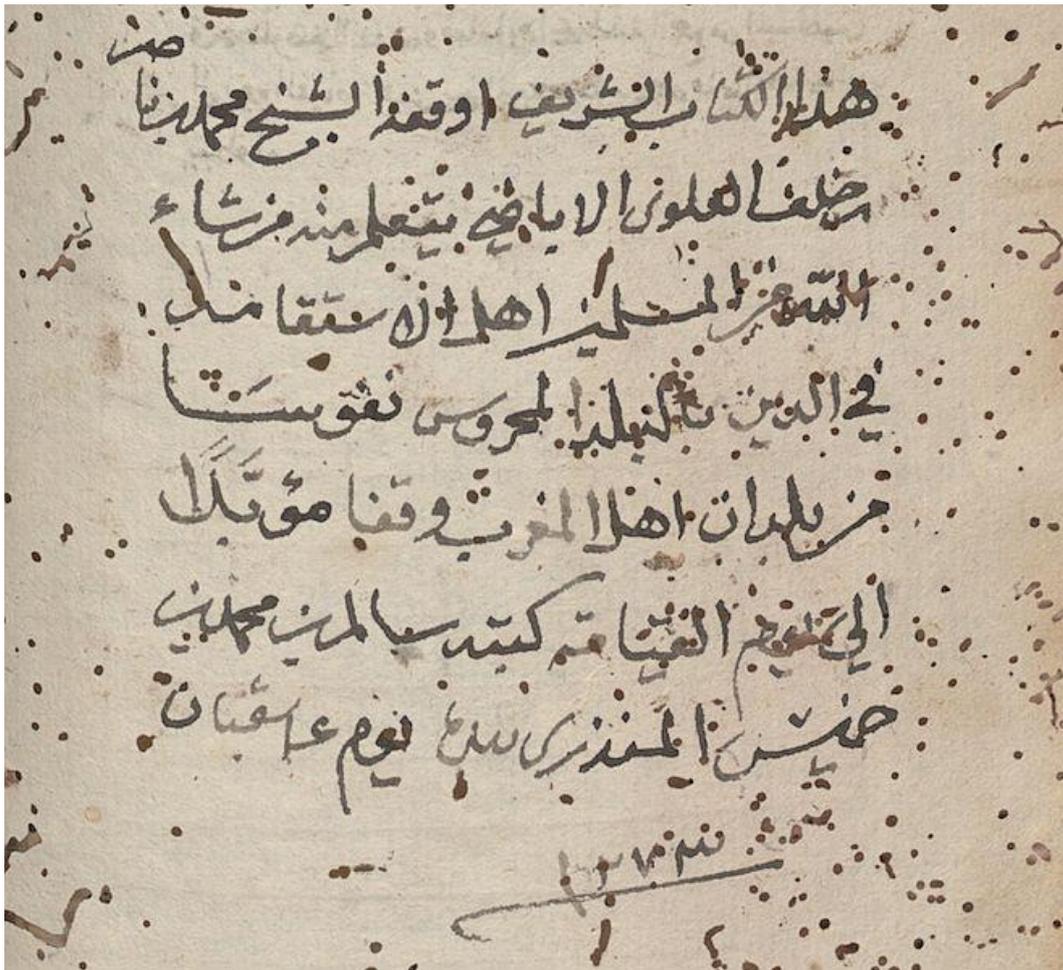


Fig. 3. Endowment statement of AK13, *Muḥṭaṣar al-ḥiṣāl* (f. 1.b), dated 1273/1856–1857. The date of transcription of the manuscript itself is 21 Muḥarram 1273/21 September 1856. Image source: Ibāḍīca Research Center, 2019 (Reproduced here with permission).

The date of transcription of these texts sent to Cairo under al-Šammāḥī's directorship also deserve note. The texts carry dates of transcription from 1273/1856, less than a year before their *waqf* statements were written. This suggests that Muḥammad al-'Alawī specifically intended for them to be delivered as *waqfs* to Ibāḍīs in Cairo. The donation of Omani texts to the Agency from the early to the mid-19th century speaks to a growing awareness in Oman and Zanzibar of the Ibāḍī presence in Cairo as well as to the increasingly interconnected spheres of Ibāḍī Islam in the east and the west.

Further evidence for Omani/Zanzibari links to Cairo comes from library of the same director of the Buffalo Agency's *waqf* who received the other Omani titles, Sa'īd al-Šammāḥī. He owned a copy of the *Kitāb al-raḥma fī al-ṭibb*, by the Middle Period Omani

Ibādī author Rāšid b. Ḥalaf al-Rustāqī (d. 9th/15th–10th/16th centuries).⁵⁰ The first few folios of the manuscript carry notes about its provenance. The first statement notes it was owned by Ḥasan b. Saʿīd b. Ḥalfān al-Rustāqī in 3 Šafar 1199 (16 December 1784).⁵¹ Several decades later, the book was purchased in the souk of Zanzibar on 8 Šawwāl 1236 (9 July 1821):

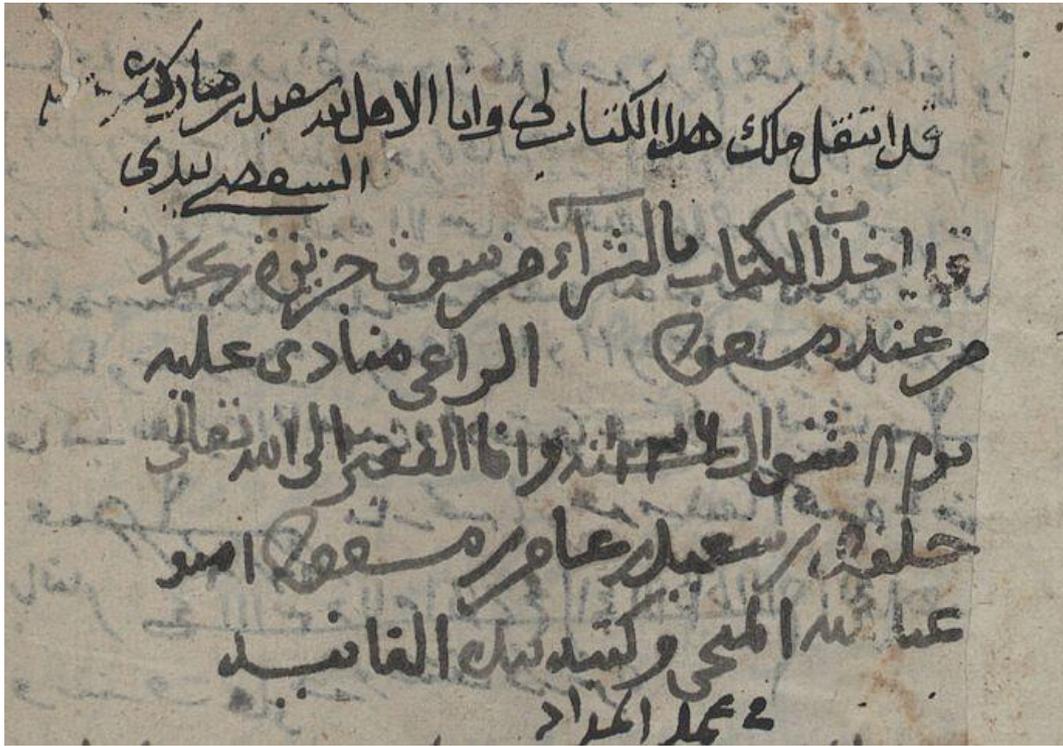


Fig. 4. A statement of sale on the first folio of the *Kitāb al-rahma fi al-ṭibb* by Rāšid al-Rustāqī notes it was purchased in the souk of Zanzibar in 1236/1821 (AK 065, f. 1.a).

Image source: Ibādīca Research Center, 2019 (Reproduced here with permission).

An additional ownership statement makes it clear that the book joined Saʿīd al-Šammāḥī’s personal collection before entering the stacks at the Buffalo Agency’s library in the 19th century:

⁵⁰ M.H. Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya*, 2016, vol. 1, p. 471.

⁵¹ “Ḥadā al-kitāb qašīdat [I]bn Ḥāšim fi al-ṭibb wa-al-ḥukm malik ḡildihi wa-qirtāsihi al-faqīr ilā Allāh (...) Ḥasan b. Saʿīd b. Ḥalfān b. Muršid b. Saʿīd b. Ḥalaf b. Abī [Ramaḥ?] al-Rustāqī (...) bi-tārīḥ al-sabt li-ṭālit ḥalat min šahr Šafar sanat 1199” (AK 065, f. 5.a).

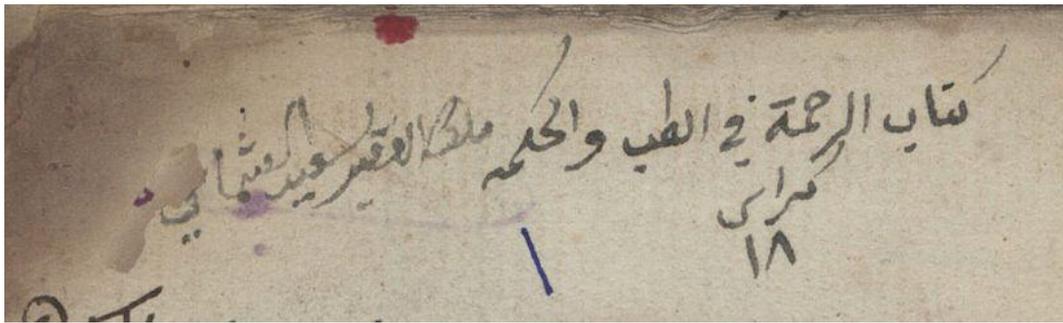


Fig. 5. Ownership statement of Sa'id al-Šammāhī in AK 065 (f. 5.a).
Image source: Ibāḍīca Research Center, 2019 (Reproduced here with permission).

The first half of the 19th century laid the groundwork for the establishment of these closer ties among Ibāḍī communities in the Maghrib, Oman, and Zanzibar. With the advent of print technology, steam power, and European colonialism, “by the late-nineteenth century [they had been connected] into an Ibadi Triangle of religious revival and renewal”.⁵² Building on its historic role as a point of interaction for pilgrims, scholars, and students Ibadis from the Maghrib, the Buffalo Agency would turn out to be uniquely positioned to facilitate connections among these different Ibāḍī centers.⁵³ Parallel to the growing interest among Maghribi Ibāḍīs in eastern Ibāḍī texts in manuscript form, the establishment of Ibāḍī print houses in Egypt and Zanzibar, as well as later in Algeria and Tunisia, further expanded the circles of readership for classic and modern works of Ibāḍī thought from Oman.⁵⁴ Print did not, however, replace the continued movement of Ibāḍī manuscript texts from east to west. Indeed, the networks linking Maghribi Ibāḍī scholars continued unabated by European colonialism.⁵⁵ Likewise, as they had earlier, pilgrims continued to play a vital role in the transport of books in either direction in the late-19th century. In correspondence from the 1880s with the Algerian Ibāḍī scholar Amuḥammad Aṭfayyīš (d. 1914), Omanis requested a number of books from Ibāḍī print houses in exchange for manuscripts sent back to Cairo and the Maghrib with pilgrims from Mecca.⁵⁶ One especially interesting letter from Sa'id b. 'Alī al-Šaqarī

⁵² A.N. Ghazal, *Islamic Reform and Arab Nationalism*, 2010, p.37.

⁵³ On the Buffalo Agency in this later period of colonialism and print, see my chapter: “The Charlatan & the Library: At the intersections of manuscripts, colonialism, & Ibadi Muslims in Late-Ottoman Cairo” (forthcoming in proceedings from 5th Dies Academicus on African Studies at the Ambrosiana Academy in January 2019).

⁵⁴ P. Sadgrove, “From Wādī Mizāb to Unguja”, 2004; M.H. Custers, *Ibāḍī Publishing Activities in the East and in the West, c. 1880–1960s: An Attempt to an Inventory, with References to Related Recent Publications*, 2006; A.N. Ghazal, “The Other Frontiers of Arab Nationalism: Ibadis, Berbers, and the Arabist-Salafi Press in the Interwar Period”, 2010, pp. 105–122; id., “An Ottoman Pasha and the End of Empire: Sulayman al-Baruni and the Networks of Islamic Reform”, 2014, pp. 40–58; A. Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus d'un archipel saharien”, 2016.

⁵⁵ A. Jomier, “Les réseaux étendus d'un archipel saharien”, 2016.

⁵⁶ I am grateful to Amal N. Ghazal both for pointing out this particular exchange and for sharing a copy of it with me. She described these exchanges in her paper at the 10th Annual Ibadi Studies Conference in

notes that he has sent Aṭfayyīṣ some books and that the Omanis lack more books mainly due to the small number of available copyists.⁵⁷ The books sent to al-Ṣaqarī were later transported to Zanzibar by his son Muḥammad b. Saʿīd, as noted in a separate letter from Oman in 1304/1887.⁵⁸ The movement of manuscripts and printed books among different Ibāḍī centers in the Mzab, Tunis, Cairo, Zanzibar, Mecca, and Oman was a reoccurring theme of Ibāḍī history in the latter half of the 19th century.⁵⁹

VI. Conclusion

After centuries of sporadic contact, the textual traditions of eastern and western Ibāḍism began to merge in the early-to-mid 19th century. While in earlier periods books and people had moved along similar paths to connect Maghribi Ibāḍīs with their eastern confreres, in the 19th century a series of changes occurred that helped bring the textual traditions of these two spheres together at the half-way point: Cairo. I have argued here that the Ibāḍī trade depot, library, and school known as the Buffalo Agency served as a key site of material linkage between them. I have suggested that manuscripts in the Agency's library, in particular, serve as a lens through which to view the growing intersections of their textual traditions. The Buffalo Agency's library increased in both size and scope throughout the 18th century, in part due to the economic prosperity of North African Ibāḍī merchants. Some of these, such as the founder of the Agency's *waqf* in the 18th century, were connected to the coffee trade in the Red Sea. Until the end of that century, the Agency largely remained an intra-Maghribi site of contact for Ibāḍīs. Coinciding with the collapse of the Ottoman monopoly on Red Sea trade, the early 19th century witnessed increasing textual interaction among Ibāḍīs from Oman and Maghribi Ibāḍīs in Cairo. The Buffalo Agency's library received several books from Omani patrons from the beginning to the middle of the 19th century. Those books donated in the 1850s, in particular, identified the Maghribi geographic origins of their beneficiaries and suggest an increased awareness among Eastern Ibāḍīs in Oman and Zanzibar of their Maghribi confreres. Just as they would in the latter part of the century, Maghribi Ibāḍī pilgrims to Mecca also played important roles as transporters of these texts to Cairo. The movement of people and texts from Zanzibar to Cairo that began in this earlier period would likewise grow into a much stronger network in the coming decades. These textual interactions at the Buffalo Agency in early-to-mid 19th-century Cairo thus anticipated

June 2019 at the University of Toronto. In the scan of the manuscript she shared with me, the correspondence has been rewritten in a Maghribi hand and collated. The document is labeled as "Rasā'il waradat ilā al-Quṭb min 'Umān" and the manuscript itself is from the library of Muḥammad Ayyūb al-Ḥāḡḡ Saʿīd (in Gardaia, Algeria). The letters referring to the movement of books among the Mzab, Cairo, and Oman are found on f. 17.b–19.a, and most carry dates in early Ṣawwāl 1298 (Aug.-Sep. 1881).

⁵⁷ "Rasā'il waradat ilā al-Quṭb min 'Uman", f. 18.b.

⁵⁸ "Risālat al-Ḥāḡḡ Rašīd b. 'Azīz b. Baḥīt al-Ḥašībī" (dated mid-Ḡumādā al-Āḥīr 1304). See: S. Siyūsiyū & M. Busnān, *Fihrist maḥṭūṭāt ḥizānat*, 2013, p. 309.

⁵⁹ P. Sadgrove, "From Wādī Mizāb to Unguja", 2004; A. Jomier, "Les réseaux étendus d'un archipel saharien", 2016.

the remarkably interconnected world of Ibādīsm at the end of that century. The cultures of lithograph and typeset printing, steam engine travel, and intellectual and armed engagements with European colonial powers that would characterize the shared world of Ibādī communities in the late-19th and early-20th centuries built upon a foundation laid several decades earlier.

Acknowledgements

Working on manuscripts discussed here presented a unique challenge, since none of them could be examined by autopsy. I instead relied on digital facsimiles that were provided to me by several people, each of whom deserves special thanks. The list of endowed books from the Sālim Bin Ya‘qūb library in Djerba came from Professor Martin H. Custers; the digital facsimiles of the al-Ḥalīlī library in Muscat, Oman came from the Ibādīca Research Centre in Paris, France, whose director Soufien Mestaoui also graciously allowed me to reproduce several of those images; the photos of al-Quṭb correspondence were shared with me by Amal N. Ghazal. Many thanks to all of these people for their help. All shortcomings, errors, or other limitations are mine alone.

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