

# The Hajj

*Pilgrimage in Islam*

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## The Early Hajj

### *Seventh–Eighth Centuries CE*

Travis Zadeh

#### BY FOOT OR BY DONKEY

Queen Zubayda (d. 216/831) and her husband (and first cousin), the famed Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809), are two of the most iconic figures associated with the early Meccan pilgrimage. Zubayda performed the Hajj on at least five occasions, and Hārūn nine times. They would travel to the Meccan sanctuary from the palatine city of Baghdad, which Zubayda's paternal grandfather, the caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775), had founded. From the many public works that Zubayda sponsored along the route, the desert path from Iraq through the Arabian Peninsula came to bear her name, known popularly as the way or path (*darb*) of Zubayda. While the journey was no doubt arduous, the royal family was joined by a large entourage of high-ranking administrators, court companions, military officials, and servants.

Hārūn is famously said to have once performed the pilgrimage on foot, accompanied by Zubayda, in fulfillment of a vow. The story of carpets unfurled beneath their feet as they made their journey across the desert appears in medieval Arabic belletristic sources. It also features prominently in nineteenth-century European accounts of the Hajj as an expression of the costly extravagance of oriental despotism. As with much of the material on the early Abbasid pilgrimage, this particular event is enmeshed in the courtly imagination of later generations. First, there is some confusion over the date of the pilgrimage in question, though 173/790 appears to be most likely. According to the historian al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Hārūn is said to have led the pilgrimage that year, having

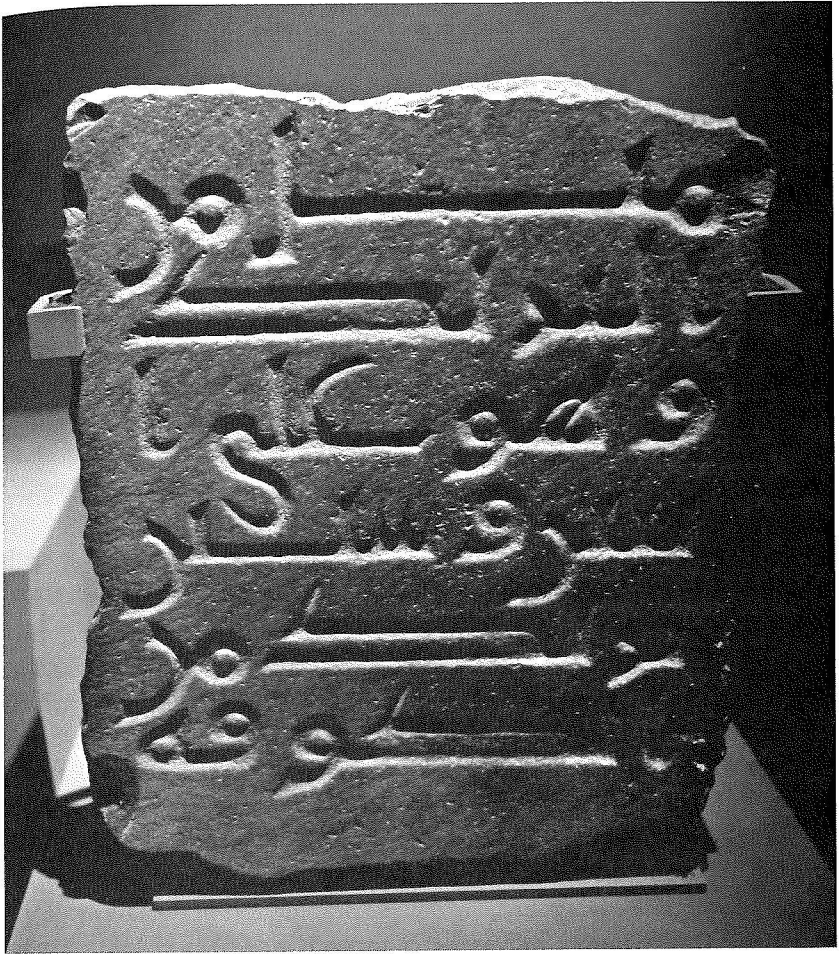


FIGURE 3 Milestone from Darb Zubayda in the National Museum, Riyadh

left Baghdad in a state of ritual consecration.<sup>1</sup> This may well have been the germ for later anecdotes, which offer differing explanations for the oath, ranging from a vow uttered on the deathbed of a beloved concubine<sup>2</sup> to a humorous account of a promise the caliph made to one of his ministers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk = Annales quos scripsit Abu Džafar Mohammed ibn Džarīr at-Tabarī*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., 15 vols. in 3 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1879–1901), III: 609.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Nisāʾ al-khulafāʾ*, ed. M. Jawād (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1968), 45–46.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Qutayba (pseudo-), *Kitāb al-Imāma wa-l-siyāsa*, ed. ʿA. Shayrī, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-ʿAḏwāʾ, 1990), II: 212–219.

This literary tapestry of telling and retelling is ripe for further expansion. Such is the case with the anecdote preserved by the Andalusī courtier Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940): as carpets were unfurled before the pair day after day, Hārūn grew increasingly fatigued. Calling out for the arm of one of his servants, he exclaimed, “By God! Riding a boney donkey would better than walking on fine carpets!” Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih then uses this colorful turn of phrase as a gloss on the poetic proverb, “there is no pleasure in having an ass as my mount, but he who has had to walk will be pleased by whatever he rides.”<sup>4</sup> While such material complicates any strict historicization, it also emphasizes that the imperial history of the pilgrimage forms part of a broad courtly process of memorialization. It is precisely because the Hajj held such profound political and religious significance for the ruling elite that these examples of discursive expansion took hold in the literary imagination.

The symbolic importance of the Meccan shrine as a caliphal prerogative is memorialized in a wide range of early Arabic materials, from official records and state chronicles, to literary anecdotes and courtly poetry. The pattern of articulating caliphal authority through the leadership of the pilgrimage and control over the Meccan sanctuary was set in motion during the Umayyad dynasty (41–132/661–750), which was based in Damascus. The Umayyad elite met a bloody end with the Abbasid revolt, which ultimately moved the political center of power to Iraq. In the very nascence of the Abbasid state, however, the new rulers also staked their claim to power through the Meccan sanctuary complex.

The early Abbasids located their authority as members of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which in this period still retained a double meaning, as it signified both “people of the sanctuary,” as well as descendants of the family of the Prophet.<sup>5</sup> This coalesces in their direct ancestor al-‘Abbās (d. ca. 32/653), the paternal uncle of the Prophet, who according to the early historiographical material was responsible for preparing and distributing drink (*siqāya*) to pilgrims, as the custodian of the Zamzam well.<sup>6</sup> This is

<sup>4</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, ed. M. M. Qumayḥa, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1983), VII: 254; see S. Rāshid, *Darb Zubayda: The Pilgrim Road from Kufa to Mecca* (Riyadh University Libraries, 1980), 20 n. 20.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Sharon, “*Ahl al-Bayt*, People of the House: A Study of the Transformation of a Term from *Jāhiliyyah* to Islam,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 8 (1986): 169–184; cf. M. Sharon, “The Umayyads as *Ahl al-Bayt*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 14 (1991): 115–149.

<sup>6</sup> See G. Hawting, “The ‘Sacred Offices’ of Mecca from *Jāhiliyya* to Islam,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 13 (1990): 62–63, 67; G. Hawting, “The Disappearance

a right that al-ʿAbbās inherited from his father, ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the paternal grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad, who a generation before is famously said to have discovered the sacred well through a providential dream. The distribution of drink took place in a building generally known as the siqaya of al-ʿAbbās, located within the sacred precincts (*ḥaram*). The early Abbasid caliphs promoted themselves as the rightful leaders of the pilgrimage through their hereditary control over the Zamzam well and the office of the siqaya. This was expressed in the water works in and around the Meccan sanctuary, and in the development and maintenance of a network of wells, cisterns, and reservoirs dotting the Iraqi pilgrimage route through the desert. Over the course of yearly pilgrimages led either directly by the caliphs or by close relatives, the Abbasid elite fortified the Iraqi pilgrimage route by supplying it with wells, way stations, and castles that benefited the caliphs and their family, as well as ordinary pilgrims. Under the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 158–169/775–785), the political center of the empire was connected to the sacred precincts of Mecca and Medina through the extensive communications network of the imperial postal service (*barīd*).

Zubayda's celebrated charities included both the pilgrimage route and the Meccan shrine, which fit into a larger pattern of pious endowments. As with other leading members of the Abbasid ruling circle, Zubayda's patronage features prominently in the panegyric poetry produced by court poets. The world of verse on the Mecca shrine and the Hajj offers insight into a broad discursive regime that fused religious and political legitimacy in the providential power of sacred history and geography. When read against the historical backdrop of the period, this poetic material reveals how the early Abbasid elite affirmed their authority as the rightful guardians of the sacred shrine in symbolical terms.

#### POETRY, POLITICS, AND THE PILGRIMAGE

Three examples taken from the courtly panegyrics on Zubayda and the Meccan pilgrimage illuminate this process of dynastic self-fashioning. The first comes from the Baghdadi bookseller and transmitter of anecdotes and other belletristic material, Ibn Abī Saʿd (d. 274/887), who relates that during one of Zubayda's pilgrimages, Nuṣayb, a court poet from Yemen, sang a poem in her honor that began:

and Rediscovery of Zamzam and the "Well of the Ka'ba," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 43,1 (1980): 44–54.

The holy sanctuary and the Zamzam will greet  
 the mother of the crown prince, the ornament of the pilgrimage rituals.  
 Whoever reaches the station for casting stones will know that  
 she will carry the burden of debt for every debtor.  
 The tribe of Hāshim is the ornament of all creation  
 and the mother of the crown prince is the ornament for the Hāshim . . .<sup>7</sup>

In return, Zubayda granted Nuṣayb a hefty reward. Apart from the lavish praise that points to the interconnection between literary patronage and courtly self-fashioning, we can deduce several pieces of information from this anecdote. The reference to Zubayda as the mother of the heir apparent alludes to the caliphal election of her five-year-old son Muḥammad, who would succeed the throne after his father's death with the regnal title al-Amīn (r. 193–198/809–813) – the only Abbasid caliph whose parents were both from the Prophet's clan, the Hāshimīs. This pronouncement of succession took place in 175/792, when Muḥammad was barely five years old.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the pilgrimage in question most likely occurred the following year, when Zubayda traveled on the Hajj with her uncle and brother.<sup>9</sup> These verses also imagine the pilgrimage as a form of heraldry that grants legitimacy to the caliphal succession, which is confirmed here by the sacred landscape of the Meccan shrine. Similarly, the poem locates the Abbasid family in the heights of a cosmic hierarchy, as chief members of the Hāshimīs.

Nuṣayb's eulogy most likely precedes the ill-fated double succession announced in 183/799, when Hārūn declared that his eldest son 'Abd Allāh, the future al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–833), would succeed al-Amīn as caliph. The terms of succession were famously instituted during the pilgrimage of 186/802, when Hārūn and his two heirs swore in the Ka'ba to the orderly transfer of power before an entourage of dignitaries and officials. Both brothers signed documents pledging their commitment to the pact and to a litany of severe privations should they break their oaths. These documents were in turn hung in the inner sanctum of the Ka'ba, an axis mundi that symbolically, at least, was designed to grant a sacred legitimacy to the entire affair. The oaths ultimately did not avert the civil war that soon ensued between the half-brothers.<sup>10</sup> Two other

<sup>7</sup> See Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 24 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1927–61), XXIII: 14–15.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 610–611.

<sup>9</sup> See Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 628–629.

<sup>10</sup> See T. El-Hibri, "Harun al-Rashid and the Mecca Protocol of 802: A Plan for Division or Succession?" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 24, 3 (1992): 461–480;

important features of the encomium are the emphasis on caliphal charity and the reference to the Zamzam spring as a central location within the shrine complex. Indeed, both the charitable water works established along the route and the Zamzam well are consistent sites of poetic attention, as they foreground Abbasid piety in terms of hereditary rights over the sacred shrine.

The second example highlighting the poetic memory of Zubayda and the Meccan shrine underscores this very issue. Ibn Abī Sa‘d also records the following verses by the Yemeni poet Ashja‘ ibn ‘Amr al-Sulamī, who was originally in the service of Zubayda’s father and went on to have an illustrious career as a panegyrist during the reign of Hārūn. At the end of an hour-long learning assembly, held for the four-year-old al-Amīn, Ashja‘ recited the following two verses:

His father is a king and his mother is of noble stock,  
from her emanates a blazing lamp for the faithful,  
she drank in Mecca’s noble ground  
the unadulterated water of prophecy<sup>11</sup>

Zubayda gifted Ashja‘ 100,000 dirhams for these verses, which celebrate al-Amīn’s unique status as the son of two Abbasid royals and promote Zubayda as a sacred figure for the faithful through her connection to the water of prophecy, in a direct allusion to the Zamzam well. These verses also promote Zubayda as a spiritual guide.

The poetic portrayal of Zubayda as a leader features most prominently in an *urjūza*, a lengthy poem in the *rajaz* meter, composed by Ashja‘’s lesser well known brother, Aḥmad ibn ‘Amr al-Sulamī, also a court poet. According to the poem’s framing conceit, Aḥmad joined the entourage accompanying Zubayda during one of her pilgrimages. The driving rhythm of the *rajaz* meter is particularly conducive to movement and is the quintessential meter of the camel-driver urging his camels through the desert and to water. Following well-established motifs in the Arabic classical ode, the imagery of the *urjuza* opens up a vast and forbidding desert tableau. As the party moves away from civilization into the desert landscape, the shrubs and palm trees recede from view and the sources for water grow further apart. Through it all, Zubayda figures as a salvific guide, a saintly patroness of the pilgrimage; she unleashes torrents of water for the pilgrims through her charity and compassion.

R. A. Kimber, “Hārūn al-Rashīd’s Meccan Settlement of AH 186/AD 802,” *School of Abbāsīd Studies, Occasional Papers*, 1 (1986): 55–79.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Isfahānī, *Aghānī*, XVIII: 226.

The poem follows a basic pattern that serves to enumerate the halting grounds (*manāzil*) along the route from Baghdad to Mecca. The poet dedicates a stanza of five verses to each of over fifty halting grounds. In this poem (called a *mukhammasa*), the rhyme scheme for the strophic groupings is taken from the name of each station, as in the following strophe, rhyming in *-īla*, on the halting ground al-Salīla, whose well water is known to have been particularly bitter:

[*thumma tarabḥalnā ilā l-Salīla / marḥalatun miyābhuhā qalīla . . .*]  
 Then we journeyed on to Salīla / a station whose water was so scarce  
 her group was unable to alight / so, elegant handed, she assisted  
 giving of her flowing wealth / for water to be drawn by every means  
 as a grace to the pilgrims and the local tribe / the sublime sovereign lent  
 a hand to the graceful daughter of Abū al-Faḍl / for her, the sky is always  
 ready to burst<sup>12</sup>

The rhyme scheme is well suited for the mnemonic purpose of recalling the names of the halting stations along the pilgrimage route. While Zubayda's father, Abū al-Faḍl, and husband, Hārūn al-Rashīd, are both alluded to, these two male authority figures remain in the background. In contrast, the verses celebrate Zubayda as the primary agent of generosity, which is here measured in water given for pilgrims. She took a direct, hands-on role in the improvement of the pilgrimage.

The poem notes that although the path is marked with milestones and postal route markers, it is rough going and strewn with rocks, a common trope in Arabic desert poetry. We are assured, however, that God lessens these difficulties through Zubayda's grace. Her charity is framed repeatedly in soteriological terms, as the poet affirms that "on the Day of Return she will have the greatest blessings," and exclaims, "blessings, blessings are upon you, O Zubayda!" This expression carries both the sense of blessings and joy, as well as eternal life, directly echoing the Qur'anic promise that at journey's end, blessings await those who believe and do righteous deeds (Q Ra'd 13:29).<sup>13</sup>

On this journey, Zubayda, who is known to have preferred riding camels to asses,<sup>14</sup> is portrayed, both on foot and seated in her palanquin atop camels as a radiant sun illuminating everything in her path; she is more powerful than the Queen of Sheba, just as she outshines all other

<sup>12</sup> *Kitāb al-Manāsik wa-amākin ṭuruq al-ḥajj*, ed. Ḥ. al-Jāsir (Riyadh: Dār al-Yamāma 1969), 553, cf. 331. On Salīla, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1955–1957), III: 243.

<sup>13</sup> *Manāsik*, 550–551.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Rusta, *Al-a'lāq al-naḥīsa*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1882), 197.

women of the Hāshimī clan.<sup>15</sup> The poet characterizes Zubayda’s works of public piety in the following terms, “the cupbearer of the pilgrims, the source of pride, she improved the path with silver and gems.”<sup>16</sup> The improvement of the route reflects an Abbasid charitable tradition of supporting the pilgrimage. Similarly, the identification of Zubayda as giving drink to pilgrims fits into a well-worn motif of Abbasid religious and political legitimacy.

For instance, the anonymous and fragmentary history documenting the early formation of the Abbasid state, known by its modern title as the *Akhhbār al-dawla al-‘Abbāsiyya* (“Accounts of the Abbasid State”) alludes to an association between the progenitors of the Abbasid caliphs, the Zamzam well, and the right to give pilgrims drink. This is represented in the figure of ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh (d. ca. 118/736), the paternal grandson of al-‘Abbās and celebrated forefather of the Abbasids. He is portrayed as a particularly pious man who earned the sobriquet al-Sajjād, the worshiper or prostrator, for his continuous prayer;<sup>17</sup> while living in Damascus each day he would perform a thousand prostrations in the mosque over a tablet or board (*lawh*), which was taken from the Zamzam well.<sup>18</sup> The chronicle recounts a poem in praise of ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh, composed by al-Faḍl al-Lahabī (d. ca. 95/713), a Hāshimī poet and maternal grandson of al-‘Abbās. The poem was delivered within the Meccan sanctuary while ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh was on pilgrimage. Al-Faḍl posed his verses as a rebuttal to a poet who had just sung the praises of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd I (r. 88–98/705–715), while leading the caliph’s mount by the halter. In response, al-Faḍl took the halter of ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh’s mount and retorted with his own panegyric, which lists among ‘Alī’s honors the distribution of drink to pilgrims:

O Zamzam you are blessed by a stone-lined well  
 Blessed for the one who gives water and for the thirsty  
 The cupbearer gives drink to them<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Manāsik*, 545, 550.

<sup>16</sup> *Manāsik*, 551.

<sup>17</sup> See Al-Tabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 2497.

<sup>18</sup> *Akhhbār al-dawla al-‘Abbāsiyya*, ed. ‘A. al-Dūrī and ‘A. al-Muṭṭalibī (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī‘a 1971), 145.

<sup>19</sup> *Akhhbār al-dawla al-‘Abbāsiyya*, 152–153; cf. Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, XVI: 183–184. Al-Faḍl returns to Zamzam and the right to provide drink to pilgrims elsewhere in his poetic corpus; see al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār Makka*, ed. ‘A. b. ‘A. b. Duhaysh, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dār Khidr, 1994), II: 60–61.

One can find similar allusions to the hereditary claim over the Zamzam well and control of the siqaya in Abbasid court poetry. For instance, in a poem honoring the first Abbasid caliph, al-Saffāḥ (r. 132–136/749–754), the Persian court poet Bashshār ibn Burd (d. ca. 167/784) praises the Abbasid family in the following terms:

You are the cupbearers of the pilgrimage and without your cisterns and your buckets, people would not praise the station where they arrive<sup>20</sup>

Bashshār continues, “You have inherited from the Prophet of God the house of the caliphate.” In the poetry of Bashshār during the caliphates of al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī one can trace an ideological movement identifying the Abbasids as the *Ahl al-Bayt* (“family of the [Prophet’s] house”) an affiliation that is strongly associated with al-‘Abbās and the right of the siqaya.<sup>21</sup> By the time Aḥmad al-Sulamī composed his urjuza in honor of Zubayda, there was an established discursive tradition that closely identified the Abbasids with the water rights of the pilgrimage.

As for the composition of the poem, there is no explicit indication of its particular historical context. However, given the absence of any reference to Zubayda’s son al-Amīn, or the pressing question of caliphal succession, we have reason to suspect that the journey occurred after the Hajj of 186/802, when the oaths of succession were taken at the Ka‘ba. This would suggest one of Zubayda’s two last documented pilgrimages, both of which are associated with improving water for pilgrims. According to the Abbasid administrator al-Ya‘qūbī (fl. 278/891), Zubayda undertook the pilgrimage in 190/805, during a severe drought in Mecca, when the water of the Zamzam had all but dried up. At this point, Zubayda was said to have overseen an extensive excavation of the sacred well.<sup>22</sup> This event was also an impetus for the great water works she sponsored throughout the sacred city. According to an inscription preserved in the history of the shrine city by the Meccan historian al-Fākihī (fl. 272/885), one of the major cisterns which Zubayda constructed at the heights of the city was completed in 194/809–810. The inscription, written on marble and gypsum, remained visible in al-Fākihī’s own day. It noted that Zubayda had

<sup>20</sup> Bashshār ibn Burd, *Dīwān*, ed. M. Ṭ. b. ‘Ashūr, 4 vols. (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta’līf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1950), III: 39, ll. 6–7.

<sup>21</sup> See M. Sharon, *Black Banners from the East: The Establishment of the ‘Abbāsīd State: Incubation of a Revolt* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 77, n. 8; idem, “*Ahl al-Bayt*,” 177–178.

<sup>22</sup> See al-Ya‘qūbī, ed. M. T. Houtma, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1883); *Tārīkh*, II: 519; al-Azraqī, *Akhhār Makka*, ed. ‘A. b. ‘A. b. Duḥaysh, 2 vols. (Mecca: Maktabat al-Asadī, 2003), I: 580; al-Fākihī, *Akhhār*, II: 74–75; Ibn Rusta, *A‘lāq*, 42.

ordered the construction of the cistern to serve as a watering station for the pilgrims to God's shrine and for the people of His sanctuary.<sup>23</sup>

Turning to her final pilgrimage in 211/827, al-Fākihī depicts Zubayda as particularly keen on protecting her legacy as a patroness of the Meccan sanctuary and its water supply. Upon reaching the sacred city, Zubayda sharply rebuked the governor of the city for writing to the caliph al-Ma'mūn and not directly to her with a request for financial support to fund the construction and maintenance of cisterns.<sup>24</sup> At this point, Zubayda very much held a *détente* with al-Ma'mūn, who had deposed her son, the caliph al-Amīn, during the course of the bitter civil war. Her role and influence in the court was no longer as great as it had been during the caliphal reign of al-Amīn, when she had dirhams minted in her name.<sup>25</sup> The *urjuza* with its final prayer for her well-being may well fit into this later period in Zubayda's life and form part of a concerted effort to affirm her legacy as a patroness of the pilgrimage. Yet, efforts to historicize such material may risk obscuring how the Abbasid patronage of the Meccan pilgrimage served as part of a literary canvas for later generations to draw upon and configure.

While this tapestry preserves a profound historical value, it also maintains a very vibrant literary color. For instance, the Persian courtier and man of letters Ibn Khurdādhbih (fl. 269/882) recounts that the poet Abū al-Muhannā Mukhāriq fell madly in love with one of Zubayda's handmaids. In order to be closer to her, Mukhāriq followed Zubayda's entourage to Mecca. The anecdote ends with the poetic witticism that "while most people perform the Hajj out of piety and forbearance, Abū Muhannā's pilgrimage was all in the purist of a lady."<sup>26</sup> When reading such material, it is thus important to consider how a literary imagination animates the diverse historical contexts of the Meccan pilgrimage, while also serving as a model for it.

#### SOURCES FOR THE EARLY PILGRIMAGE

The majority of our knowledge on the early pilgrimage comes through source material from the Abbasid era, some fragmentary, and offering

<sup>23</sup> Al-Fākihī, *Akhhār*, III: 155.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Fākihī, *Akhhār*, III: 153–154; cf. Al-Azraqī, *Akhhār*, II: 856–857. See N. Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Hārūn al-Rashīd* (University of Chicago Press, 1942), 246–247.

<sup>25</sup> See L. Ilisch, "Münzgeschenke und Geschenkmünzen in der mittelalterlichen islamischen Welt," *Münstersche Numismatische Zeitung*, 14, 3 (1984): 15.

<sup>26</sup> Al-İṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, XVIII: 370.

only a composite picture – for instance, the urjuza cited earlier exists only in a single acephalous manuscript that lacks the author’s name and the title of the work. There are strong indications, however, that this work is the otherwise lost *Kitāb al-Ṭarīq* (“Book of the Route”), an incomplete geographical work by the Baghdadi historian and littérateur Wakīʿ (d. 306/918).<sup>27</sup> The manuscript describes in great detail the major pilgrimage routes through the Arabian Peninsula and is one of the most valuable sources for documenting the Abbasid patronage of the pilgrimage through the establishment and maintenance of water works and way stations across the Hijaz. This geographical work interrupts the dry list of stations and halting grounds with vivid verse citations and colorful anecdotes. As such, the text overlaps in important ways with imperial road books and administrative works, generally known as “routes and realms” (*al-masālik wa-l-mamālik*), which are peppered with belletristic attention to narratives and poetry. One of the earliest and most famous texts to bear the title *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik* (*Book of Routes and Realms*) is the geographical compendium by Ibn Khurdādhbih, which also preserves, though in a more truncated form, an account of the pilgrimage itinerary through the Hijaz.<sup>28</sup> The historical transmission of Ibn Khurdādhbih’s road book is, to say the least, also rather messy; despite this, here too a clear outline emerges that promotes both Mecca and the seats of Abbasid power in Iraq as the central nodes of an expansive sacred geography.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of major compendiums, the histories of Mecca by Abū al-Walīd al-Azraqī (fl. 250/865), and by Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Fākihī (who copies extensively from al-Azraqī’s collection), are also among the most important primary sources for documenting the early pilgrimage. Similarly, Ibn Ishāq’s (d. 150/767) biography of the Prophet and history of the early community, as preserved by Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), and al-Wāqidi’s (d. 207/822) compendium on the early military

<sup>27</sup> See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* ed. A. F. Sayyid, 2 vols. in 4 vols. (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2009), I: 352–253. On the question of authorship, see ʿA. al-Wuhaybī, “Hal huwa *al-Manāsik* am *Manāzil al-ṭarīq*? Wa-hal huwa li-Imām al-Ḥarībī am li-l-Qāḍī Wakīʿ?” *Majallat al-ʿArab*, 7/8, s. 23 (1409/1988): 433–441.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Khurdādhbih, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1889), 125–128, 131–132; cf. al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892), 311–312.

<sup>29</sup> See Zadeh, “Of Mummies, Poets, and Water Nymphs: Tracing the Codicological Limits of Ibn Khurrādādhbih’s Geography,” in M. Bernards (ed.), *ʿAbbāsīd Studies IV* (Warminster: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2013), 8–75.

campaigns, offer valuable insight into how the pilgrimage and the shrine were envisioned by the early community. Although the historical writings of al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) are of great importance, other collections, such as those by al-Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ (d. 240/854), Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/860), and al-Ya‘qūbī, also shed much light on the political history of Mecca and the pilgrimage. Many of these authorities were connected, in some fashion, to the imperial administration, and taken in the aggregate they form part of a particular Abbasid literary milieu. Nonetheless, they also draw extensively from earlier materials that were clearly in circulation during the Umayyad period.

Assessing the authenticity of this discursive stratum of Umayyad material has been a thorny issue for modern historians; even more challenging is the effort to separate the mythopoeic elements on the formation of the Meccan sanctuary from the historical record. A good example of these challenges can be found in an epistle, preserved by the Meccan historian al-Fākihī, ascribed to the ascetic al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), who is known to have performed the pilgrimage at least twice. The letter celebrates the virtues (*faḍā’il*) of Mecca and the Hajj rite through a collection of reports and sayings ascribed to the Prophet and the early community.<sup>30</sup> The material is designed to sanctify the various elements of the Ka‘ba and the ritual stations of the pilgrimage. The letter also features a saying, ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad in some other sources, that “No prophet has fled his own people save that he went to Mecca and remained there worshiping God Almighty until he died.” The letter continues by stating that around the Ka‘ba are located the tombs of three hundred prophets, including the tombs of Noah, and the Arab prophets Hūd, Shu‘ayb, and Ṣāliḥ.<sup>31</sup>

While the ascription is certainly open to question, there is good reason to believe that the text forms part of an early discourse on the sanctuary. For instance, the chief Abbasid judge Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) relates a nearly identical report on the tombs of the prophets; this may lend credence to the antiquity of the epistle. The epistolary genre is not only strongly associated with Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, but is a notable feature of Umayyad belletristic

<sup>30</sup> For a treatment of the expiating logic of the *faḍā’il* discourse on the Meccan pilgrimage, see M. Katz, “The Hajj and the Study of Islamic Ritual,” *Studia Islamica*, 98/99 (2004): 103–105.

<sup>31</sup> See Al-Fākihī, *Akbbār*, II: 291; see al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (attrib.), *Faḍā’il Makka* ed. M. Z. M. ‘Azab (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 1995), 63.

conventions.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, considering the date of Abū Yūsuf's collection, the dissemination of atomized material taken from the epistle could well have followed a movement from *narratio* to *exemplum*, with the epigraphic account ascribed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī circulating in the Umayyad period and beyond in a piecemeal fashion.

#### PATRONS AND VILLAINS

As custodians of the Meccan sanctuary, the Abbasid caliphs appointed leaders of the annual pilgrimage, usually from within their own family – a practice that follows an established Umayyad precedent.<sup>33</sup> The first to be organized by the early Abbasid elite marked the culmination of their uprising against the Umayyad state in 132/750. The powerful general Dāwūd ibn 'Alī (d. 133/750), uncle to the first two caliphs and short-lived governor of Mecca, led the pilgrimage that year in a procession with both religious and military significance.<sup>34</sup> In 136/753, the caliph al-Saffāḥ (d. 136/753) appointed his brother, the future caliph al-Manṣūr, to lead the pilgrimage, outwitting one of the most prominent military leaders of the Abbasid revolution, Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī (d. 137/754), who sought the position.<sup>35</sup> In an attempt to win over the support of the Bedouins, Abū Muslim dug wells, leveled the road, and distributed head wraps and cloaks to the local Arabs on his own way to Mecca.<sup>36</sup> It was during this pilgrimage that, while in Mecca, al-Manṣūr learned of his brother's death, whereupon he assumed the title of caliph.<sup>37</sup> As caliph, al-Manṣūr also led the pilgrimage in the year 147/765; however, he did not make it far past Kufa, evidently for lack of water on the

<sup>32</sup> Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Āthār*, ed. A. al-Afghānī (Hyderabad: Lajnat Iḥyā' al-Ma'ārif al-Nu'Māniyya, 1355/1936–1937), 117, § 545. See S. Mourad, *Early Islam between Myth and History: Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H/728CE) and the Formation of his Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 52, cf. 140–158. See also more broadly, D. J. Latham, “The Beginnings of Arabic Prose Literature: The Epistolary Genre,” in A. F. L. Beeston et al. (eds.), *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 154–179.

<sup>33</sup> On the Umayyad pilgrimage, see M. E. McMillan, *The Meaning of Mecca: The Politics of Pilgrimage in Early Islam* (London: Saqi Books, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. 'A. M. 'Umar, 11 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001), VII: 471, §1950.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 85; Al-Dinawarī, *Akhhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. 'U. F. al-Ṭabbā' (Beirut: Sharikat Dār al-Arqam ibn al-Arqam, 1995), 345.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 99.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: 437; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 88.

route.<sup>38</sup> Nearly ten years later, al-Manṣūr set out on pilgrimage but died before reaching Mecca, possibly from a stomach ulcer aggravated by dysentery; his bier was carried to Mecca, where he was ultimately interred.<sup>39</sup>

Leading the community in pilgrimage was a caliphal prerogative explicitly based on the Prophet's precedent. In his history, al-Ya'qūbī generally notes who led the pilgrimage each year. This is often followed by a chronological account of the various military campaigns undertaken, and the prominent jurists active during the caliphate in question. Al-Ya'qūbī parallels a pattern set by al-Khalīfa ibn Khayyāt and others. This is a historiographical tradition kept alive by al-Ṭabarī in his universal history, and it appears to build upon actual lists, as preserved, for instance, by Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/860) and al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), likely kept as part of the state administration.<sup>40</sup> These records demonstrate that the early Abbasid caliphs followed an Umayyad practice of either personally leading the annual pilgrimage or delegating close relatives – particularly sons, cousins, and uncles – to do so.

Over the course of twenty-two years, al-Manṣūr led the pilgrimage six times. He charged his son and then heir apparent, Ja'far (d. 150/768) with the position in 148/766. In 153/770, the honor in turn fell to another of al-Manṣūr's sons, Muḥammad, who took the regnal name al-Mahdī upon assuming the caliphate.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, al-Mahdī honored his son and heir apparent, Mūsā al-Hadī (r. 169–170/785–786), with the post in 161/778.<sup>42</sup>

While later caliphs, particularly al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861), invested hefty sums in renovating the Iraqi pilgrimage route and the Meccan sanctuary, the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd is a high-water mark for direct caliphal presence in the region. The course of the following centuries witnessed a noticeable distancing between Baghdad and Mecca; as the central authority of the Abbasid empire weakened, large areas of the Hijaz fell into the hands of nomadic bandits outside of direct imperial control. While other caliphs sent representatives, Hārūn is generally

<sup>38</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 334, 429. This appears to be the same pilgrimage that al-Ya'qūbī places in the year 142/760 (Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: 447).

<sup>39</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 455.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, ed. I. Lichtenstadter (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1942), 11–44; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādin al-jawhar*, ed. Ch. Pellat, 7 vols. (Beirut: al-Jāmi'a al-Lubnāniyya, 1966–1979), §§3630–3656.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: 469–470.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: 485.

credited as the last Abbasid caliph to personally make the pilgrimage to the sanctuary.<sup>43</sup>

The pilgrimage ceremony represented a significant undertaking, involving large caravans with vast retinues, which resembled, and at times indeed served as, military campaigns. Included were the royal family, elite military leaders, court companions, judges, the secretariat, and numerous attendants.<sup>44</sup> Travel through the desert necessitated protection from marauding Bedouins and a secure and steady supply of water. The lack of reliable water on the route from Iraq was a perennial problem, and ensuring that there was a sufficient amount for pilgrims was a caliphal responsibility. Al-Saffāh undertook a campaign to erect fortifications, al-Manṣūr established way stations (*manāzil*), and his son al-Mahdī ordered the construction of rainwater reservoirs at each watering hole, the establishment of wells, the restoration of cisterns, and the placement of milestones marking the route. This public project began in 161/777–778 and was still ongoing ten years later.<sup>45</sup> The high-ranking general Yaqtīn ibn Mūsā, who oversaw the expansion of the Meccan sanctuary under al-Mahdī, was placed in charge of the project. Much work clearly remained, for when al-Mahdī set out for the pilgrimage of 164/781, he and his entourage had to abandon the enterprise due to a lack of water on the route.<sup>46</sup>

Hārūn continued this same work of fortifying the Iraqi pilgrimage route with castles, reservoirs, wells, and cisterns, which he also established in Mecca, Mina, ‘Arafat, and Medina. Hārūn paralleled this building enterprise with fortifications along the Byzantine frontier, highlighting a broader imperial venture of controlling and demarcating territory.<sup>47</sup> In terms of water management, however, the extensive public works carried out by Hārūn’s favorite wife, Zubayda, are far better known. She is said to have undertaken a massive irrigation project that cost over 1.5 million dinars and routed water through a series of canals, some twelve miles away from the holy city. The system of irrigation required the leveling of a vast amount of land. The project was mounted in response to the perpetual water shortages in Mecca and exorbitant inflation in the prices water-sellers were charging, particularly during the pilgrimage season.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II: 505, 509, 521.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 665.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 486.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 502.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, §3449, cf. al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, II: 845.

Al-Ya‘qūbī relates that pilgrims and locals would drink water from Zubayda’s cistern in the city.<sup>48</sup> In Mecca, Zubayda also built lodgings for travelers, and aided in ongoing efforts to dig wells and build cisterns along the desert pilgrimage route through Iraq and along the western frontiers. She supported these projects with charitable endowments designed to ensure their ongoing maintenance.

The Iraqi Hajj itineraries also formed the basis for the imperial postal network first established between Iraq and the cities of the Hijaz during the reign of al-Mahdī; according to al-Ṭabarī the network was completed in the year 166/781–782.<sup>49</sup> The efficiency and speed of the communication network famously made it possible for al-Mahdī to have ice imported to him while in Mecca.<sup>50</sup> Along the routes from Iraq through the Hijaz all sorts of exotica traveled, often as imperial booty donated to the sanctuary city.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to pious endowment of physical buildings in the form of mosques, forts, and palaces, the foundation and maintenance of wells and reservoirs along the route served as a form of charitable donation. Notable among the early leading members of the Abbasid ruling family to construct wells and other public works along the route are ‘Īsā ibn ‘Alī (d. 163/780) and ‘Abd al-Ṣamad (d. 185/801), both of whom were uncles of al-Saffāh and al-Manṣūr, and were prominent leaders and governors with strong connections to the sanctuary complex.<sup>52</sup> The *Kitāb al-Ṭarīq* ascribed to Wakī‘ also credits the Barmakids, the powerful family of viziers during the reigns of the early Abbasid caliphs, with establishing several wells and watering stations.<sup>53</sup> Another notable contributor to the maintenance of the route through the foundation of wells is Yaḳṭīn ibn Mūsā (d. 185/801), the famed general and promoter of the Abbasid cause, who held vast estates in Mesopotamia.<sup>54</sup> Yaḳṭīn also served as the superintendent of the pilgrimage route.<sup>55</sup> This same road book illustrates that

<sup>48</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Buldān*, 316.

<sup>49</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 517; see A. Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61–62.

<sup>50</sup> See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Dhahab al-masbūk fī dhikr man ḥajja min al-khulafā’ wa-l-mulūk*, ed. J. al-Shayyāl (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2000), 76.

<sup>51</sup> See S. Avinoam, “Made for Show: The Medieval Treasury of the Ka’ba in Mecca,” in B. O’Kane (ed.), *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 269–283.

<sup>52</sup> See *Manāsik*, 309, 344, 346, 347, 421.

<sup>53</sup> See *Manāsik*, 285, 298, 303, 304, 332.

<sup>54</sup> See Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Masālik*, 11.

<sup>55</sup> *Manāsik*, 333.

the digging of wells served as a form of pious charity that extended beyond the Abbasid elite to include a range of other patrons. This is further supported by the archeological record which preserves a foundation inscription for two wells dug in the precinct of Mecca. The inscription preserves the name of the patron as Sulaymān ibn Mihrān, that is the famed Kufan traditionist and Qur'an reciter of Persian origin known as al-A'mash (d. 148/765). The foundation stone also records that the two wells were established as a form of public charity (*ṣadaqa*) for travelers.<sup>56</sup>

The vast majority of travelers to Mecca could not emulate the Basran traditionist al-Aswad ibn Shaybān (d. 165/781–782), a pious ascetic who left Basra on pilgrimage, taking with him as provision only a single female camel, which subsisted off the earth and which he milked in order to survive.<sup>57</sup> Even with reliable sources of water, the overland journey through the desert presented obvious physical difficulties for the pilgrims. The large caravans supporting the caliphs and their delegates would have also put pressure on the water supply. The sources make repeated reference to the problem of water shortages on the route.

The archeological evidence along the Darb Zubayda corroborates the textual sources documenting the great effort that the early Abbasids dedicated to the maintenance and construction of wells, cisterns, and rainwater reservoirs along the desert route. While the record is much less substantial, it is also clear that the Umayyads similarly maintained a pilgrimage route from Damascus.<sup>58</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī recounts that the Umayyad caliph Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743) fortified the frontiers while also establishing waterways and cisterns along the road to Mecca, in a process that speaks both to the imperial definition of external boundaries and the internal demarcation of religious authority. Here al-Mas'ūdī also alludes to the famed account of how the Abbasid general Dāwūd ibn 'Alī destroyed the Umayyad waterworks in Mecca during the conquest of the city.<sup>59</sup> Archeological evidence of the early Umayyad caliphal sponsorship of wells can be seen in a

<sup>56</sup> Recorded in S. Rāshid et al., *Silsilat āthār al-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Sa'ūdiyya*, 13 vols. (Riyadh: Wizārat al-Ma'ārif, 2003), II: 148–149.

<sup>57</sup> *Manāsik*, 594; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, ed. I. al-Zaybaq and 'Ā. Murshid, 4 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1996), I: 171–172.

<sup>58</sup> For an epigraphic study of the archeological evidence, see Ḥ al-Kilābī, *al-Nuqūsh al-Islāmiyya 'alā ṭariq al-ḥajj al-shāmī: min al-qarn al-awwal ilā l-qarn al-khāmis al-hijrī* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya, 2009).

<sup>59</sup> Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, § 2219

fragmentary foundation inscription on a water tank established by Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705) outside the city of Suwayda, in the southeast of Syria.<sup>60</sup>

The historical sources also suggest that among the many points of conflict between the Umayyads and the Abbasids was the correct administration of water within the Meccan sanctuary. Several sources identify members of the Abbasid elite as custodians of the Zamzam well and the siqaya in the Umayyad period. This material intersects with a series of cynical reports concerning the depravity associated with the Umayyad governor of Mecca, Khālid ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Qasrī (d. 126/743–744), who in one such report is said to have constructed an aqueduct to bring potable water into the holy sanctuary on the order of the caliph Sulaymān ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 96–99/715–717).<sup>61</sup> Upon the completion of the aqueduct, Khālid slaughtered camels, distributed the meat, and then ascended a pulpit (*minbar*) he had placed next to the Ka‘ba, whereupon he addressed the inhabitants of Mecca and encouraged them to drink the pure, cool water he had brought to the sanctuary, rather than the bitter salty water of the Zamzam. The residents refused the piped-in water, preferring the Zamzam, much to Khālid’s consternation. The anecdote concludes with Dāwūd ibn ‘Alī’s triumphant entrance into the city and his destruction of Khālid’s aqueduct, whereupon the people of the city rejoiced. This would have taken place when Dāwūd led the first Abbasid pilgrimage to the Ka‘ba in 132/749, which marked the beginning of his short tenure as governor of Mecca. In addition to extirpating the Umayyad waterworks within the sanctuary, Dāwūd is also known to have slaughtered all the members of the Umayyad royal family imprisoned in the holy city. There is every reason to believe that the revolutionary violence against the Umayyad ruling elite also extended to their architectural legacy within the sanctuary.<sup>62</sup> The fact that the destruction focused on the Umayyad distribution of water within the sanctuary sheds further light on the importance of the siqaya and the Zamzam well for the early Abbasid movement.

Marshall Hodgson took the account of Khālid’s aqueduct as proof of the decadence and impiety of the Umayyad ruling elite.<sup>63</sup> While the aqueduct

<sup>60</sup> A. Rihaoui, “Découverte de deux inscriptions arabes,” *Les Annales archéologiques de syrie*, 11/12 (1961–1962), 208, figs. 1–2; cited in Rāshid, *Darb*, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, II: 647–649; al-Fākihī, *Akhhbār*, II: 82; III: 149–151.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III: 72–73.

<sup>63</sup> Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (University of Chicago Press, 1974), I: 267.

may very well have been a historical edifice erected by the Umayyads within Mecca, the extent to which it was designed as an act of impious desecralization remains to be seen. As noted previously, the early Abbasid caliphs responded to perennial water shortages both in Mecca and in the sanctuary itself with various public works. The Umayyad water project may well have addressed a similar challenge, only to be reshaped later into an act of sacrilege. Rather, this particular portrayal of the Umayyad aqueduct appears to reflect a broader Abbasid program of vilifying the Umayyads. Several accounts depict Khālid's activities in Mecca in extremely offensive terms. He is said, for instance, to have been willing to tear down the Ka'ba stone by stone and transport the dismantled edifice to Damascus, if the caliph so ordered, and to have boasted of the superiority of the piped water, describing the Zamzam as a filthy well where dung-beetles bred.<sup>64</sup>

#### OPENING UP THE KA'BA

The historical record also documents that various state officials sought to shape the meaning of the Meccan sanctuary in terms that bolstered their own interests and authority. For instance, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–644) is said to have redrawn the boundary markers of the complex. Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 73/692), who declared himself caliph and mounted a revolt against the Umayyads, for his part took over the sanctuary and rebuilt the entire Ka'ba, giving the sanctuary two doors. Ibn al-Zubayr reportedly did this in an effort to reconstruct the edifice upon its original Abrahamic foundations, which the Quraysh had failed to do prior to the advent of Islam. He is also said to have expanded the Ka'ba to include the semicircular enclosure space (*hijr*) on the northwest side, thereby including within the walls of the Ka'ba the tomb of Ishmael, thought to have been buried in the sanctuary's walls. Additionally, Ibn al-Zubayr attempted to remove the siqaya watering station from the sanctuary complex, but demurred in the face of Ibn al-'Abbās's protests.<sup>65</sup> After the Umayyad general al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf defeated and executed Ibn al-Zubayr, he received orders from the caliph 'Abd al-Mālik to destroy

<sup>64</sup> Al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, xxii, 16–18; cf. al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, ed. M. al-Makhzūmī and I. al-Sāmarrā'ī, 8 vols. (Baghdad: Dār al-Rashīd, 1980–1985), I: 231.

<sup>65</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥ. al-A'zamī, 11 vols. (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1970–1972), V: 126, §9126.

Ibn al-Zubayr's structure, remove the second door added to the back, and restore the Ka'ba to its previous size.<sup>66</sup>

Non-Arab clients (*mawālī*) of Ibn al-Zubayr are said to have participated in the reconstruction. Some sources assert that Ibn al-Zubayr brought from Iraq Persian architects and craftsman to rebuild the Ka'ba.<sup>67</sup> A trace of this legacy may well linger in the Persian word *shādhurwān* used to describe the marble base of the Ka'ba.<sup>68</sup> Ibn al-Faqīh (fl. 289/902) reports that Ibn al-Zubayr had originally asked the Arabs how to go about rebuilding the Ka'ba. When he was unable to find a satisfactory answer, he sought help from the Persians, for he claimed that "they are descendants of Abraham and the sanctuary can only be raised up by Abraham's descendants."<sup>69</sup>

This move to graft Persians into the sanctuary is itself part of a larger socio-historical process of accommodating new converts in an ever-broadening fabric of Islamic religious identity. To a similar effect, Ibn al-Faqīh quotes the Qur'anic verse (Q Baqara 2:125), "We have made the sanctuary a place of return for humanity." He explains this verse by citing the Khurasani exegete Muqātil (d. 150/767), who claimed that God did not limit the sanctuary to either Arabs or the Persians, but rather opened it up as a place of worship for all.<sup>70</sup> A similar sentiment is found in earlier Abbasid geographical literature, expressed, for instance, by Ibn Khurdādhbih, who relates that after Adam originally built the Ka'ba, people from all the nations of the world came on pilgrimage to honor the sanctuary.<sup>71</sup>

The very form of the Hajj is designed to bring Muslims from disparate lands together in the performance of a common sacred ritual. There is a tradition ascribed to the Prophet during the famed farewell sermon delivered on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 10/632. In it, the Prophet speaks of a society in which hierarchy is not based on ethnicity but on piety. According to a version of the sermon related by several transmitters, including notable Abbasid courtiers, the Prophet posed the following questions to the congregation of pilgrims:

<sup>66</sup> See, e.g., 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, V: 103–104; al-Tabarī, *Tārīkh*, II: 427, 854; al-Ḥafṣahānī, *Aghānī*, XVIII: 323–324; *Manāsik*, 488–492.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Ḥafṣahānī, *Aghānī*, I: 250; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. Y. Hādī (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1996), 403.

<sup>68</sup> See al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, I: 427–428; Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, III: 450, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), *Ma'rīfat al-sunan*, VII: 240, §9927.

<sup>69</sup> Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 403.

<sup>70</sup> Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 75. Cf. al-Tha'labī, *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān*, ed. A. M. ibn 'Āshūr, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2002): I: 269.

<sup>71</sup> Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Masālik*, 133.

O people! Is your Lord not one? Is your father not one? Is it not so that there is no superiority of Arab over non-Arab nor non-Arab over Arab, nor of White over Black, nor Black over White, except in righteousness (*taqwā*)?<sup>72</sup>

In this famed account, the Hajj serves as an occasion to replace ethnic divisions with a hierarchy based on piety. The carefully selected language functions as a gloss on the following Qur'anic verse: "O People, We have made you men and women and made you nations (*shu'ūb*) and tribes (*qabā'il*) so that you may know each other and that the most noble of you before God are the most righteous among you" (Q Ḥujurāt 49:13). The pairing of the Prophet's sermon with the Qur'an passage is found in an array of early exegetical literature.<sup>73</sup> From this particular Qur'an verse is derived the name '*shu'ūbiyya*', a cultural and literary movement that gained prominence in the early Abbasid period by offering a largely discursive form of resistance to the putative supremacy of Arabic culture and language. The *shu'ūbī* movement emerged from a social context in which the rigid ethnic divisions between the Arabs and their clients, characteristic of the earlier Umayyad social order, had been slowly dissipating. The movement, often known for advocating equality (*taswiyya*) between Arabs and Persians, was also strongly associated with arguments favoring Persian history and culture.<sup>74</sup>

The following account is particularly insightful in this regard. The Abbasid courtier of Arab descent Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206/821) records a tradition from his renowned teacher al-Sharqī ibn al-Quṭāmī (d. ca. 150/767), who relates that the Zamzam took its name from the Sasanian period, when the Persian king Bābak set out for Yemen.<sup>75</sup> On his journey, Bābak made a pilgrimage to Mecca, where at the spot of the Zamzam he buried Qalī swords and jewels of the *zamāzima* (i.e., Zoroastrian priests, who were so named in Arabic for the whispering prayers associated with them, known onomatopoeically as *zamzama* prayers) as an offering. Ibn

<sup>72</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, ed. Sh. al-Arnā'ūt and 'Ā. Murshid, 52 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1993–2001), XXXVIII: 474, §23489. On the sermon, see L. Marlow, *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 22–28.

<sup>73</sup> See, e.g., al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. by 'A. M. 'A. Shāhīn, 3 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1415/1994), I: 382.

<sup>74</sup> On the *shu'ūbiyya*, see I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, tr. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern, 2 vols. (Chicago: Aldine, 1966–1971), I: 137–198; R. Mottahedeh, "The Shu'ūbiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 7, 2 (1976): 161–182.

<sup>75</sup> Cited in Al-Bakjarī, *al-Zahr al-bāsim fī siyar Abī l-Qāsim*, ed. A. A. 'Abd al-Shakūr, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Salām, 2012), I: 320.

al-Quṭāmī then alludes to the famous story of how, generations later, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, paternal grandfather of the Prophet, had a vision that led him to discover the Zamzam. The well had long been hidden by the Jurhum tribe, who buried it when the rival Khuzā’a attacked them and pushed them out of Mecca.<sup>76</sup> When ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib unearthed the well, he found these votive offerings, and thus the well took its name from the jewelry of the Zoroastrian priests.

Ibn al-Quṭāmī’s report presents an important variation on the discovery of the well, the reconstitution of the Meccan shrine, and the various offices associated with it. The earliest sources make no reference to the presence of a Persian king at the sanctuary.<sup>77</sup> For instance, Ibn Ishāq reports that the Jurhum buried the treasure before fleeing Mecca.<sup>78</sup> The etiology of the Zamzam well, which links royal Sasanian votive offerings with the sanctuary, weaves Persian pre-Islamic history directly into the mythic landscape of Mecca and the Hajj. Al-Mas’ūdī’s report takes the association proposed by Ibn al-Quṭāmī even further, and relates that many Persians considered themselves descendants of Abraham and claimed that their ancestors traveled to the sanctuary and circumambulated the Ka’ba in veneration of their forefather, Abraham, who had originally built the shrine. According to al-Mas’ūdī, the last of the ancient Persians to have performed the pilgrimage was Sāsān ibn Bābak, the Zoroastrian high priest and eponymous founder of the Sasanian empire. Al-Mas’ūdī pauses to explain the importance of this Persian king by noting that the Sasanians traced their ancestry back to Sāsān ibn Bābak, “just as the Marwānids trace their ancestry back to Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam and the Abbasid caliphs back to al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. No other Persian king ruled who was not descended from [Sāsān].”<sup>79</sup>

The story of ancient Persians at the shrine serves to promote the Abbasids as the inheritors of an imperial Sasanian legacy of pilgrimages from Mesopotamia to the Ka’ba. Also advanced in this narrative complex is the idea that the Abbasids had a rightful claim to Mecca, as they were

<sup>76</sup> See al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ed. S. Zakkār and R. Zirikli, 13 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), I: 86.

<sup>77</sup> See, e.g., ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, V: 313–319; al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, II: 548–558.

<sup>78</sup> Ibn Hishām, *al-Sira al-nabawiyya*, ed. M. al-Saqqā, I. al-Ibyārī, and ‘A. Shalabī, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1955), I: 154–155; see al-Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, I: 155, 547–548.

<sup>79</sup> Al-Mas’ūdī, *Murūj*, §573. See also S. Savant, “Isaac as the Persian Ishmael: Pride and the Pre-Islamic Past in Ninth and Tenth-Century Islam,” in *Comparative Islamic Studies*, 2, 1 (2006): 14–15.

direct relatives of al-‘Abbās, whose father, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, rediscovered the Zamzam well. Admittedly, these claims are almost baroque in their articulation of linguistic, ethnic, and religious legitimacy: not only were ancient Persians genealogically related to Abraham, but they were also among the first to perform the pilgrimage to the Meccan shrine, and the founder of the Sasanian empire gave Zamzam its name, from a Persian word based on a Zoroastrian liturgical prayer (which evidently would have been recited in Persian).

In the course of the first two centuries of the Islamic era, both Mecca and the pilgrimage to it underwent profound and lasting transformations. The broad ritual contours of the Hajj and the monotheistic associations binding Abraham and Ishmael to the Meccan sanctuary can be traced back to the Qur’an and the early Hadith corpus.<sup>80</sup> However, sweeping shifts in religious and political power came to define the meaning of the sanctuary and the pilgrimage rite in significantly new terms. These changes are reflected not only in the face of the ruling elite, but also in the expanding community of believers. This process of transformation is articulated in a series of often competing architectural expressions, as well as in various discursive efforts that turned to the mythopoeic power of narrative to mold and reimagine the significance of the Ka’ba.

<sup>80</sup> See R. Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); see also U. Rubin, “Ḥanifiyya and Ka’ba: An Inquiry into the Arabian Pre-Islamic Background of Dīn Ibrāhīm,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 13 (1990): 85–112; cf. G. Hawting, “The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca,” in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 23–48.

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