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Of Mummies, Poets, and Water Nymphs: Tracing the Codicological Limits of Ibn Khurradādhbih's Geography

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"El texto de Cervantes y el de Menard son verbalmente idénticos, pero el segundo es casi infinitamente más rico. (Más ambiguo, dirán sus detractores; pero la ambigüedad es una riqueza.)"

Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*," *Sur* 56 (May 1939), 14.

"Veruntamen, quemadmodum in adagio est: *quod non est totaliter notum, non est totaliter rejiciendum*. Cognitio enim partis praeferenda est ignorantiae totius."

Abū l-Fiḍāʾ, *Chorasmiae et Mawaralnahrae* (London, 1650), 4–6.

SCEPTICISM AND AMBIGUITY

The ninth ʿAbbāsid caliph, al-Wāthiq bi-llāh (r. 227–32/842–7), is featured in an episode of the *Murūj al-dhahab,* the delightfully meandering encyclopaedia of history and geography by the famed littérateur Abū l-Ḥasan al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956). Here the caliph, while holding court before an audience of learned doctors, philosophers, and boon companions, inquires how knowledge of medicine and its principles was derived. In attendance were several prominent intellectuals, including the physicians Bukhtīshūʿ (d. 256/870) and Ibn Māsawayh (d. 243/857), as well as the famed court physician and translator Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, all of whom were Nestorian Christians. The assembly commenced with al-Wāthiq, who is said to have loathed blindly following tradition (*taqlīd*), asking whether this knowledge was acquired by perception (*ḥiss*), through deduction by analogy (*qiyās*), or through principles of reason (*awāʾil al-ʿaql*). The conversation immediately turns to experimentation (*tajriba*). Eventually, Ḥunayn steps forward to respond, in magisterial style, with a detailed description of the anatomy of the human mouth, which digresses seamlessly into a discussion of the natural dispositions differentiating the various regions of the world.[1]

[1] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj,* §§2857, 2862–6.

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Josef van Ess saw in this short anecdote how vestiges of classical scepticism and with it empiricism continued over from Sāsānian learning into ʿAbbāsid scholasticism; this is an idea which Michael Cook flirted with when examining the theological foundations of the early Murjiʾī suspension of judgement (*irjāʾ/wuqūf*) concerning the soteriological status of a grave sinner.[2] In the classical model of empiricism, knowledge was derived from a hierarchical order that foremost privileged direct experience (*εμπειρία*) or authored observation (*αὐτοψία*), which could be supplemented, by indirect testimony (*ἱστορία*), and then, finally, through induction (*επαγωγή*).[3]

This is not the only case where al-Wāthiq is pictured as an empiricist; he also features prominently in the administrative geography by the Persian courtier Ibn Khurradādhbih (fl. 270/884), *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, for having dispatched two separate exploratory missions across the globe. These missions are recounted with such detail and vividness that they become mainstays of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish geographical literature for the next eight centuries. Central to both missions is the desire to obtain eyewitness testimony (*ʿiyān*) of the world and its wonders. The notion of *ʿiyān*, directly akin to the Greek *autopsia*, informs the epistemic foundations of Arabic classical descriptive geography as a preferred mode of knowing.[4]

The great *adīb*, Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–9) advanced a similar empirical system that privileged eyewitness testimony as the most authoritative means of learning about the unknown (*ʿilm al-ghayb*).[5] Of course, our knowledge of all this is through indirect testimony, i.e. of manuscripts and critical editions, which al-Jāḥiẓ claims is admissible as long as it is based upon the congruence of multiple reliable sources. When accounts are transmitted by only one source whose reliability is unknown, he admits that a certain amount of doubt must remain.

This state of doubt and epistemic ambiguity characterises a good deal of our historical knowledge. For the sceptics, *historia*, contrary to what Cervantes might evoke or seventeenth-century empiricists might wish, never truly equals *autopsia*.[6] Our direct observation of the past comes largely by way of bearing witness to manuscripts, many of which have passed into printed editions, and now, increasingly, binary texts whose form can be telegraphed with amazing consistency and homogeneity. The reliability of this material, at least for positivist pursuits, needless to say, must be continually scrutinised, for the textual condition has never offered a stable, closed archive of monogenetic material; rather it resists reduction through the permutations of a history of reception which is neither static nor fixed, but rather, polyvalent and polygenetic.

While this is the story of the earliest preserved descriptive geography written in Arabic, the *Masālik* of Ibn Khurradādhbih, it also proves true for a good deal of the written corpus of ʿAbbāsid letters, which scribes deemed worthy of preserving and memorialising, or through sheer serendipity escaped the inevitable entropy of an archive which stretches back over a millennium. As a geography that has been read in modern scholarship above

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[2] Van Ess, Skepticism, 4; Cook, *Dogma*, 44–7.

[3] Ibid., 44n5.

[4] See Montgomery, Autopsies; Touati, *Islam and Travel*, 101–56.

[5] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil*, 24–5.

[6] See Pomata, Observation, 67–9.

all for its documentary value, the *Masālik* offers an important case study of the limits and pleasure of the archive. The historical transmission of such texts across the diachronic fabric of time represents, in part, the product of what one society valued from its ancestors and what it choose to preserve, however reconstituted, for the following generations. The codicological record, nonetheless, is shaped by the twin impulses of redaction and expansion. I offer the following tour through the archive with its tales of adventure, deceit, and confusion, as an extended addendum to an earlier journey made with Ibn Khurradādhbih and his imperial landscape of taxation, poetry, and monsters.[7]

ON ORIENTAL GEOGRAPHY

Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* has long been known to western scholarship. However, compared with the subsequent geographical writings of al-Idrīsī (d. 560/1165) or Abū l-Fidāʾ (d. 732/1331), the *Masālik* made its western debut relatively late. Although references to Ibn Khurradādhbih can be traced throughout the development of Orientalism, a fuller picture of the ʿAbbāsid man of letters and his work does not emerge until the nineteenth century. One of the earliest mentions in pre-modern Europe is in the Medici publication in Rome (1592) of an abridgement of al-Idrīsī's *Nuzhat al-mushtāq*. With the Latin translation of al-Idrīsī published in Paris (1619), Ibn Khurradādhbih appears transcribed as Abdallah filius Chordádhebe, and is indexed as a *historiographus,* a reflection of the partial understanding of his significance for al-Idrīsī.[8] However, he is portrayed as primarily a geographer in the bilingual Arabic and Latin edition of an extract pertaining to Khurāsān and Transoxiana from the *Taqwīm al-buldān* of Abū l-Fiḍāʾ, prepared by the British mathematician and explorer John Greaves (d. 1652), who is perhaps best known for his survey of the pyramids in Egypt, the *Pyramidographia* (1646). Greaves' edition opens with Abū l-Fiḍāʾ lamenting how Ibn Ḥawqal (fl. 378/988), Ibn Khurradādhbih, and al-Idrīsī all failed to fully corroborate the geographical data they recorded, a common justification found in geographical discourse.[9] More information on Ibn Khurradādhbih is supplied by the French Orientalist Barthélemy d'Herbelot (d. 1695) in his *Bibliothèque orientale, ou Dictionaire universel* (Paris, 1697). This immensely popular encyclopaedia drew extensively from the *Kashf al-ẓunūn* of the Ottoman bibliophile Ḥājjī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657). According to d'Herbelot, Ben Khordadbah was the author of a history, who died around the year 300 of the Hijra.[10] The death date is drawn from Ḥājjī Khalīfa, who in his first entry on Ibn Khurradādhbih identifies him as a historian, and it is evidently for this reason that d'Herbelot does not describe Ibn Khurradādhbih as a geographical authority.[11]

A copy of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* made its way to Europe by way of Robert Huntington (d. 1701), an Orientalist and manuscript collector, who acquired an impressive array of rare books in Oriental languages while serving as a chaplain to the English Levant

[7] See Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers*.
[8] Al-Idrīsī, *Geographia,* 267, 279.
[9] Abū l-Fidāʾ, *Chorasmiae*, 2.
[10] D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*, 995.
[11] See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, i, 278.

Company in Aleppo.[12] Although Huntington collected widely across the fields of *adab* and Islamic religious sciences (*ʿulūm al-dīn*), like many of his contemporaries he also had a noticeable penchant for works on mathematics, medicine, astronomy, cosmography, descriptive geography, and history. At some point in his travels, Huntington acquired what has since proved to be a particularly rare manuscript — a copy of the *Masālik*, which, according to its colophon, was completed in 630/1232.[13] In 1693, for the price of £700, the Bodleian Library of Oxford University acquired over six hundred manuscripts from Huntington's collection. With this purchase, Oxford came to house the only manuscript of the *Masālik* available in Europe until the nineteenth century, known now by the signature MS Huntington 433.[14]

The first scholar to work in any serious measure on this particular manuscript was Jean Gagnier (d. 1740), a French priest and Anglican convert who held the Lord Almoner's Professorship in Arabic at Oxford University from 1724 until the end of his life.[15] Gagnier is best known for his polemical writings on the Prophet Muḥammad. His first publication on the topic was the *De vita et rebus gestis Mohammedis*, a bilingual Arabic-Latin edition cum commentary drawn from the history of Abū l-Fiḍāʾ (1723). This work, in turn, formed a major source for his immensely popular French study, *La vie de Mahomet* (1732), a three-volume collection, considered to be highly authoritative throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which in a blaze of philological and historical erudition was designed to put Arabic source material in the service of attacking the Prophet.[16] As for his interest in geography, Gagnier also published an Arabic–Latin edition of a selection from the geography of Abū l-Fidāʾ pertaining to Egypt, with the goal of completing the full work in subscription form, to be accompanied by detailed notes, plates, and maps.[17] While he never saw this project to fruition, Gagnier left behind notebooks containing a significant corpus of unpublished research on Arabic geographical writing, including extensive annotations and Latin translations of material from the Bodleian copy of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*.[18]

Despite this initial effort of working directly with the manuscript, it was not until more than a century later that sections from the *Masālik* appeared in published form. During this period, several cursory references were made to Ibn Khurradādhbih as a well-known geographer,[19] many of which coalesce around his description of the pyramids in Egypt and his transmission of the marvellous adventure of Sallām al-Tarjumān to the Wall of Gog

[12] *The Dictionary of National Biography*, x, 308–9.

[13] Bodleian MS Hunt 433 (= MS B), fol. 82a; cf. Uri, *Bibliothecae*, 216, §993.

[14] Macray, *Annals,* 113–4.

[15] *Dictionary of National Biography*, xx, 358–9; see also, Sutherland, *Politics*, 519–30.

[16] This work, later translated into German, served as one of the primary sources for Edward Gibbon's portrayal of the early history of Islam, *Decline and Fall*, v, 177n111.

[17] See pseudo-Philoglottus, *The Usefulness of Oriental Learning*, generally ascribed to Richard Parker (d. 1742), 42n42; *Journal des sçavans*, (1727), 375; idem, (1755), 738.

[18] Bodleian MS Or. 306; see also Bodleian MSS Or. 243; Or. 290; Or. 304; Or. 309; Or. 310; Or. 317, Or. 318; Or. 364.

[19] See Ouseley, *Oriental Geography,* v; de Sacy, Mémoire, 272.

and Magog, which was available in quotation from other Arabic sources.[20] However, bit-by-bit, more information on the *Masālik* and its author began to emerge. In his work on the adventures of Ibn Faḍlān (fl. 310/922) among the Rūs (1823), the Russian Orientalist Christian Fraehn (d. 1851) identified Ibn Khurradādhbih as a *wazīr* in the ʿAbbāsid empire, the author of both a history and a geography, as well as possibly the descendant of ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih, governor (*walī*) of Ṭabaristān. Furthermore, Fraehn was able to situate the geography within the larger rubric of geographical works bearing the title *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*.[21] Likewise, the Austrian Orientalist, former dragoman and embassy counsellor in the Ottoman empire, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (d. 1856), set Ibn Khurradādhbih and the Bodleian manuscript within a specific progression of geographical writing in his overview (1825) of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish source material.[22]

This move toward historicisation, and with it classification, forms the backbone to the "Introduction générale a la géographie des orientaux," which Joseph Toussaint Reinaud (d. 1867) presented as a preface to his French translation of the *Taqwīm al-buldān* of Abū l-Fiḍāʾ (1848). As a curator of Oriental manuscripts in the Bibliothèque royale of Paris, Reinaud had access to an array of unpublished Arabic manuscripts which gave him a fuller picture of the development of Arabic geography, as it progressed from the ʿAbbāsid period until the writings of Abū l-Fiḍāʾ. Drawing on a manuscript copy of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, Reinaud described Ibn Khurradādhbih as the "directeur de la poste et de la police" for the district of the Jabal, i.e. ancient Media. He also identified him as an intimate of the caliph al-Muʿtamid (r. 256–79/870–92) and as a Persian descendant of a Zoroastrian convert to Islam.[23] For this survey of Oriental geography, Reinaud directly consulted the Bodleian manuscript of the *Masālik* and published a French translation of a short extract, which treated the respective itineraries of Jewish and Rūs merchants. While the actual identities of these two merchant groups became embroiled in controversy, this particular section of Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography was of great significance for the construction of medieval economic history during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[24]

Building upon this broad historical framework of Arabic geographical literature, the Austrian Orientalist Aloys Sprenger (d. 1893) spent four days in 1859 at the Bodleian Library copying the *Masālik* in an admittedly rushed and incomplete fashion.[25] Sprenger considered Ibn Khurradādhbih the 'grandfather' of the Arabic geographical tradition. The *Masālik* offered Sprenger one of the earliest and thus most valuable sources for his monograph, *Die Post- und Reiserouten des Orient*, a study of imperial postal routes and administrative practices of taxation.[26] In addition to the *Masālik*, Sprenger drew upon a host of largely unpublished Arabic geographical works, including, most notably, the *Kitāb al-kharāj wa ṣināʿat al-kitāba* by

[20] See, for instance, Bayer, De muro, 439; Quatremère, *Mémoires géographiques*, 53; Howard-Vyse, *Operations*, ii, 320.

[21] Fraehn, *Ibn-Foszlan*, xxi, 265.

[22] Von Hammer-Purgstall, Uebersicht, 48, §4.

[23] Reinaud, Introduction, i, lvii.

[24] Ibid., i, lviii–lx

[25] Sprenger, *Post*, viii; on Sprenger's copy of the *Masālik*, now housed in the Staatsbibliothek of Berlin, see Ahlwardt, *Arabischen Handschriften*, v, 361, §6031, MS Sprenger 4.

[26] Sprenger, *Post,* xv.

the ʿAbbāsid administrator Qudāma b. Jaʿfar (d. 337/948), preserved in an *unicum* housed in Istanbul.[27] For Sprenger, part of the appeal of Ibn Khurradādhbih and Qudāma was that as state bureaucrats they both had direct access to official caliphal records, and thus their works offered genuine information for the historical documentation of administrative practices. As for the *ʿajāʾib* which populated much of these sources, Sprenger did his best to separate out dubious accounts from what he considered was otherwise genuine archival material.[28]

'EUROPEAN CRITICISM'

The *editio princeps* of the *Masālik* was published soon thereafter, with an accompanying French translation, by the Orientalist and former dragoman in Jerusalem, Charles Barbier de Meynard, in the *Journal asiatique* (1865). De Meynard had already worked extensively on early Arabic geographical literature. By this point he had issued the first volumes of what would be a foundational text in the growing canon of historical and geographical Arabic sources available to western scholarship, *Les prairies d'or* (1861–71), a bilingual French-Arabic edition of al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*, completed in collaboration with Abel Pavet de Courteille (d. 1889). Additionally, de Meynard already had published a French translation of geographical material pertaining to Iran and the adjoining regions from Yāqūt's multivolume compendium, the *Muʿjam al-buldān* (1861), based upon unpublished manuscripts.

In preparation for his work on Yāqūt, de Meynard travelled to England to conduct research in the British Museum and in the Bodleian Library. While in Oxford, he consulted Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*, which he used in the annotations of his translation of Yāqūt.[29] For de Meynard, the *Masālik* represented, "un des plus anciens documents des archives musulmanes,"[30] and served as an authentic archival witness to early ʿAbbāsid history. Unfortunately, as he explains, he did not have sufficient time during his research to copy the manuscript in its entirety.

This job fell to Adolf Neubauer (d. 1907), future sub-librarian of the Bodleian Library and reader in Rabbinic Hebrew at Oxford University. Neubauer transcribed the manuscript in a form that de Meynard considered so accurate as to be like a "photograph of the original."[31] The choice of analogy is not entirely accidental, as the period is witness to the development of mimetic technologies of reproduction, with the use of photography and photolithography in the fields of book printing. The following year, after de Meynard published his bilingual edition of the *Masālik*, which drew on the centuries-old technology

[27] See al-Zubaydī's introduction to his edition of Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, *Kharāj*, 12–4; Heck, *Construction of Knowledge*, 3nn7–8. For the nineteenth-century copy that Charles Schefer (d. 1898) commissioned from the Istanbul manuscript, see Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits*, 137, §5907.

[28] Sprenger, *Post*, xv.

[29] See, for instance, Yāqūt, translated by de Meynard, *Dictionnaire géographique*, viii, 5n2, 59n1, 136n2, 264n1, 403n1.

[30] See Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik* = Livre des routes, ed. by de Meynard, 5.

[31] Ibid., 6.

of the printing press and its moveable type, Howard Staunton printed in London a photograph facsimile of the 1623 First Folio edition of William Shakespeare; while the next year saw the publication in Paris of a photolithographic facsimile of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, from a fourteenth-century manuscript housed in the monastery of Vatopedi on Mt Athos (Codex 655).[32] The increasing application of photographic technology for the circulation of such objects as manuscripts and rare books offered the guarantees of exactness and strict precision promised in the evident transparency of the medium.[33] The period also notably overlaps with the aesthetic developed by "photographic orientalism," in both gazing upon and possessing the other through the ceaselessly transferable capital of mimetic control.[34]

While Neubauer's transcription may well have achieved the ideal of photographic fidelity, de Meynard also understood that a single manuscript would not sufficiently fulfil the expectations for an accurate edition. This was especially true of the Bodleian copy, which posed significant problems with ambiguous readings and notable lacunae. However, de Meynard's solution to this problem was rather vexing and remains partially shrouded in mystery.

The Turkish statesman, translator and littérateur, Aḥmad Wafīq Pāshā (d. 1891), who at this point was serving as the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in Paris, had informed de Meynard that there existed a copy of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* tucked away in a "basement of one of the mosques" of Istanbul. Agreeing to collaborate on the publication of the geography, Aḥmad Wafīq returned to Istanbul and asked de Meynard to send him his copy of the Bodleian manuscript. Then the famed Ottoman ambassador had three people versed in Arabic and Persian literature compare the two manuscripts. As de Meynard explains:

> [His] intention was to publish the text in the periodical *le Moniteur ottoman* and to leave me with the task of the translation and the commentary. But an objection, easy to foresee, forced him to abandon [this project]: the complete restoration of the manuscript was declared impossible because of the gaps and illegible names which marred it. His excellency... sent me all of the material which he had gathered.[35]

The result was the transcription of the geography, purportedly based on a manuscript housed somewhere in Istanbul and on Neubauer's hand-written copy of MS Hunt 433. According to de Meynard, this transcription was produced by a certain Arabic teacher, identified as Abdur Rahman-Efendi, who appears to be the same as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qusṭanṭī (d. 1864), Arabic instructor and grammarian at the Ottoman Imperial School for Military Sciences, and author of the grammatical treatise, the *Miqyās al-lisān*.[36] De Meynard mentions that the new manuscript sent to him from Istanbul unfortunately contained the exact shortcomings, in the disorder of the text and the missing sections, as found in the Bodleian copy. Nonetheless, this copy produced by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān offered several helpful

[32] Diller, The Vatopedi Manuscript.
[33] See Martinof, Review, 883.
[34] Jay, *Downcast Eyes,* 140n213.
[35] De Meynard, Livre des routes, 7–8.
[36] See Ismāʿīl Pāshā l-Baghdādī, *Hadiyya*, i, 558; *Journal asiatique*, 11 (1868), 488.

readings, such that the errors of negligence caused by the earlier copyists were corrected and some unusual words were elucidated. However, as de Meynard concludes, on careful study, it became readily apparent that the two copies derived from a common source, which he argues must have been an abridged redaction of the original geography.

In 1874, the manuscript copy produced for de Meynard in Istanbul was deposited in the Bibliothèque nationale of Paris (MS Arabe 2213 = MS P).[37] The copyist does mark out a handful of suggested readings and vocalisations in the margins and describes how he checked these against an original copy (*al-nuskha al-aṣliyya*).[38] Yet, given the fact that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's manuscript produces no significant variants with MS Hunt 433, closely following the order, the lacunae, and even the errors in the text, we are left to wonder whether or not there ever existed a second copy housed in an Istanbul collection, as suggested by Aḥmad Wafīq Pāshā. While a copy of the *Masālik* has failed to turn up in an Istanbul collection, such lack of evidence offers merely an *argumentum ex silentio*, which cannot account for the perfidious dissemination or destruction of manuscripts. Yet, there is sufficient room for doubt when considering the profound similarities between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's transcription and the Bodleian manuscript, matched with the fact that de Meynard never consulted the original Istanbul copy. Whatever the case may have been, de Meynard acknowledges that the two manuscripts in his possession were effectively identical, originating, in some fashion, from the same source, and thus posing the same textual problems of recension.

Despite this rather obfuscated process of secondary and tertiary transcription, which in the critical process of *eliminatio* leaves us only a single manuscript of any significance, de Meynard argued that his edition benefited from the advances of, what he termed, "European criticism," which could give life anew to the dead works of the past, through the methodical comparison of texts and the study of the particular circumstances and influences acting upon a given author. In contrast, he continued, this scholarly practice was entirely missing in the traditions of Muslim erudition.[39] Such an assessment of the moribund intellect of the Oriental fits into a discrete set of discursive practices profoundly connected with the colonial production and management of knowledge; an observation which has been so thoroughly examined that it need not be fully rehearsed here. However, the full irony of de Meynard's rhetorical opening gambit to his bilingual edition — "Ma *traduction* n'est-elle pas devenue çà et là *trahison*?" — would surely have been lost on him, as a historical anarchism which Orientalist scholarship would only begin to confront a century later.

What is noteworthy, nonetheless, is that by printing the *Masālik* through the organ of the *Journal asiatique,* de Meynard indeed breathed life back into Ibn Khurradādhbih's administrative geography, reviving the dead manuscript through a new horizon of readers who could directly access the work in the highly transportable and readily reproducible fruit of print technology. As an issue in the *Journal asiatique,* the *Masālik* bore the imprimatur

[37] De Slane, *Catalogue,* i, 389, §2213.

[38] See BNF MS Arabe 2213, fol. 11a. Scattered throughout the manuscript, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān recommends in the margins over sixty emendations for the readings of specific words.

[39] De Meynard, Livre des routes, 8–9.

of the French empire, published by the Imprimerie impériale, which was founded by the Napoleonic state in 1806. Within the first years of its operation, the imperial printing house issued the *Code de procédure civile* (1806), establishing a legislative structure for a growing imperial power, as well as the voluminous *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–28), composed by the savants accompanying Napoleon Bonaparte on his Egyptian campaign (1798–1801),[40] which in its encyclopaedic totality documented the numerous marvels encountered, in antiquities and human flesh alike.[41] Also of note among these early imperial publications is the *Postes impériales: état général des postes et relais de l'empire français* (1807), which in its bureaucratic division of postal routes passing through the Parisian cosmopolis, with tables, charts, and almanacs, bears striking resemblance to the administrative and imperial interests of Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography. The gift of a new life granted to the *Masālik*, and with it, Arabic medieval geography writ large, issued through European printing houses and financed by the intellectual and material capital of imperial expansion, also signified a debt. This obligation, as it were, granted European criticism the right to possess and reorder, in a seemingly rational sequence, the historical value of the acquired antiquities of Oriental knowledge.

THE *BIBLIOTHECA GEOGRAPHORUM ARABICORUM*

The primary value of Arabic geography as presented by the likes of Reinaud, Sprenger, and de Meynard was that it offered documentary evidence for the reconstruction of history. It was this move toward historicisation and with it periodisation that shaped the growing interest in the *Masālik*, which promised to be one of the earliest surviving examples of Arabic geographical writing. Soon after de Meynard's edition, the eminent Dutch Orientalist Michael Jan de Goeje, who came to wield a profound influence over the fields of medieval Arabic geography and history, published, in Leiden, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik* by Abū Isḥāq al-Iṣṭakhrī (fl. 340/951). Al-Iṣṭakhrī's geography appeared as the first volume in de Goeje's edited series of Arabic geographical texts, the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* (1870–94).

De Goeje had already established himself as a rising scholar in the disciplines of classical Arabic history and geography. He had studied under the Dutch Orientalist Reinhart Dozy and collaborated with him on the publication in 1866 of a bilingual French and Arabic edition of al-Idrīsī's treatment of the Maghrib from the *Nuzhat al-mushtāq*. With this work, the two Dutch scholars sought to establish a critical edition and properly identify the various toponyms and onomastic material mentioned in the geography; to do this they used four manuscripts housed in Paris and Oxford, respectively. This edition was, in part, designed to correct the misreadings and problems of comprehension that plagued the rough French translation (1836–40) undertaken by Pierre-Amédée Jaubert (d. 1847).[42] For this project, de Goeje spent a year working in the Bodleian Library and was able to make

[40] See Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt.*

[41] See Said, *Orientalism*, 83–7.

[42] Al-Idrīsī, *Description de l'Afrique*, viff, xxii–xxiii.

extensive use of the rich geographical and historical archival material housed therein.[43] While he considered including the *Masālik* in his edited series of Arabic geographical works, he recognised that without further manuscript evidence, he would not be able to produce a truly critical edition which could improve upon what de Meynard had been able to accomplish.

This situation changed notably, however, in 1885, when the Swedish Orientalist and aristocrat, Count Carlo de Landberg (d. 1924), after what appears to have been a good deal of haggling with the anonymous owner, found and purchased in Alexandria another manuscript of the *Masālik* on de Goeje's behalf.[44] Compared to what was preserved in the Bodleian copy, this manuscript offered a substantially distinct redaction of the geography, which in many cases appeared to greatly improve upon the text. The following year, at the final session of the seventh Conference of Orientalists held in Vienna, the Count publicly announced his intention of donating his acquisition, *ein unbestrittenes Unicum*, to the Hofbibliothek of Austria;[45] de Landberg did this under the condition that his friend de Goeje would first be allowed to make use of the find in preparation for a new edition of the *Masālik*.[46] This manuscript, which bears the signature MS Mixt. 783, is housed in what is now the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

In 1888, de Goeje published an essay, entitled "De Muur van Gog en Magog," where he offered a Dutch translation of an excerpt from this newly discovered manuscript pertaining to the adventure of Sallām al-Tarjumān, who served as an interpreter of Turkish dispatches for the ʿAbbāsid court.[47] In the *Masālik*, Ibn Khurradādhbih relates that al-Wāthiq sent Sallām to discover the legendary wall mentioned in the Qurʾān (18:92–7), and long believed to have been built by Alexander the Great against the apocalyptic tribes of Gog and Magog. The Vienna recension proved invaluable for de Goeje's reconstruction of the ʿAbbāsid adventure. While de Goeje's reconstruction of the itinerary, which placed Sallām before Great Wall of China, was warmly greeted in some quarters, it was also met with a good deal of controversy and even ridicule.[48] However, the general outline detailed in this article anticipated how de Goeje would treat the significance of de Landberg's find.

In the following year, de Goeje published a thoroughly revised version of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*, using the Vienna copy as the base text for what he presented as a critical edition, issued as the sixth volume in his series on Arabic geography. The text was accompanied by a French translation, which he undertook with the collaboration of de Meynard. The volume also included an edition of the *Kitāb al-kharāj* by Qudāma b. Jaʿfar. In addition to the Bodleian (MS B) and Vienna (MS V) manuscripts,

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[43] See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, xii, 180, s.v., "Goeje Michael, Jan de."

[44] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xiv.

[45] See "Schluss-Sitzung (2 October 1886)" in *Berichte*, 115; De Goeje, De Muur, 104; idem, Préface, *Masālik*, xiv.

[46] Ibid., xviii; cf. De Goeje's complaint at the conference concerning the limited circulation of manuscripts from the Hofbibliothek to scholars outside Austria, "Sitzung der vereinigten Sections-Präsidien und Delegirten" in *Berichte*, 113–4.

[47] De Goeje, De Muur van Gog en Magog, 104; idem, "Préface," *Masālik*, xiv. Cf. Ibn Rusta, *Aʿlāq*, 149, and al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094), *Masālik*, ii, 29–30.

[48] Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers*, 155–77.

de Goeje used material from a third source, although he did not directly identify it, other than to mention that it was a fragment of Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography which he had discovered in another manuscript of the Bodleian Library.[49]

The model for textual criticism that de Goeje would use here, and throughout his numerous other editions of medieval Arabic literature, followed the editorial practices for establishing critical editions of Greek and Latin classics. These were developed and promulgated, in great measure, by such German philologists as Karl Lachmann (d. 1851) during the beginning of the nineteenth century. The epistemological basis of this method was fundamentally taxonomic: it assumed the notion of prior simplicity, whereby in a vertical fashion the proliferation of textual variants which were naturally distributed across manuscripts, and were inherent in the very idiosyncratic nature of manuscript production, all descended from an original common source. Also generally assumed was a monogenetic origin from a single parent. Both assumptions prove to be highly problematic for understanding medieval Arabic book culture.[50]

This method sought the reconstruction of an urtext, the original authorial form of a work, through a genealogical analysis of relationships between the surviving manuscript descendants. Such a process privileged above all accuracy and authenticity and attempted to identify the closest codicological witness to the original authorial intention, referred to as the best manuscript, or the *codex optimus*. Conversely, corruptions and contaminations inherent in the "universal variation" of manuscript culture had to be exposed and ferreted out as spurious to the authorial original.[51] Based upon a genealogical sequence, or stemma, the relationship of variants could be reconstructed. Such a process set out a hierarchic structure between the various manuscripts (phyla, genera, etc.), as they proliferated from what was posited to be an authorial archetype, which was invariably lost.

A particular challenge posed for the edition of medieval geographical writing was the question of the proper vocalisation and identification of toponymic material that often could vary across the manuscript recensions of a given work. De Goeje followed a standard procedure through the nine editions of *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*. He not only listed in his critical apparatus of marginal notes the relevant manuscript variants found in the recensions of a given text, but he also cited various other Arabic geographical authorities, who would often present parallel material, copying verbatim one from the other. The result of de Goeje's labour was truly pioneering, offering cross-references to parallel passages, glossaries, along with toponymic and onomastic indexes which revealed the profound interconnections binding together early Arabic geographical writing.

In an attempt to account for the notable divergences in order, readings, and content which separated the Vienna and Bodleian recensions, de Goeje proposed that Ibn Khurradādhbih had originally composed his geography in two stages.[52] Drawing from the historical references which were contained in both manuscripts, he concluded that the

[49] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xiv.

[50] See Witkam, Establishing the Stemma; Edzard, Comparable Problems.

[51] On the category of universal variation, see Greg, *Calculus of Variants*, 9.

[52] De Goeje used a similar process to date the *Masālik* of al-Iṣṭakhrī, and to separate it out from that of al-Iṣṭakhrī's predecessor, Abū Zayd al-Balkhī, Die Iṣṭakhrī-Balkhī Frage. See also Kramers, La question, 12–4.

Bodleian copy was an extract from the first draft of the geography, which Ibn Khurradādhbih finished around 232/846, at the end of, or slightly after, the reign of al-Wāthiq. The Vienna copy, in contrast, reflected Ibn Khurradādhbih's final, and thus authorial, redaction, containing his revisions and improvements, which could not have been completed before 272/885, owing to a handful of references contained only in this particular manuscript pertaining to a later historical period.

As a means of assessing the validity of this argument, de Goeje drew on the dissemination of the adventure of Sallām al-Tarjumān, which he claimed was the latest event mentioned in the Bodleian copy, occurring during the middle of al-Wāthiq's reign. As with much of the material found in the *Masālik,* the Vienna and Bodleian redactions of the adventure diverge in very significant ways, ranging from the details of the itinerary to the actual description of the ominous wall. Several early geographical authorities, such as Ibn al-Rusta (fl. 300/912), Ibn al-Faqīh, and Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Muqaddasī (fl. 375/985),[53] incorporated al-Wāthiq's mission to the wall into their respective works, usually by directly citing Ibn Khurradādhbih as their source. From these parallel witnesses, de Goeje concluded that it was the version of the story contained in the Bodleian account which first circulated widely, and therefore the Bodleian manuscript, which evidently lacked the later historical references found in the Vienna recension, must have been based upon an earlier, if inferior, redaction.[54]

While de Goeje's theory of two stages of authorial composition and publication has been generally accepted within the ensuing scholarly treatment of the *Masālik*, as with many of de Goeje's other arguments, there have been several prominent detractors. The Austrian Orientalist Josef Marquart contended that the adventure of Tamīm b. Baḥr al-Muṭṭawwiʿī among the Uyghur Turks had to have occurred after the reign of al-Wāthiq; as details from Tamīm's report appear in both recensions of the *Masālik,* Marquart reasoned that the theory of two authorial recensions was incorrect.[55] Attempting to restore the original force of de Goeje's thesis, Vladimir Minorsky, in turn, challenged Marquart's analysis, arguing, largely on inferential evidence, that Tamīm's journey amongst the Uyghurs took place around 206/821, and thus the reference to the account in the Bodleian recension did not impinge upon de Goeje's hypothesis.[56] The Soviet Orientalist P. G. Bulgakov, for his part, countered that the entire *Masālik* was riddled with anachronisms, such that the older dates in the Bodleian copy did not necessarily reflect an earlier stage of composition. As for the missing references to later historical events, Bulgakov argued that, considering how much else was absent from the manuscript, one could not conclude that this version was itself an earlier redaction.[57]

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[53] The only textual evidence for the modern convention of vocalising the topynomic as Muqaddasī, i.e. from *bayt al-muqaddas*, and not the more common Maqdisī, is the reading at the concluding verse of the *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, "*...Abā Ḥasanin wazīra bni l-Rafīʿi / muqaddasatan tabiṣṣu baṣīṣa shadhrin...*," 498; see also de Goeje, Praefatio, in al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, vii; *GAL*, ii, 402; see, however, A. Fischer, al-Maqdisī und al-Muqaddasī.

[54] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xx.

[55] Marquart, *Osteuropäische*, 390; cf. V.V. Barthold, Preface, 12–3.

[56] Minorsky, Tamīm, 303

[57] Bulgakov, Kniga putei i gosudarstv.

However, outside the fields of medieval Russia and inner Asia, where Bulgakov's dating of Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography has received modest attention,[58] the two-stage process of composition proposed by de Goeje has been generally accepted as a historical fact.[59] In a magisterial article on the *Masālik*, James Montgomery has demonstrated the profound limitations of the epistemic assumptions at the basis of the textual criticism employed by de Goeje, as they fail to adequately account for the notions of authorship and the practices of composition and publication prevailing in the third/ninth century. Montgomery advances this conclusion most poignantly in the service of a nuanced reading of the two distinct introductions which open the Bodleian and Vienna copies. Yet regarding the actual composition of the *Masālik*, he accepts the fundamental basis of de Goeje's thesis as authoritative and unsurpassed, namely that Ibn Khurradādhbih reissued the geography at some point after 272/885. Montgomery sees in these two versions, however, not scholarly stages of composition and improvement, as de Goeje would have it, but rather acts of realpolitik positioned within the ever-shifting power structures of ʿAbbāsid society.[60] A full assessment of de Goeje's theory, nonetheless, would require a reexamination of the actual codicological evidence.

POETRY, VARIANCE, AND DESIGN

Admittedly, an exhaustive account of all the variants separating the Vienna and Bodleian manuscripts is beyond the scope of the present study. The vast majority of these divergences are contained within de Goeje's critical apparatus, which is rather obscure and, at times, goes to great length to obfuscate the relationship between the recensions. In terms of collating the manuscripts de Goeje has done an admirable job of producing a workable text. Yet there are notable shortcomings with Goeje's editorial methodology, which forces the two distinct recensions of the *Masālik* into the artificial format of a text that never existed. His edition flattens out the profound variations of structure and content into a homogenous whole, often obfuscating a reception history of expansion, redaction, and emendation.

In de Landberg's estimation, his discovery in Alexandria represented an *unicum*. Such a claim is correct in so far as the Vienna copy offers a unique witness to the reception of the *Masālik*; however, the overwhelming parallels with the Bodleian recension point to a deep connection that binds together these two manuscripts. Moreover, as many archives of Arabic manuscripts have yet to be fully catalogued or remain unknown, it is still a rather tenuous business to make authoritative statements concerning the existence or absence of any given text or manuscript tradition.[61] Yet, barring future manuscript discoveries, the

[58] See, for instance, Pritsak, Corporation of Ar-Rūs, 244n86.

[59] See Hadj-Sadok, Ibn Khurradādhbih, *EI*^{2}; Bosworth, Ebn orda beh, *EIr*; Lewicki, *Źródła Arabskie*, i, 55–6; Krachkovskii, *Istoriia arabskoi*, 148; Miquel, *Géographie*, i, 56n3, 90; Riḍā, Ibn Khurdādbih, 4; Göckenjan and Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, 30.

[60] Montgomery, Serendipity, 198–202.

[61] See Witkam on the problem of the 'unique' manuscript for medieval Arabic codicology, Establishing the Stemma, 90.

question of how exactly the Bodleian and Vienna copies are related may never fully be resolved. De Goeje's thesis, as he presents it, offers what appears to be a very reasonable treatment of the surviving material. However, I contend that the basic assumptions that inform his understanding of the historical connections between the Bodleian and Vienna recessions need reconsideration.

De Goeje offered the Vienna recension as the *codex optimus* and used it as the general foundation for his edition.[62] While both manuscripts share a great deal in common, the Bodleian recension is missing a significant amount of material, just as it also contains notable information not found in its Vienna counterpart. There are two primary means of assessing the relationship of the surviving corpus: a comparison of the internal distribution of variants across the manuscripts; and the use of external witnesses to the *Masālik* as a rubric by which to measure the manuscripts themselves. It should be noted that both sources of information are reflections of the historical reception of the geography. Without the future discovery of something akin to an authorial autograph, such a methodology cannot truly leave us with the original form(s) of the text as Ibn Khurradādhbih had intended. As with the general transmission of medieval learning, the reception of Arabic geographical literature did not occur merely through a closed or static process of transcription, rather it was open to reformulation and reconfiguration based upon the prevailing interests and desires of authors, copyists, and their audiences, all shaped by each context of reception. This could produce variants horizontally, in a synchronic fashion of dissemination, as well as vertically, through the diachronic accretions inherent in any historical transmission over time.

A point drawn out by Bulgakov that warrants greater consideration is the question of poetry.[63] As Montgomery has suggested, in addition to administrative and geographical horizons, the categories of *adab* and *munādama* appear to animate the driving logic of the *Masālik*.[64] According to the *Fihrist*, Ibn Khurradādhbih was the *nadīm*, or boon companion, to the caliph al-Muʿtamid, to whom he appears to have dedicated his study of music and musicians, the *Kitāb al-lahw wa-l-malāhī*.[65] This work was evidently the source for the perturbation expressed by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d. 356/967) in his encyclopaedic collection on the subject, the *Kitāb al-aghānī*, where repeatedly he draws into question Ibn Khurradādhbih's reliability.[66] As with the *Masālik*, Ibn Khurradādhbih's book on music survives only in a very abridged state, i.e. through an extended citation by al-Masʿūdī, and as an extract, or *mukhtār*, which includes, in addition to a much discussed introduction on the history of music and singing, a selection of short biographical sketches on early singers and musicians, in the form of a *ṭabaqāt* work consisting of over forty entries. Many of these entries quote from earlier collections by Yūnus al-Kātib (d. ca. 147/765) and Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 188/804). While this work is admittedly quite abridged, it appears to have been

[62] De Goeje, "...Comiti de Landberg qui optimum libri codicem manuscriptum indagavit...," Préface, *Masālik*, v.

[63] Bulgakov, Kniga putei i gosudarstv, 133, 135.

[64] Montgomery, Serendipity, 198.

[65] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §§3213–27.

[66] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī,* i, 36, ix, 250, 272, xv, 27–8, 137, xviii, 343; de Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xi; Montgomery, Serendipity, 193–4; Kilpatrick, *Book of Songs*, 44, 105–6, 112–3.

considerably longer, for al-Iṣbahānī cites Ibn Khurradādhbih as an authority, though at times as a rather suspect one, in his entries for the lives of over thirty additional singers and musicians not mentioned in the surviving material of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Kitāb al-lahw*. The citation of verse forms a major locus of attention for Ibn Khurradādhbih here, as well as with his appearance in the *Aghānī*.

The Vienna recension of the *Masālik* is also marked by the repeated citation of poetry. The deployment of verse functions as one of the basic semiotic structures governing the progression of the geography. Stopping at remote way stations and obscure watering holes, Ibn Khurradādhbih quotes from a broad repertoire of Arabic verse. This intricate form of intertextuality results in a geography which comments upon a poetic corpus and a corpus of poetry which enlivens the meaning of the discipline of geography. Included here are also two Persian verse citations, offering some of the earliest attestations of Persian poetry written in the Arabic script.[67] While Arabic as the cosmopolitan language of learning and culture represents a hegemonic discourse of power and authority, according to al-Iṣbahānī, Persian poetry and songs had long featured within the belletristic practices of the ʿAbbāsid court.[68] Ibn Khurradādhbih in the *Kitāb al-lahw* also cites another set of Persian verses, ascribed to Bārbad, the famous court minstrel of the Sāsānian king Khusraw II Parwīz (r. 591–628 C.E.). Here Ibn Khurradādhbih advances the cultivation of music by the Sāsānian kings as one of their courtly practices worthy of emulation.[69] This intersection of cosmopolitanism and the Sāsānian past is likewise a central current running throughout the *Masālik*.

On average, the Vienna manuscript offers a poetic citation slightly more than once every folio, with over eighty-five individual quotations. The poets cited range from such figures as Bahrām Gūr (r. 420–38 C.E.) and Imruʾ al-Qays (d. ca. 550 C.E.) to Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 198/813), and Abū ʿUbāda al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897). The Bodleian redaction, in contrast, preserves less than ten of these citations.[70] There is much to suggest, though, that the archetype for the Bodleian copy was derived from material that contained more in the way of poetry.

One basis for this argument is found in the fragment of the *Masālik* that de Goeje cryptically alludes to in his critical apparatus as MS C. According to his preface, de Goeje discovered this excerpt in a manuscript in Oxford, though he does not supply at this point any more information about the exact provenance of this discovery.[71] However, buried in a note, halfway through his Latin critical apparatus, he mentions that in the Bodleian manuscript of Ibn Ḥawqal there were a few folios which related to the geography of Ibn Khurradādhbih, though, again, he does not identify this explicitly with his MS C.[72] The

[67] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 26, 118.

[68] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, i, 379, v, 293–5.

[69] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Lahw,* 16.

[70] See, for instance, the following verse citations MS B, fols. 10a, 15a–b, 43b, 65b, 78a, 79a; cf. *Masālik*, 15–16, 82, 128–9, 162, 181.

[71] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xiv, xvii.

[72] De Goeje, *Masālik*, 92 note a; Uri, *Bibliothecae*, 209, §963. When editing this passage for his edition of Ibn Ḥawqal, de Goeje appears to have not yet known the provenance of the excerpt, as he merely observes, "quae sequuntur in B. desiderantur," Ibn Ḥawqal, *Masālik*, 402 note d. This break is not

fragment in question is preserved in Bodleian MS Hunt 538, which concludes with an excerpt appended to the end of Ibn Ḥawqal's geography that copies, without direct attribution, a range of material from the *Masālik.* This includes, most notably, the famed account of Sallām al-Tarjumān. While this particular fragment is original to the manuscript, written out in the same hand as the rest of Ibn Ḥawqal's geography, its exact placement within the text appears to reflect a later restoration of the codex. The excerpt begins *in medias res* "...b. Qabṭ b. Ḥām," starting on a new folio (f. 140a). Just as the fragment abruptly cuts into the original concluding sections on Transoxiana from Ibn Ḥawqal's geography (f. 139b), it breaks off in mid stride with a description of waterways, "it spills into the Arsanās, the river of Shimsāṭ...." (f. 145a).[73]

There is much that binds this fragment of the *Masālik* (= MS H) with the fuller recension preserved in MS Hunt 433 (= MS B); both appear to derive from a common archetype (β), which is distinct from the archetype for the Vienna redaction (ω). The most obvious example of this is found in their treatment of Sallām's famed adventure to the wall of Gog and Magog. Both Bodleian manuscripts set this anecdote at the end of the report on the lands of the north (*khabar al-jarbī*), which accounts for Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Khazar.[74] This follows a well-established belief that Gog and Magog and the wall built to stave them off were found in some septentrional land. This northern location is followed throughout the early Arabic narratives of the ominous rampart,[75] and is supported by Syriac accounts, which consistently situate the barrier in the frontiers of the north (*sawpay garbyā*).[76] However, the Vienna copy places Sallām's account as the climactic conclusion in a chapter of wondrous buildings (*ʿajāʾib al-bunyān*) of the world.[77] Both the Bodleian versions follow Sallām's adventure with the report of the southern territories (*al-tayman bilād al-junūb*). The Vienna copy, in contrast, moves on to a description of the wonders of various natural phenomena found in the world (*ʿajāʾib ṭabāʾiʿ al-buldān*), thereby lifting al-Wāthiq's mission out of the geographical progression of the *Masālik*, and placing it squarely within a well-established discursive tradition of marvel-writing.[78]

The Bodleian redactions parallel each other in their presentation of Sallām's adventure, which, when compared to the Vienna manuscript, appear to be significant abridgements. This is also true of the account of the pyramids of Giza found in both Bodleian copies, which excludes the expedition to uncover pharaonic treasures during the reign of Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 270/884), the ʿAbbāsid Turkish general and *de facto* ruler of Egypt and Syria.

Additionally, from these three manuscripts, we can infer that poetry was a central feature to Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography. However, unlike the Vienna copy (= MS V), both Bodleian

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mentioned by Kramers in his edition of Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūra*, Preface, v–vi, cf. 519.

[73] See Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, 116–7.

[74] According to MS B, the account of the wall comes directly after the report of the north, fol. 61a; while MS H situates the adventure within the report of the north, fol. 142b.

[75] See, for instance, Ibn Hishām, *Tījān,* 103; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ,* xvi, 16.

[76] See pseudo-Methodius, *Apokalypse*, 15, §6.

[77] MS V fols. 68b–72a; compare this with MS H, which mentions the rampart against Gog and Magog within the list of wondrous buildings, but does not place the account of the adventure here, fol. 145a.

[78] MS B, fol. 64a; MS H, fol. 142b; MS V, fol. 72a.

redactions are almost entirely devoid of verse citations. In the following chart (fig. 1), which contains parallel passages for the description of Madīna and its dependencies (*aʿrāḍ*), the Vienna recension quotes seven verse citations (§§3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15) interspersed with geographical descriptions; this compares to two citations in MS B (§§ 6, 9) and just one line preserved in MS H (§11), which is in the form of a proverb. As for the actual content, the Bodleian copies only abridge and rearrange material that is contained in the much fuller Vienna redaction. Such is the case with the opening discussion of *ṭayba,* sweet smelling, as a name for Madīna (§§2–4). Like much of the material in the Vienna redaction, the honorific of the city offers an occasion to adumbrate poetic citations which use *ṭayba* as an appellation for Madīna. The first, by Ṣirma al-Anṣārī, comes from the period of the Prophet's migration to Madīna and the early Muslim community,[79] while the second, according to the famed historian and exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), was composed by al-ʿAbbās b. al-Faḍl, as a dirge lamenting a massacre of the inhabitants of Madīna, which occurred in 271/884 and was carried out by the descedants of the seventh Imām, Mūsā al-Kāẓim.[80] Here the citations appear to be deployed as a means of directly commenting on the significance of the honorific title for the city. In contrast, the Bodleian recensions, which considerably abridge the entire passage, collapse this merely into "Madīna is Ṭayba. And it is Yathrib," (§§2, 5) moving straight on to the geographical description.

As with the majority of the poetry in the *Masālik*, these two verses are missing from both Bodleian redactions; yet their absence, in their own right, does not signify that these redactions are descedants of a copy (β) that was composed prior to the expanded archetype of the Vienna manuscript (ω). De Goeje's thesis would have it that Ibn Khurradādhbih incrementally improved upon the first redaction of the *Masālik* (β), adding material to the geography over time, and thus the verses containing later references, such as to the massacre in Madīna, were made to the text only after it had already been disseminated in what would in hindsight, appear to be an abridged form. While this explanation is, in certain ways, compelling, there is much to indicate that, to the contrary, the archetype of the Bodleian recension (β) does not reflect the first stages of composition, but rather a later process of abridgement.

The use of key words and catch phrases as devices to expand out poetry appears to be integral to the design of the *Masālik.* As with the word *ṭayba,* this is the case with the account of how the Sāsānian Marzubān levied a land tax (*kharāj*) over Madīna, which in turn occasions the line of verse (§6) describing how the Qurayẓ and al-Naḍīr tribes also continued a similar practice of extracting tribute from the city. This line of verse is missing from MS H, so too is the catch phrase, "who raised taxes from it," (§5) which sets in motion the citation from the Anṣār poet (§6) on the tax given to Khusraw and then to the Arab tribes, suggesting a process of abridgement which excised both the verses and the material occasioning them. Such is also the case with the proverbial adage "Mārid revolted and al-Ablaq withstood" (§11), where MS B cuts out not only the quotation in question, but also the catchword, Mārid, which gives rise to it. In contrast, MS H follows in this one case the fuller Vienna recension preserving both the toponym and the proverb.

[79] See Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, ii, 152–55.

[80] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. III, 2105–6.

MS V, fol. 55a–56a	MS B, fol. 65a–66a	MS H, fol. 142b–143a
[§1] From al-Maʿdin to al-ʿUsayla, where there are wells of brackish water...	[§1] From al-Maʿdin to al-ʿUsayla, where there are wells of brackish water...	[§7] The Dependencies of Madīna
[§2] then to Madīna, and it is Ṭayba, thirty-five miles.	[§2] then to Madīna thirty-five miles.*	[§2] Madīna is Ṭayba.
[§3] Ṣirma al-Anṣārī said: *fa-lammā atānā aẓhara Allāhu dīnahū wa aṣbaḥa masrūran bi-ṭaybata rāḍiyā* But when [the Prophet] came to us in Ṭayba, God manifested His religion and he became happy and contented.	[§7] The Dependencies of Madīna	
[§4] al-ʿAbbās b. al-Faḍl al-ʿAlawī said: *ʿalā Ṭaybata llatī bāraka Allāhu ʿalayhā li-khātami l-mursalīna* [Cry] over Ṭayba which God has blessed with the seal of the Prophets.	[§2] Madīna is Ṭayba.	
[§5] And it is also called Yathrib. There was a governor in control of it and of Tihāma in the Age of Ignorance (*jāhiliyya*), appointed by the Marzubān of the desert who raised taxes from it. The Qurayẓa and al-Naḍīr tribes were rulers who ruled over Madīna, al-Aws and al-Khazraj.	[§5] And it is Yathrib. There was a governor in control of it and of Tihāma in the Age of Ignorance (*jāhiliyya*), appointed by the Marzubān of the desert who raised taxes from it. The Qurayẓa and al-Naḍīr tribes were rulers over Madīna, al-Aws and al-Khazraj.	[§5] And it is Yathrib. There were two* governors in control of it and of Tihāma in the Age of Ignorance (*jāhiliyya*), appointed by the Marzubān of the desert; the Qurayẓa and al-Naḍīr tribes were rulers over Madīna, al-Aws and al-Khazraj.
[§6] Concerning this, the Anṣār poet said: *tuʾaddī l-kharja baʿda kharāji Kisrā wa kharjin min Qurayẓata wa-l-Naḍīri* You pay the impost after the tax of Khusraw and now an impost from Qurayẓa and al-Naḍīr.[i]	[§6] The Anṣār poet said: *nuʾaddī l-kharja baʿda kharāji Kisrā wa kharjin min Qurayẓata wa-l-Naḍīri* We pay the impost after the tax of Khusraw and now an impost from Qurayẓa and al-Naḍīr.	
[§7] The Dependencies of Madīna		

[i] Cf. Kister, Relations with Arabia, 45–6.

Figure 1: Variance between the three Recensions on the Dependencies of Madīna (asterisks mark notable variants).

[§8] Then there is Taymāʾ...	[§8] Then there is Taymāʾ...	[§8] Then there is Taymāʾ...
	[§17] The Path which the Prophet of God, peace upon him, took on his migration....	
	[§7] The Dependencies of Madīna are:	
	[§14] al-Furʿ, Dhū l-Marwa, Wādī l-Qurā, Madayn, Khayr.	
	[§16] Fadak, Qurā ʿArabiyya, al-Waḥīd, Namira, al-Kharīfa...	
[§9] It is concerning him that the poet said:	[§9] Concerning him the poet said:	
bi-l-ablaqi l-fardi min taymāʾa manziluhu ḥiṣnun ḥaṣīnun wa jārun ghayru ghaddāri	*bi-l-ablaqi l-fardi min taymāʾa manziluhu ḥiṣnun ḥaṣīnun wa jārun ghayru ghaddāri*	
His abode in al-Albaq al-Fard in Taymāʾ, a fortified citadel whose guardian is faithful.[ii]	His abode in al-Albaq al-Fard in Taymāʾ, a fortified citadel whose guardian is faithful.	
[§10] Then there is Dūmat al-Janda; it is thirteen stages from Madīna and ten stages from Kūfa and ten stages from Damascus and its citadel is called Mārid.	[§10] Then there is Dūmat al-Jandal and it is thirteen stages from Madīna and ten stages from Kūfa, and ten stages from Damascus.	[§10] There is also Dūmat al-Jandal and it is thirteen stages from Madīna and ten stages from Kūfa and ten stages from Damascus and its citadel is called Mārid.
[§11] al-Zabāʾ said:		[§11] The poet* said:
Tamarrada Māridun wa ʿazza l-Ablaqu		*Tamarrada Māridun wa ʿazza l-Ablaqu*
Mārid revolted and al-Ablaq withstood.[iii]		Mārid revolted and al-Ablaq withstood
[§12] And Dūma is where the two arbitrators [for ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya] met.		[§12] In Dūma the two arbitrators [for ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya] met.
[§13] Aws b. Jābir said:		
law kuntu fī Dūmata aw fī Fāriʿin lam tanju min raybi l-manūni l-wāqiʿi		
If I were in Dūmata or Fāriʿ you wouldn't have escaped from imminent misfortune.[iv]		

[ii] See al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §1057.
[iii] See al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, i, 97; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, v, 38.
[iv] See al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 251–2, §2045.

Figure 1 continued.

[§14] Then there is al-Furʿ and Dhū l-Marwa and Wādī l-Qurā and Madayn and Khayr. [15] Marḥab said: *Qad ʿalimat Ḥimyaru annī Marḥab shākka l-salāḥ baṭlun mujarrabu*. The Ḥimyar have learned that I am Marḥab, loaded with arms, a proven warrior.[v]	[§14] Then there is al-Furʿ, Dhū l-Marwa, Wādī l-Qurā, Madayn, Khayr,
[§16] Then there is Fadak, Qurā ʿArabiyya, al-Waḥīda, Tamra, al-Ḥarīfa, ʿĀdī, Ḥaḍira...	[§16] Fadak, Qurā ʿArabiyya, al-Ḥayda, Namira, al-Kharīfa, ʿĀditī,* Ḥaḍira...
[§17] The path the Apostle of God, may God have blessings upon him and his family, took when on his migration...	[§17] The path the Apostle of God, peace upon him took, on his migration...

[v] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. I, 1577.

Figure 1 continued.

The Bodleian manuscripts preserve different citations. However, as with the parallel texts of this passage and throughout the respective manuscripts, it appears that these two recensions descend from a copy which consisted of similar arrangements of material and abridgements within the text itself. It thus stands to reason that the archetype for these two manuscripts (β) once contained a fuller array of poetic citations. Following de Goeje's thesis of two stages of composition, André Miquel viewed the lack of poetry in the Bodleian recension as an indication of a literary evolution separating the two compositions, whereby Ibn Khurradādhbih added material to an improved edition, which in the evolution of descriptive geography marked a noted turn toward *adab* and belletristic composition.[81] However, the fusion of geography and poetry can already be seen a generation earlier with the belletristic interests of Abū l-Mundhir Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206/821).[82] Furthermore, the reductive nature of variants found in the Bodleian manuscripts could also point, not to a process of authorial improvement, but rather to a later stage of redaction, which took little interest in poetry.

A similar conclusion may be gathered from the verse citations employed in Ibn al-Faqīh's geography which appear to be taken from the *Masālik*. Ibn al-Faqīh shared with Ibn Khurradādhbih his penchant for poetry and marvellous accounts and drew extensively from the *Masālik*, almost entirely without attribution, save in one instance, where he directly refers to the author of the geography as ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Khurradādhbih.[83]

[81] Miquel, *Géographie*, i, 56n3, 87–92.

[82] See particularly Ibn al-Kalbī's work identifying the geographical references in the poetry of Imruʾ al-Qays, Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 305

[83] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 410; cf. ibid., *Mukhtaṣar,* 203 note k.

For his relation of al-Wāthiq's mission to the wall of Gog and Magog, as well as his description of the pyramids of Giza, Ibn al-Faqīh follows the text of the *Masālik*, drawing clearly from the archetype for the Bodleian recensions (β); his version of this material is also missing the considerable expansions which are found only in the Vienna manuscript and presumably its archetype (ω). Yet, Ibn al-Faqīh also cites poetic material that finds direct parallels in Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography as preserved in the Vienna copy.[84] This supports the thesis that the β-archetype, from which the Bodleian manuscripts descend, also included a broader array of poetic sources.

Most importantly, one of these poetic citations quoted by Ibn al-Faqīh is from the famed nostalgic *qaṣīda* on the ruins of the Sāsānian great audience hall of Ctesiphon (Madāʾin), by al-Buḥturī, generally thought to have been composed in 270/883–4.[85] Ibn al-Faqīh quotes the same three verses from this poem that are cited in the Vienna manuscript. Expectedly, this citation is entirely absent from the Bodleian recensions of the section in question. De Goeje advanced his theory that Ibn Khurradādhbih composed the geography at two distinct historical periods, largely on the basis of such poetical material datable to the last quarter of the third/ninth century. The evidence he cites in support of this thesis are these verses as well as another poetic citation of al-Buḥturī, in addition to the account of an extended adventure into the pyramids of Giza, all of which are absent from the Bodleian redactions, and yet are datable to the latter half of the century.[86] However, the fact that Ibn al-Faqīh parallels the β-archetype for his account of the pyramids as well as al-Wāthiq's mission, but also cites poetical material from this later period, which only appears in the Vienna recension, lends further credence to the idea that the Bodleian copies do not reflect a first redaction, but rather a later abridgement.

Ibn al-Faqīh follows these verses by al-Buḥturī on Ctesiphon with another poem on the same ruins which he had heard directly from its author, Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 351/962), the renowned ʿAbbāsid secretary of Persian descent, who according to Ibn al-Nadīm was a disciple (*ghulām*) of the court poet Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896), famed for his rivalry with al-Buḥturī.[87] Ibn Khurradādhbih happens to have been on cordial terms with both poets.[88] Assuming that Ibn al-Faqīh indeed took his reference to these three verses of al-Buḥturī's ode on Ctesiphon from the *Masālik*, his extended quotation of Ibn al-Ḥājib may well be designed as an intertextual moment of reflexivity, commenting not only on the poetic discourse of nostalgia before the ruins, but on a specific geographical manner of imagining ruins encoded in verse. The absence from the Bodleian copies of a handful of passages does not in its own right determine anything about the date for the redaction of the β-archetype, nor for that matter the historical composition of Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography. De Goeje's thesis of composition largely rests on the logical fallacy that an absence of evidence is evidence of absence.

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[84] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 383, 391; cf. Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 7, 15.

[85] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xviii–xix.

[86] MS V, fol. 68a; see *Masālik*, 162; al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān*, ii, 1152–62, §470; on the date of composition, see al-Ṣayrafī's note, 1152.

[87] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 415, 531–8.

[88] See Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, i, 347–8; see below for al-Buḥturī.

OF ANACHRONISM AND TAXATION

In his introduction to the *Masālik,* de Goeje claimed that there was no material in the Bodleian copy which postdated 234/848–9; he upheld this as the strongest evidence for his theory of two stages of composition.[89] However, this statement is misleading. The *Masālik* cites a variety of authorities, from the famed littérateur al-Jāḥiẓ to the court astronomer Muḥammad b. Mūsā. In keeping with this citational practice, the Bodleian copy thrice quotes a certain al-Iṣbahānī as an authority on the taxation of Syria. These citations are all given without the authority of an *isnād* and all begin with the form of "al-Iṣbahānī said (*qāla*)..." In contrast to other material missing from the Vienna copy, from minor variants to an entire map of the earth, de Goeje held that these three quotations were not original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography, and he assumed that these citations represented a later interpolation. As such, he chose to bury this material in his critical apparatus as not authentic to the *Masālik*, arguing that these quotations were first marginal annotations, made by a later owner of a copy of the first redaction of the geography, which then mistakenly made their way into the manuscript tradition, as though they were original to the text.[90] Although de Goeje did not explicitly mention it, his reason for this line of analysis is that al-Iṣbahānī presents material which must postdate the period in which he thought that Ibn Khurradādhbih first composed his geography.

According to al-Iṣbahānī, Ibn al-Mudabbir (d. ca. 270/883) stated that the total tax revenue for Damascus was 140,000 dinars. This information on the tax revenue dates to a period after 240/854–5, when Ibn al-Mudabbir, the famed poet and powerful statesman, was appointed by al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–48/847–62) to the position of director of finance (*ʿāmil al-kharāj*) over Damascus and Jordan.[91] Ibn al-Mudabbir first had charge over the bureau of taxation (*dīwān al-kharāj*) of Sāmarrāʾ and eventually he took over responsibility for the tax revenue of the Levant and Egypt. The career of Ibn al-Mudabbir had many twists and turns; he was in and out of favour, due largely to his rivalry with Ibn Ṭūlūn, the future ruler of Egypt and the Levant. It is further possible that the information related to al-Iṣbahānī dates to a period after 258/872, when Ibn al-Mudabbir regained his position in Syria.[92] Whatever the case may have been, this material in the Bodleian manuscript must pertain to a period after 232/846, which is when de Goeje theorised that Ibn Khurradādhbih first composed his geography. De Goeje believed that the citations from al-Iṣbahānī were meant to correct original figures given by Ibn Khurradādhbih. Yet the argument could be turned around. There is nothing explicit in the way these citations are presented in the text that look as though they were meant to correct Ibn Khurradādhbih. For instance, the Bodleian manuscript first gives the tax revenue of Ḥims as 340,000 dinars, and then cites al-Iṣbahānī who claims that it no longer reached more than 180,000 dinars.[93] Proof for why this could not be an authorial emendation remains to be seen.

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[89] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xx.

[90] MS B, fols. 38a–40a; de Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xxi, 74 note a, 76 note p, 77 note o.

[91] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 596, 599, 615–6. See H.L. Gottschalk, Ibn al-Mudabbir, *EI²*.

[92] See Balawī (fl. 330/941), *Sīrat Ibn Ṭūlūn*, 43–6, 49–50, 56–7, 118, 175–7.

[93] MS B, fol. 39b; Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 76 note p. Compare this with the figures listed by Qudāma, *Kharāj*, 178, 184.

In the Bodleian recension, Ibn Khurradādhbih refers to having directly based his research on information in the bureau of taxation (*dīwān al-kharāj*), and it is possible that the citations from al-Iṣbahānī are themselves part of the larger administrative network through which Ibn Khurradādhbih travelled.[94] The absence of these quotations in the Vienna copy does not prove them to be spurious additions to the *Masālik.* For instance, the Vienna manuscript cites on three separate occasions the administrator al-Faḍl b. Marwān (d. 250/864) on the tax revenue for the districts Fārs, Iṣfahān, and the Ahwāz. These citations are all given in the form of direct transmission (*wa khabbaranī…*).[95] As for al-Faḍl b. Marwān, he worked in the tax bureau under Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 140–93/786–809), held the rank of *wazīr* under al-Muʿtaṣim for a period of three years (218–21/833–6), fell into disgrace, and then served in a lesser position during the reign of al-Wāthiq.[96] By de Goeje's own reckoning this material would have been original to the so-called first redaction of the *Masālik.* Yet all three of these citations are absent from the Bodleian recension, which de Goeje claims to be a descendant of the archetype for this first recension. For the citations in question, the Bodleian version appears to have transposed large sections of material in a process of rearrangement that makes its collation with the Vienna manuscript rather difficult.[97]

Using the same method of inferential reasoning that places al-Faḍl b. Marwān into the archetype of the Bodleian manuscript, one could argue that the citations to al-Iṣbahānī were also original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's ongoing process of composition, which built upon his proximity to the financial records of the state. However, just as these citations are missing from the Vienna recension, they also appear to be absent from the surviving reception history of the *Masālik.* Thus, for instance, when al-Muqaddasī presents Ibn Khurradādhbih's tax revenue for the Levant as outdated, he clearly draws from these unrevised figures.[98] Al-Muqaddasī, however, is an interesting case, for he acknowledges that he only had access to Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* in an abridged form (*mukhtaṣar*).[99] On the basis of widely different criteria, de Goeje chose to exclude material from both the Bodleian and Vienna recensions as not authentic to Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography; though given the state of the codicological evidence, such a method of *divinatio* is entirely speculative, and relies upon a conjectural process of emendation.

Without further details concerning the Iṣbahānī quoted in the *Masālik* it is impossible to determine with certainty either his identity or his relationship to Ibn Khurradādhbih. There are, however, notable candidates. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, the theologian and founder in Baghdad of the Ẓāhirī school of jurisprudence, Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd b. ʿAlī l-Iṣbahānī (d. 270/884), wrote a *Kitāb al-kharāj.*[100] Yet, while his son, Ibn Dāwūd (d. 294/909), was both a celebrated jurist and a man of letters (*adīb*), there is little direct evidence tying

[94] MS B, fol. 70b; cf. MS V, fol. 61b; Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 144 note a.

[95] Ibid., 21, 42–3, 47. Ibn al-Faqīh cites al-Faḍl b. Marwān on the *kharāj* for Fārs, evidently from the *Masālik*, *Buldān*, 411.

[96] Ibn Khālikan, *Wafayāt*, iv, 45–7, §530; see Sourdel, *Le vizirat*, i, 246–53.

[97] MS B, fols. 15b, 26b; Meynard, Livre des routes, 36, 41–2, *Masālik*, 20 notes b, c, 42–3 note k, 48 note a, "deinde multa in B desiderantur."

[98] See al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 189; cf. Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik,* 75–7.

[99] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 4–5.

[100] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ii, 62.

Abū Sulaymān to Ibn Khurradādhbih or the ʿAbbāsid administration.[101] Another possibility is that this reference is to one of the forefathers of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, the author of the *Aghānī*, several of whom appear to have been connected to Sāmarrāʾ and the secretariat. According to Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), Abū l-Faraj had two uncles who were famed secretaries during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, which, if correct, would coincide directly with the period in question.[102] While Abū l-Faraj and his immediate family were from Baghdad and Sāmarrāʾ, his great-grandfather was already referred to as al-Iṣbahānī, and thus the paternal side of his entire family was known during this time by the Iṣbahānī toponymic.[103] Ibn al-Faqīh, in the course of his geography, cites a certain Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Iṣbahānī as a geographical authority.[104] This may refer to Muḥammad b. Aḥmad the paternal grandfather of Abū l-Faraj, who was also connected to ʿAbbāsid courtly circles during the last quarter of the third century of the Islamic era.[105] It is certainly reasonable to suppose that there was an Iṣbahānī during this period who had direct contact with officials in Sāmarrāʾ and who could have been cited by Ibn Khurradādhbih. While we may construe an entire array of possibilities, without further evidence, either internal to the manuscripts themselves or in the external reception history of the *Masālik*, as preserved in later sources, there is nothing to either substantiate that the citations from al-Iṣbahānī and his information taken from Ibn al-Mudabbir were authorial presentations within the *Masālik* or that they were later scribal emendations.

This question of authenticity, however, raises a much deeper issue: namely, the retrojection of modern notions of authorship onto the practices and values of composition and circulation that governed ʿAbbāsid book culture. Foremost, the problem lies in viewing classical Arabic geographies that have survived the vicissitudes of time as the product of individual authors who controlled the design and form of these works in their entirety. As with other problems posed by the archive, the extent to which the material found in the *Masālik* is original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's composition is a question that most likely will never be resolved.

There is much to suggest, however, that a good deal of the *Masālik* draws upon earlier geographical and administrative data in circulation amongst the secretariat long before Ibn Khurradādhbih ever began to compose his work. The geography consistently makes historical references that evoke an earlier generation of bureaucrats and administrators. There are several accounts that pertain to events that predate the first half of the third/ninth century. Such is the case with how the progenitor of the Ṭāhirds, ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir (d. 230/844), gifted al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–33) two thousand Ghuzz Turks as captives from Kabul in 211–2/826–7,[106] or how he extracted 44,840,000 dirhams from Khurāsān in taxes.[107] Much of the material on far-flung regions is also pulled together from earlier

[101] Ibid., ii, 63.

[102] Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, 107; cf. al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 440, §3925; Khalaf Allāh, *Ṣāḥib al-aghānī*, 36, Kilpatrick, *Book of Songs*, 14–5.

[103] Ibid., 351n3; see Khalaf Allāh, *Ṣāḥib al-aghānī*, 24–5, 36–8.

[104] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 407–8.

[105] See Abū l-Faraj, *Aghānī*, x, 67, xvi, 384; Khalaf Allāh, *Ṣāḥib al-aghānī*, 37–8.

[106] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 37, cf. 39.

[107] Ibid., 34; MS B, fol. 10b.

sources. For the Uyghur Turks, Ibn Khurradādhbih draws from Tamīm b. Baḥr's journey to the Orkhon, which, according to Minorsky, occurred around 206/821.[108] A good deal of the information on Byzantium is taken from the writings of Muslim b. Abī Muslim al-Jarmī, a captive along the Byzantine marchlands (*thughūr*), who, with some four thousand others, was released in a prisoner exchange negotiated during the reign of al-Wāthiq in 231/845.[109] The account of India, its kings, and its caste system is evidently a redaction of the mission to India sent by the powerful *wazīr*, Yaḥyā b. Khālid al-Barmakī (d. 190/805).[110] By the time the *Masālik* related this material on India, it had long been in circulation within ʿAbbāsid writerly culture. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, the philosopher Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb al-Kindī (d. ca. 260/874) had copied out the report of the Barmakid emissary who was sent to collect medicinal plants (*ʿaqāqīr*) and describe the religions (*adyān*) of India.[111]

Rather than reflecting a contemporary, up-to-date account of the world, the *Masālik* imbricates the sovereignty of the ʿAbbāsid state within an ideology of imperial expansion, which is in turn predicated upon a lionised history of conquest and dominion. The accounts of how al-Wāthiq sent the court astrologer Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. Shākir to the Cave of the Sleepers and Sallām the Interpreter to the wall of Gog and Magog do not reflect events that had just recently occurred, but rather speak to a past that was in need of memorialisation.[112] The same is true for many other historical references. For instance, we read that al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218–27/833–42) conquered the Byzantine city of ʿAmmūriya (Amorium), an event which occurred in 223/838;[113] that al-Faḍl (d. 193/808), the son of Yaḥyā b. Khālid, erected in Khurāsān a mountain barrier, much akin to the wall of Dhū l-Qarnayn, to close off the entrance of the Turks into the region;[114] and that the grandson of Yaḥyā, ʿImrān b. Mūsā (d. ca. 226/840), who served as a government official in Sind from the reign of al-Maʾmūn until al-Wāthiq, had produced a tax income of 1,000,000 dirhams from the province, above the expenditures incurred there.[115] According to de Goeje such material datable to the first half of the century supported his conclusion that Ibn Khurradādhbih first composed the *Masālik* around the reign of al-Wāthiq. However, as Bulgakov had earlier argued, these details may well reflect a kind of antiquarian penchant for anachronism and should not be used as the basis for dating the composition of the work. It also stands to reason that these earlier historical references circulated within an established corpus of geographical and administrative information that Ibn Khurradādhbih inherited.

It is perhaps a more useful heuristic model to conceive of Ibn Khurradādhbih's role not that of the sole author of the work, but rather as an authorial voice who drew from

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[108] Minorsky, Tamīm, 303–4.

[109] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 105–6; cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 190–1.

[110] See Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 66–8, 71–2; cf. Lawrence, *Shahrastānī*, 18–29; Ahmad, *Accounts of India*, xii–xiii; Minorsky, *Marvazī*, 125ff; idem, Gardīzī, 626.

[111] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ii, 423.

[112] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 106–7. On the identity of Muḥammad b. Shākir, see *GAS*, xiii, 243–4.

[113] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 101.

[114] Ibid., 34.

[115] Ibid., 57.

his personal experience with various state officials and from his vast knowledge of poetry and marvels, and who used this knowledge as a means of certifying, with his own mark as a state bureaucrat, a body of geographical material that significantly predated him. Qudāma speaks rather disparagingly of the intellectual capacity necessary to fulfil the position of the *ṣāḥib al-barīd*, with the main geographical responsibility being that of supplying information on stage routes.[116] However, Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*, offers more than merely a road book of facts and figures. It reflects, rather, a fusion of geographical knowledge with the belletristic values that would have readily spoken to the literary conventions and aspirations of ʿAbbāsid book culture. The paradigm of *adab*, which governs the poetic logic of the geography and its concomitant interest in marvels, is one of the most salient features of Ibn Khurradādhbih's intellectual life.[117]

We should think of Ibn Khurradādhbih not as initiating the tradition of Arabic administrative geography, but rather as a courtier and ʿAbbāsid official who built upon a pre-existing corpus of material that had long circulated amongst the secretariat. This would help account for the broad stretch of historical material covered in the *Masālik.* Much of the geographical and administrative information was available not only to Ibn Khurradādhbih, but to an entire class of administrators, who redacted and circulated official state reports (*akhbār*) as part of the larger discursive machinery of the empire. Thus, for instance, Ibn al-Faqīh quotes a certain Yazīd b. ʿUmar al-Fārisī describing the division of the Sawād, i.e. the cultivated areas of southern Iraq, citing various terms, such as *ṭassūj*, *ustān*, *kūra*, all drawn from Sāsānian administrative models. Al-Fārisī continues with an account of how the Sawād was divided into sixty cantons (*ṭasāsīj*), a Sāsānian division which preceded the land reforms of Qubādh I (r. 488–531 C.E.).[118] This exact material is cited without attribution in the *Masālik* and appears to reflect information that was available well before Ibn Khurradādhbih had redacted it. The Bodleian copy follows the same account, but rather offers forty-eight cantons for the region, the number of divisions after Qubādh's reforms, while the Vienna copy keeps the number at sixty.[119] Each variation does not in its own right indicate authorial stages of redaction or revision, just as the broad range of material missing from the Bodleian is not proof that it was produced at an earlier stage. For if Ibn Khurradādhbih had indeed first republished his geography around 272/885, why would he not have updated the anachronisms which abound in this later copy?

This is the case with the presentation of the various Muslim potentates lining the sphere of ʿAbbāsid influence in a manner that suggests that they are still in power. These include

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[116] Qudāma, *Kharāj*, 77–8; cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §504.

[117] On geographical and astronomical knowledge as a belletristic ideal for courtiers, see the characterisation of the famed singer Ziryāb (d. 242/857), former student of Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, who found favour with the Umayyads of al-Andalus, described as "*ʿāliman bi-l-nujūmi wa-qismati l-aqālīmi l-sabʿati,*" al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1632), *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, iii, 127; cf. Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076), *al-Muqtabis*, 318–9.

[118] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 380; Yāqūt also quotes from Yazīd b. ʿUmar al-Fārisī, *Buldān*, i, 289, iii, 273; cf. al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 133.

[119] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 6 note a. MS B, fol. 3a; cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 40; cited in Morony, Continuity, 31n460.

such figures as: Ibrāhīm b. al-Aghlab (r. 184–97/800–12),[120] founder of the Aghlabid dynasty of North Africa; Nūḥ b. Asad (d. 227/841–2),[121] the governor of Transoxiana under al-Maʾmūn and founding member of the Sāmānid dynasty; and Yuʿfir b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥawālī (r. 232–58/847–72), founder of the Yuʿfirids of Yemen.[122] Although these figures appear in both the Bodleian and Vienna recensions, not one of them was still alive in 272/885. With de Goeje's hypothesis of revision and republication, we are left wondering why Ibn Khurradādhbih would have chosen to add only certain information to his geography and not have given current details on these particular dynasties. It is of note that Ibn al-Faqīh is happy to repeat many of the dynasts recorded in Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography, also without updating the material to make the lists current to his own time, highlighting a widespread practice of transmitting, without revision, an established body of writing.[123]

There is very little to suggest that everything in the *Masālik* was designed to present a current picture of ʿAbbāsid society as it existed when Ibn Khurradādhbih composed his geography. This is true, for example, with the tax revenue on the Sawād. Ibn Khurradādhbih draws on figures which, if we use Qudāma's parallel list as a basis, reflect the account of revenue (*ʿibra*) produced in 204/819–20, during the caliphate of al-Maʾmūn.[124] Yet unlike Qudāma, who explicitly offers revised data based on the income of 260/873–4, Ibn Khurradādhbih's redaction, as preserved in both the Bodleian and Vienna manuscripts, appears to follow the earlier account generated for al-Maʾmūn.[125] The overlap between the two accounts, however, demonstrates a shared core of material. Given the codicological record it is impossible to know whether the different figures recorded by Qudāma and Ibn Khurradādhbih reflect a natural entropy of variance inherent in manuscript culture or result from an actual process of administrative revision. It would thus be hasty to read the tax lists of the *Masālik* as supplying data current for the latter half of the third/ninth century.[126]

The case of the tax income of the Sawād is particularly illustrative, as Ibn al-Faqīh copies, again without attribution, the revenue list found in the *Masālik*. The section in question draws from a technical vocabulary whose origins stretch back to Near Eastern imperial practices of taxation and agrarian land management. The tax sheet lists the numbers of villages (*rustāq*) in each canton (*ṭassūj*); the threshing houses (*baydar*) contained therein; the amount of wheat and barley weighed in *kurr*, a dry measurement whose use goes back to Sumerian times;[127] and the amount of hard silver levied on each district in dirhams.[128] A

[120] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 87.

[121] Ibid., 38.

[122] Ibid., 142.

[123] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 132–4, cf. Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 87–8.

[124] Qudāma, *Kharāj*, 237–9; cf. Ṣābī, *Rusūm*, 29; on *ʿibra,* see al-Khwārazmī (d. 387/997), *Mafātīḥ,* 86–7.

[125] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 8–15; see idem, Livre des routes, 30–5.

[126] This is, however, how the material is often treated, see for instance, El-Sāmarrāie, *Agriculture in Iraq*, 99–103.

[127] On the *kurr*, see Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 38, 42–3*;* A. S. Ehrenkreutz, The Kurr System.

[128] The vocabulary speaks to a particular history of Near Eastern administrative practices, closely associated with the Sāsānian past: both *rustāq* and *ṭassūj* are direct cognates with Middle Persian (*rōstāg* / *tasūg*), see Widengren, Féodalisme iranien, 96, 122–35; *baydar* derives from an Aramaic

	Villages			Granaries			Wheat			Barley			Silver		
	V	B	F	V	B	F	V	B	F	V	B	F	V	B	F
Western Districts Irrigated by the Euphrates and the Tigris															
Anbār	5			250			2300			1400			150000		350000
Quṭrabbul	10			220			2000	1000	2000	1000			300000		
Maskin	6			150	105	150	3000			2000	1000	2000	300000		150000
Bādūrayā	14		10	420			3500			2000	1000	2000	2000000	1000000	2000000
Bahurasīr	10			240			1900	1700	1900	1700			150000		
Rūmaqān	10			240	220	150	3300		1300	3050			250000	350000	150000
Kūthā	9			210	220	210	3000			2000		1000	150000		
Nahr Durqīṭ	8			125			2000			2000		1000	200000	150000	200000
Nahr Jawbar	10			227		226	1700		2700	600		10000	150000		
al-Zawābī	12			x	244		1400	1700	1400	7200			250000		1000000
Bābil & Khuṭarniya	16		12	378		370	3000	x	3000	5000	x	5000	350000		
Fallūja Upper	15			240			500	1500	500	500			70000		
Fallūja Lower	6			72		92	2000	1000	2000	3000			280000		180000
Nahrayn	3			181	81	181	300			400			45000		
ʿAyn al-Tamr	3			14			300			400			45000	51000	45000
al-Jubba & al-Budāt	8			71			1200			1400			150000		
Sūrā & Barbīsmā	10			265		250	700			2400	4500	1400	100000	250000	100000
Bārūsamā & Nahr al-Malik	10			664			1500			4500			250000		
al-Sībayn & al-Wuqūf	x			x			500			5500			250000		150000
Fūrāt Bādaqlā	16	10		271			2000			2500		1500	900000		
al-Saylaḥīn	x			34			1000			1700	1500		140000		
Rūdhmastān & Hurmuzjard	x			x			500			500			10000		
Nistar	7			173	163		1250			2000		1000	300000		
Īghār Yaqṭīn	x			x			x			x			204840	200840	204840

Figure 2a: Tax Revenues for the Sawād as recorded in the Vienna MS (V), the Bodleian MS (B) and Ibn al-Faqīh (F).

	Villages			Granaries			Wheat			Barley			Silver		
	V	B	F	V	B	F	V	B	F	V	B	F	V	B	F
Region Irrigated by the Euphrates and the Tigris															
Kaskar	x			x			x			x			200000	70000	200000
Eastern Region															
Buzurjasābūr	9			263	260		2500			2200		2000	300000		
al-Rādhānayn	16	19	16	362			4800			4800	1800	1000	120000		100000
Nahr Būq	x			x			200			1000			100000		
Kalwādhā & Nahr Bīn	3			34			1600			1500			330000		1030
Jāzir & al-Madīna al-ʿAtīqa	7			116		117	1000			1500	1700	1500	140000	250000	170000
Rūstuqbādh	x			x			1000		x	1400		x	170000		x
Mahrūdh & Silsil	x			x			2000			2500			250000		
Jalūlā & Jalultā	5			76	66		1000			1000			100000		
al-Dhībayn	4			230			700			1300			40000		
al-Daskara & al-Rastāqayn	7			44			2000	1000	2000	2000	1000	2000	70000		
Barāz al-Rūz	7	6	7	86	26	86	3000			5500	2000	5000	120000		
al-Bandanījīn	5			54			600			500			100000		
Cantons of al-Nahrwān	21			x	380										
Upper al-Nahrwān							2700			1800			350000		
Central al-Nahrwān							1000			500			100000		
Lower al-Nahrwān							1000			1200		1100	150000		
Bādarāyā & Bākusāyā	7	x		207	x		4700			5000			330000		
Shādh Fayrūz	x			x			x			x			180000		

Figure 2a continued.

	Villages	Granaries	Wheat	Barley	Silver
1. Agreements	34/40	24/40	32/42	25/42	26/42
2. Variants	6	16	10	17	16
3. Shared Variants (VB)	2	5	3	8	8
4. Shared Variants (VF)	2	4	7	5	6
5. Shared Variants (FB)	2	6	0	1	0
6. Unmatched Variants	0	1	0	3	2

Figure 2b: Variance between manuscripts.

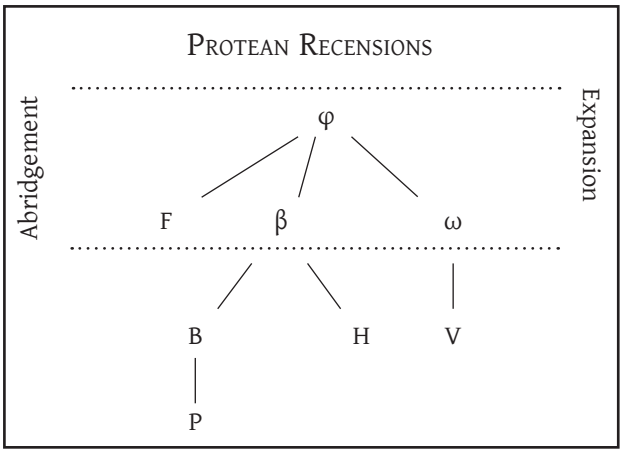

Figure 3: Stemma modelling contamination in the reception of the Masālik.

comparison of the recensions of this list (fig. 2a), as preserved in the Vienna and Bodleian copies and in the Mashhad manuscript of the *Kitāb al-buldān* of Ibn al-Faqīh, reveals that the variants between the accounts appear to be based on natural accretions inherent in the codicological transmission of textual knowledge and not on intentional or authorial stages of revision. The value of the tax revenue of the Sawād for Ibn Khurradādhbih and Ibn al-Faqīh lies in its status as an official form of empirical information; neither of them present the account within a concrete historical periodisation or attempt to give updated figures, as Qudāma does, to reflect more current information.

The three versions agree with each other roughly seventy percent of the time (see nos. 1 and 2 in figure 2b).[129] Moreover, only three percent of the variants produced are unique to any given redaction (6). As a data set, these recensions draw upon a common body of material through a relationship that can be characterised in the following terms. The Bodleian manuscript (B) and Ibn al-Faqīh (F) each share a close affinity with the Vienna recension (V), independently agreeing with it approximately eighty percent of the time. However, of the divergences, B and F share the least in common, only producing approximately fifteen percent of the same variants (5). This stands in marked contrast to how, roughly forty percent of the time, these two versions independently agree with the variants in the Vienna manuscript (3, 4). This would indicate that, independent of each other, Ibn al-Faqīh and the Bodleian manuscript derived figures which were contained within an archetype for the Vienna recension, suggesting the basis for a hyper-archetype (φ) further up on the genealogical sequence of the stemma (fig. 3).

While Ibn al-Faqīh also parallels poetry only found in the Vienna manuscript, this

compound **bē(t) + idrā*, Fraenkel, *Aramäischen Fremdwörter*, 136; and *kurr* is connected to the Akkadian, *kurru(m) > gōr*, itself a cognate with the Old Persian **grīwa*, and the Middle Persian *grīw*, which gives the New Persian *girīb*, see Black and George, *Dictionary of Akkadian*, 168; Hallock, *Persepolis*, 72–3, 717; MacKenzie, *Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, 37 (*grīw*), 47 (*kabīz*).

[129] These figures are taken from MS V, fols. 4b–8b; MS B, fols. 4b–9b; Ibn al-Faqīh, Mashhad MS 5229, *Kitāb al-buldān*, fols. 80b–83a (159–63).

affinity does not extend to his redaction of Sallām's adventure, nor his account of the pyramids, both of which follow quite closely the versions found in the Bodleian recension. Although such a comparison may lend credence to the claim that the Bodleian copy reflects a later abridgement, such reasoning is entirely inferential and based upon an empirical process of analysis whose epistemic foundations are highly suspect. Indeed the intractable nature of variants makes the resolution of their origin a particularly sticky problem.[130] However, what such an exercise succeeds in revealing is a manifold pattern of transmission and abridgement inherent in the protean reality of a manuscript culture that resists textual conformity.

Such a multivalent process of redaction is suggested in a note made by the copyist of the Bodleian manuscript, "this is how it was in the original copy" (*kadhā kāna fī l-nuskha*), which is used to explain a lacuna for the figures of wheat and barley in the district of Bābil and Khuṭarniya.[131] In contrast, the other two recensions supply the numbers for these entries, highlighting how there are inevitably more pieces missing to this partially reconstructed mosaic of textual transmission. As for the actual tax revenue of the Sawād, the distribution of variance demonstrates the difficulty of drawing out empirical evidence from a fragmentary archive that survives largely through the happenstance of what was copied and preserved.[132] This is a problem of transmission, which, needless to say, extends beyond merely the records of ʿAbbāsid administrative history, with ramifications throughout the diverse branches of medieval Arabic book culture.

PALIMPSESTS AND ACEPHALOUS TEXTS

The Vienna manuscript is in poor condition, worm-eaten, and contains several restorations in the form of sections that have been pasted over and recopied by a later hand.[133] In addition to these emendations, which are at times quite extensive, a section from the manuscript has been rearranged, perhaps during the same course of restoration. This occurs at the end of the account of the Jewish merchant network of the Rādhāniyya, copied in the original hand. The anecdote breaks off in midstream (fol. 53b), interrupted by a folio inserted into the manuscript, which marks that this is the conclusion of the report of the north (*khabar al-jarbī*). The same account of Jewish merchants is then copied out in full, some ten folios on, by a later hand, after the section on the *barīd* network of stage routes (*sikak*) crisscrossing the ʿAbbāsid empire (fol. 64b), directly preceding the account of the Rūs merchants.[134] The placement of the Rādhāniyya in this particular section parallels

[130] See Greg, *Calculus of Variants*, 30–1.

[131] MS B, fol. 6a.

[132] The revenue lists of Ibn Khurradādhbih and Qudāma have been deployed in the modern historiographical record as reflecting actual historical changes in the amount of tax revenue produced, largely without consideration of the textual variants which plague this material, see for instance, Katbi, *Islamic Land Tax*, 115–8, cf. 208, 204–5. Contrary to Katbi's suggestion, there is nothing in the *Masālik* which links this revenue list of the Sawād to the information generated from al-Faḍl b. Marwān (d. 250/864), who is cited as a tax authority rather for Fārs, *Masālik*, 21, 42–3, 48.

[133] See Loebenstein, *Katalog*, i, 197, §2403 (Mixt. 783).

[134] Cf. MS V, fol. 54a; Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 153 note k.

the order found in the Bodleian counterpart. While the arrangement of the material was reworked at some point after the original production of the manuscript, the date of these restorations remains unclear. It is noteworthy that this rupture occurs at the end of the report of the north. As noted above, the Bodleian recension concludes this section on the north with the account of al-Wāthiq's adventure to the wall, while the Vienna manuscript places the mission within a larger treatment of marvels, demonstrating how the text at this point was itself in a state of flux.[135]

As for the date of the Vienna manuscript, the colophon is entirely illegible, though there is a reader's note on the title page which dates to 756/1355.[136] Marginal notes and comments are interspersed throughout the manuscript written by various hands, glossing words and phrases, and marking out the names of people who had read the text.[137] In addition to the considerable restorations, which are found particularly in the final third of the manuscript, several later hands can be identified in the marginalia, such as a certain Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-ʿAṭṭār, who read the manuscript in Mecca.[138] This may well be Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1250/1835), the famed Egyptian reformer of Maghribī origin who became rector of al-Azhar University in Cairo. Remembered for having cultivated relations with French scholars after the occupation of Egypt by Bonaparte, as well as for his extensive travels, Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār went on hajj around 1227/1812, and may have read the manuscript while in the holy city.[139] If this identification is indeed correct, then the manuscript reached Alexandria, prior to de Landberg's acquisition of it, relatively late.

The conclusion of the Vienna manuscript also differs significantly. The Bodleian colophon appears directly after a description of the wonders of rivers and mountains, which trails off with a lacuna separating the end of folio 81b and the text at the top of folio 82a, indicating that an unspecified number of folios are missing from the manuscript.[140] In the Vienna copy, the wonders of rivers and mountains are included in reversed order; furthermore, these are followed not by a colophon, but rather by a lacuna in the manuscript that begins what is marked in the margins as a new chapter (*bāb*).[141] De Goeje posited that this chapter treated stone inscriptions, which, though possible, is not fully substantiated by the references to Ibn al-Faqīh and al-Muqaddasī which he cites as paralleling the phrase at the bottom of the folio, "in the *qibla* of the mosque of Jerusalem (*bayt al-quds*)..."[142] This line, which appears to start a new section in the Vienna manuscript, however, is never completed. What follows is neither a description of the *qibla* in Jerusalem, nor an account of stone inscriptions. Rather continued on the next folio is a discussion of rivers and the wonders associated with them, which is prefaced with a new invocation to God (*bismillāh*), apparently marking a

[135] MS V, fol. 68b.

[136] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xviii.

[137] Cf. MS V, fol. 36a; *Masālik*, 87 note m; cf. de Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, xviii.

[138] MS V, fol. 78a; Loebenstein, *Katalog,* i, 197.

[139] De Jong, Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭār, 110–11.

[140] MS B, fol. 81b ends with the catchword "wa-l-abwāb," which is not picked up on, fol. 82a. A marginal Latin note advises, "desunt aliquot folia"; cf. Meynard, 124–7.

[141] The word *bāb* is marked at the bottom right of the folio, MS V, fol. 74b.

[142] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 177 note h; cf. al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 186; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 100.

break in the text.[143] This led de Goeje to treat the final folios of the Vienna manuscript as an acephalous appendix, the origin of which he felt could not be substantiated.[144]

Three primary hands are discernible in the transcription of the Vienna manuscript. The main body of the text was evidently written by the original copyist (folios 10a–77b). A second hand appears to have recopied the opening of the text (folios 1b–9b), while a third hand is responsible for the substantial emendations running the last two-thirds of the manuscript in the form of glued over corrections.[145] This also includes what is the significant recopying of the original text. These emendations are most prominent in the final section (folios 75a–77b), which de Goeje refers to as an appendix. While this section may well have been a non-authorial addition it appears to be original to the main body of the text, as it is copied out in the main hand of the manuscript. These last folios are in particularly poor condition. Significant parts of the original text are illegible, while large portions are written out by a later hand, in the form of glued on emendations, which, as a palimpsest, efface the original layer beneath. Additionally, the manuscript ends abruptly in the middle of an anecdote, written as an emendation glued over the original layer of the text, at the base of which is exposed, though entirely illegible, the colophon.

It is difficult to determine the provenance of this concluding section. The lacuna at the *qibla* of Jerusalem matched with the opening *bismillāh* on the following folio certainly invites the possibility that the conclusion is not original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's geography. The fact that this material is not paralleled in the Bodleian manuscript is of little help, however, for it too suffers a lacuna where this section would have been, a fact that may well substantiate the idea that the Bodleian manuscript reflects a later abridgement, descending from a copy which shared similar lacunae.

While the material detailed within these last folios does not elucidate the matter further, it contains much notable information, focused on the wonders associated with rivers and springs. The final anecdote is of particular interest. Admittedly, it is partly illegible and breaks off in midstream:

> A trustworthy person informed me that Ḥamīd b. Buhrā, the *dihqān* of lower Fallūja, [reported]: There once were magnificent wonders located in four cities. In the first there was in ancient times an image (*timthāl*) of the entire earth. So if people within this kingdom withheld the land tax (*kharāj*), [one could] unleash the rivers over them such that they would be flooded and would be unable to dam up the rivers until they finally brought forth what they owed. So if one were to dam up the rivers for them on the image [of the earth], then the rivers themselves would close up on their lands. In the second city there was a pool, and when the king wished to gather his companions to dine, each one would pour his chosen beverage into the pool and they would mix it all together and then cupbearers would take out vessels, and whoever poured something in his vessel...[146]

[143] MS V, fol. 75a.

[144] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 177 note h.

[145] Loebenstein sees the same hand responsible for the glued over corrections and the introduction, *Katalog,* i, 197. However, a comparison of the significant sections of rough text copied onto paper and then glued onto the manuscript [i.e. fol. 76a] with the opening folios shows these to be two very distinct hands.

[146] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 182–3.

While this account breaks off here, its similarities with Ibn al-Faqīh's description of the wonders of Bābil reveals a common source. Ibn al-Faqīh relates how the second caliph, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–44), asked the *dihqān* of Fallūja about the marvels (*ʿajāʾib*) of the region:

> He replied: Every city of this region has a marvel (*uʿjūba*) which is not to be found in any of the other cities. In the city where the king resides there is a temple (*bayt*) in which is housed a map (*ṣūra*) of the entire earth with the various districts (*rasātīq*), villages, and rivers of the world...[147]

This anecdote, which goes on to list seven wonders of the different cities of Bābil, and not the four suggested in the Vienna manuscript, completes the anecdote of the magic pool wherein beverages can be stirred together, but remain mysteriously unmixed when poured out. Presumably, also included in the Vienna manuscript was the account of the water ordeal where two litigants came before two judges, or in some versions statues, floating on a body of water. Both litigants are forced to cross the water, the litigant who is honest crosses safely, whereas the one who perjures himself drowns.

The other anecdotes preserved in the list of seven wonders do not continue the same watery theme that determines their placement in the appendix of the *Masālik*. They include such curiosities as an all-seeing iron mirror, through which the world could be viewed, akin to the famed goblet (*jām-i gītī numā-ī*) of the mythological Persian king Kay Khusraw, which came to be associated with the ancient king Jamshīd;[148] a drum through which one could hear whether an absent relative was living or dead; a brass talismanic statue of a goose which would set off a warning if a spy attempted to enter the city which it guarded; and a magic copper tree whose shadow could shade exactly one thousand people, but if any more sat under its canopy it would leave them all out in the sun.[149] The version of the seven marvels preserved by Ibn al-Faqīh repeats itself with some frequency in later geographical writings and the accompanying genre of marvel literature.[150] Yāqūt copied the account, although, he distances himself from what he viewed to be its dubious claims: "As you see the story (*ḥikāya*) I have recounted breaks with normal phenomena and is remote from regular events. If I had not found it in the books of scholars (*kutub al-ʿulamāʾ*), I would not have related it. The majority of the accounts of ancient nations (*akhbār al-umam al-qadīma*) are like this."[151]

As for the source of this list of wonders, the Vienna recension opens the *isnād* with Hishām b. Muḥammad. While Ibn al-Faqīh does not give a direct citation for the seven

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[147] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 379.

[148] On the world-seeing goblet of Kay Khusraw, see al-Firdawsī (d. 411/1020), *Shāh-nāma*, iii, 344, ll. 544–5; on the later association of the goblet with Jamshīd, see Mahmoud Omidsalar, Jamšīd, in Persian Literature, *EIr;* for more on the motif of scrying in Persian literature, see al-Ṭūsī (fl. 555/1160), *ʿAjāʾib-nāma*, 11, 18.

[149] For a treatment of the seven wonders in relationship to the larger characterisation of Bābil in Arabic geography, see Janssen, *City of Witch Craft*, 73–4, 83–4, 86–8, 201–9.

[150] See al-Ṭūsī, *ʿAjāʾib-nāma*, 189–90; al-Dimashqī (d. 727/1327), *Nukhba,* 52–3.

[151] Yāqūt, *Buldān*, i, 311; cf. al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 304–5. For the parallels of this account with the later Parsi tradition on the seven marvellous works of Jamshīd, see Hurmazdyār (fl. 1053/1684), *Riwāyat*, ii, 71–2, trans., 436–7.

wonders, the last authority he quotes for his preceding treatment of the city of Bābil is Ibn al-Kalbī. Based upon the redactions preserved in the homiletic collection of wonders, the *Funūn al-ʿajāʾib*, by the Ḥanbalī traditionist Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad al-Naqqāsh (d. 414 /1023),[152] and in the universal history, *al-Muntaẓam,* by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200),[153] the story eventually passed from the exchange between the *dihqān* of lower Fallūja and the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sāʾib, i.e. Abū l-Mundhir Ibn al-Kalbī, the famed scholar, best known today for his work on genealogy, *Jamharat al-nasab,* and his collection on pre-Islamic Arabian idolatry*, Kitāb al-aṣnām*.[154]

Of the many titles which Ibn al-Nadīm ascribes to Ibn al-Kalbī several bear directly upon the field of descriptive geography, such as his major and minor geographical compendiums, the *Kitāb al-buldān al-kabīr* and the *Kitāb al-buldān al-ṣaghīr*; a study of the climes, the *Kitāb al-aqālīm*; a book on four marvels, the *Kitāb al-ʿajāʾib al-arbaʿa*; as well as a treatise on rivers, the *Kitāb al-anhār*. Any one of these titles could be a candidate for the account of the marvels of Mesopotamia. Ibn al-Nadīm classifies Ibn al-Kalbī's treatise on the wonders of the sea, the *Kitāb ʿajāʾib al-baḥr*, under the rubric of anecdotes (*akhbār*) and night tales (*asmār*), a further indication of Ibn al-Kalbī's penchant for marvel-writing.[155] For Ibn al-Nadīm, works on marvels (*ʿajāʾib*) form a discrete generic category, themselves linked to narratives of dubious pedigree.[156]

The marvellous is a privileged locus of discourse throughout medieval Islamic descriptive geography and its very ontology resists unambiguous delineations of individual authorship. One of the most prominent features of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* is the staging of narrative pleasure through an unfolding of marvellous anecdotes. The inclusion of Ibn al-Kalbī's account of the talismanic map at the end of the Vienna recension is in keeping with this modality of imperial wonders. While separated by more than two generations, Ibn Khurradādhbih shared a good deal with his predecessor: both were courtiers who had an interest in antiquarian history, and both were famed for their works on geography. While the geographical writings of Ibn al-Kalbī have not survived, the list of titles ascribed to him in the *Fihrist* speaks to an early geographical tradition preceding Ibn Khurradādhbih that was also connected to the imperial interests of the state.[157]

The philologist and transmitter of Ibn al-Kalbī's book of genealogy, Abū Saʿīd al-Sukkarī (d. 275/888), cites Ibn Khurradādhbih's writing (*kitāb*) for an example of hieroglyphics (*musnad*), reflecting not only Ibn Khurradādhbih's penchant for ancient scripts, but also his broader associative proximity to the writings of Ibn al-Kalbī.[158] Similarly, according to the *Fihrist*, Ibn Khurradādhbih had an interest in Persian genealogy, as attested in his study, *Jamharat ansāb al-furs*. Both men had a sustained concern for poetry and music and are

[152] Al-Naqqāsh, *Funūn*, 79–80. On al-Naqqāsh, see al-Dhahabī (d. 753/1352–3), *Siyar*, xvii, 307–8, §187.

[153] Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), *Muntaẓam,* i, 167–8.

[154] See W. Atallah, al-Kalbī, *EI*[2].

[155] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 305.; cf. Ignatii Krachkovskii, *Istoriia,* 120–1.

[156] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist,* ii, 321–2, 332; cf. i, 305, 468, 471.

[157] See the account in al-Ṭabarī concerning al-Mahdī's conflict with al-Andalus and Ibn al-Kalbī's use of the *barīd* networks for lines of communication to the western provence, *Tārīkh*, ser. III, 528–9.

[158] Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamhara*, 614, cf. 11.

featured transmitters in al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb al-aghānī*. As with Ibn Khurradādhbih, al-Iṣbahānī also makes a point of condemning Ibn al-Kalbī as unreliable;[159] although, in one notable instance, he quotes the two side by side, evidently in a favourable light, describing how the Persian *mawlā* of Madīna, Sāʾib Khāthir (d. 63/683) was the first to introduce the lute to Arabic songs, inspired by the musical techniques of the Persian singer Nashīṭ.[160] This confluence of interest lends credence to the idea that Ibn al-Kalbī's marvels of Mesopotamia at the end of the Vienna manuscript could be original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's composition. Additionally, the *isnād* transmission for the account recorded by the likes of al-Naqqāsh and Ibn al-Jawzī reflects how some form of the anecdote circulated widely during Ibn Khurradādhbih's lifetime.

Yet, nowhere in the rest of the *Masālik* does Ibn Khurradādhbih directly cite Ibn al-Kalbī or appear to draw from his work. This is in marked contrast to Ibn al-Faqīh, who frequently quotes Ibn al-Kalbī as a well-known and respected early geographical authority.[161] Likewise, Ibn al-Faqīh, who liberally borrows from Ibn Khurradādhbih, cites a significantly distinct version of seven wonders of Mesopotamia, suggesting a line of transmission which did not draw upon the *Masālik*. In terms of reception history, it is Ibn al-Faqīh's version of the seven marvels, and not the list of four presented in the Vienna manuscript, which disseminates throughout Arabic letters. As the majority of Ibn al-Kalbī's writings are no longer extant, it is not possible to determine the source of the divergence between the account of the four wonders in the Vienna recension and the seven enumerated by Ibn al-Faqīh. Not excluded is the possibility that Ibn al-Kalbī disseminated different versions, or that in the process of transmission the account was itself altered.

With the placement of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in the narrative, the larger framework of the early conquests (*futūḥ*) is also suggested, as he oversaw the Arab conquest and subsequent administration of Mesopotamia. Al-Masʿūdī relates how, in the context of the early territorial expansions, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb sought a description of the world, suggesting an early memory of imperial conquest and geographical knowledge.[162] The second caliph features earlier in the *Masālik* for having ordered a cadastral survey (*misāḥa*) of the Sawād, while the tax revenues which he levied on the recently conquered region are compared with those under the Sāsānian emperor Qubādh I.[163] The Sāsānians used land surveys as a means of collecting taxes,[164] highlighting the interconnection between geographical measurement and imperial possession, a motif that also finds resonance in the enchanted map, which was used with the explicit purpose of extracting taxes from a recalcitrant population.

The historical specificity of the anecdote is of note, adumbrating the confluence of taxation, conversion, and the administrative management of land at the height of the early Arab conquests. The Vienna recension identifies ʿUmar's interlocutor as Ḥamīd, the *dihqān*

[159] On Ibn al-Kalbī, see al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, xii, 34; xxi, 20; cited in Kilpatrick, *Book of Songs*, 112–3.

[160] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, viii, 321–2; cf. O. Wright, Sāʾib Khāthir, *EI²*.

[161] See the index of Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 725.

[162] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §§973–85.

[163] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 14; cf. Ibn Rusta, *Aʿlāq*, 104–5; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 266, 269, 272–3. See also, Morony, *Muslim Conquest*, 101.

[164] See al-Jahshiyārī (d. 331/942), *Wuzarāʾ*, 4–5; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. I, 960–1.

of lower Fallūja, and gives the *nasab*, "son of Buhrā." This appears to be a misspelling of the figure referred to in early ʿAbbāsid sources as Jamīl b. Buṣbuhrā (fl. 16/637), the *dihqān* of the two Fallūjas, i.e. Falālīj and Nahrayn,[165] known as one of the early Persian landlords who embraced Islam, and who was able to maintain his aristocratic position and with it feudal control over the land through the course of the new Islamic state.[166] For proof of the equity (*taswiya*) promoted by the early caliphs, al-Jāḥiẓ includes Jamīl and his brother Khālid in a list of the noble Persian aristocrats (*ashrāf al-aʿājim*), who, on the order of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, received stipends drawn through the tax office (*dīwān*) of the state.[167] According to al-Balādhurī, the submission of the Sawād to the Arab armies insured that Jamīl b. Buṣbuhrā and the other *dihqān*s of the region kept their estates and were free from the poll-tax (*jizya*) levied on non-Muslims.[168]

Against this setting, Ibn al-Kalbī's anecdote opens up a globe on which the earth could be manipulated, pointing to the power of descriptive geography and the concomitant field of cartography. The reference to Sāsānian administrative divisions (*rustāq* > Middle Persian, *rōstāg*), along with the extraction of taxes from an intractable population, further highlights an imperial intersection in this cartographic enterprise, confirming, in its God-like perspective, not only the ability to view, and thus possess the world in its entirety, but to also control it through the magic of mimesis.

As such, the anecdote stands as a metaphor of cartographic desire. In contrast to the enchanted globe, by Ibn al-Kalbī's period the technologies of representation were expressed through a growing field of literary culture, catalysed in the catenation of paper with the subsequent proliferation of books and booksellers.[169] As for the presence of the anecdote within the *Masālik,* the material is entirely in keeping with Ibn Khurradādhbih's focus on marvels, Sāsānian memory, and the imperial administration of land. Yet, given the state of the codicological evidence and the parallel reception history, the problem of whether or not this material is original to the *Masālik,* as Ibn Khurradādhbih composed it, is a question that remains unanswered.

NYMPHS, HORSES, AND INFILTRATION

Of the other anecdotes preserved in the concluding folios of the Vienna manuscript is an account related by an anonymous narrator (*ḥaddathanī muḥaddithun*) of a lute-playing shepherd from the region of Samarqand, who was lured into a verdant spring and disappeared, seduced by what appear to be beautiful water nymphs. The anonymous narrator relates:

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[165] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 176; al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 39–40; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §2093. See Morony, *Muslim Conquest*, 149, 174, 176.

[166] On the Sāsānian institution of the *dehgān* and its transformation during the Islamic period, see Tafazzoli, *Sasanian Society*, 38–59.

[167] Al-Jaḥiẓ, *ʿUthmāniyya*, 211–3. On the broader implications of such egalitarianism, see Roy Mottahedeh, The Shuʿūbīyah Controversy.

[168] Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 265.

[169] See Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir,* 18–34.

> In this region dwell water creatures (*sukkān al-māʾ*), in the form of humans (*ʿalā khilqat banī ādam*), but more beautiful than what God had made humankind. A shepherd from a nearby village brought his flock to this spring... The shepherd began to play the flute (*mizmār*) and reed cane (*yarāʿ*)... [The creatures] started to approach the surface of the water. They listened and took great pleasure in the sound of the singing (*ghināʾ*); during that day he played a two-stringed lute (*watarayn*). He slept at the head of the spring and then the inhabitants of the spring came out from the surface of the water and seized him forcibly, taking him with them. When a day and a night had passed and the shepherd had not returned to his family, they grew worried and went to that spring to follow his tracks. They found him gently floating on the surface of the water and saw that the inhabitants of the spring had kidnapped him so that he would play the lute. His family begged and implored them to release him; they refused to respond to these supplications; the family remained there for eight days, but not one of them dared to enter the spring. And on the eighth day they no longer saw the shepherd, nor any of those that were with him. What happened to him remained a mystery.[170]

The different instruments described along with the enchanting power of song is entirely in keeping with Ibn Khurradādhbih's interest in music.[171] As for the abduction by nymphs (i.e. *νυμφόληπτος*), this is a motif that runs throughout Greek mythology and here appears to echo the separate legends of Hylas and Bormos, Greek boys abducted by water nymphs, and then later commemorated in processions of ritualised searches.[172] The identification of the environs of Samarqand as the setting for this pastoral abduction perhaps suggests a lingering Greco-Bactrian influence in the region. Although as with the transmission and appropriation of such folkloric motifs, tracing a clear line of dissemination is a rather tenuous enterprise.

Unlike the mythological traditions of classical antiquity, bucolic water nymphs are largely absent from Arabic and Persian literary culture. This stands in contrast, for instance, with the developed vocabulary for imagining demons and *jinn*. Even the houris of the Qurʾān evoke celestial and not earthly maidens, and do not resonate with the same dangerous and seductive liminality associated with the nymphs of classical Greek mythology. The elliptic phrase 'water inhabitants' (*sukkān al-māʾ*) points to a periphrastic ambiguity concerning the ontology of the creatures who steal away with the shepherd. The scene of nymph abduction set against the *locus amoenus* of the spring and the enchanting music of the shepherd suggests the absorption of foreign mythological assumptions and values. As with the adoption of the Alexander Romance into Arabic, by way of Syriac as well as Middle Persian intermediaries, the transposition of wonder tales from Greek antiquity was an early feature of Arabic letters.[173] The location of Transoxiana for the water

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[170] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 181–2.

[171] Farmer takes this section on instruments to be original to the *Masālik*, Musical Instruments, 518.

[172] See Larson, *Greek Nymphs*, 66–71.

[173] See the seventh-century Syriac Romance, pseudo-Callisthenes, *Tashʿītā d'Aleksandrōs.* On the putative Pahlavi *Vorlage*, see Nöldeke, Beiträge, 30–2; however, see Ciancaglini, The Syriac Version. Apart from the existence or non-existence of a Pahlavi original for the *Tashʿītā d'Aleksandrōs*, see Weber, Ein Pahlavi-Fragment. As for the Arabic reception, see Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus*, 13–91.

nymphs could also suggest a Parthian intertext, as appears to exist, for instance, with the Persian romance, *Wīs u Rāmīn* by Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī (fl. 447/1055).[174] As with the marvels of Bābil, this particular anecdote is not picked up in the reception of Ibn Khurradādhbih within medieval Arabic geographical literature, as represented, for instance, by Ibn al-Faqīh, Ibn Rusta, al-Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Masʿūdī, or al-Muqaddasī, all of whom reveal sustained engagements with Ibn Khurradādhbih, evinced by their copious citations from the *Masālik.*

The same is true for another account, contained in the last folios of the Vienna recension on the supernatural origins of the famed steeds of Khuṭṭalān, a district on the upper Oxus, highly regarded for its horses. This story is also entirely absent from the geographers who follow after the *Masālik.* However, unlike the abduction of the shepherd or Ibn al-Kalbī's description of the talismanic map, the origin-myth of the Khuṭṭalān steeds is transmitted within a concrete historical context that appears to be contemporary with the life of Ibn Khurradādhbih. The passage details how one royal Khuṭṭalān steed disappeared into a verdant spring of still calm water and days later re-emerged accompanied by a foal. From this pair the breed grew larger and stronger, such that when they galloped it was as though they were flying through the air.[175]

This anecdote is of particular significance as it offers a *terminus post quem* for dating the material contained in these concluding folios. The entire account is prefaced by mention of how Khuṭṭalān, a kingdom with nearly a thousand springs, was ruled by al-Ḥārith b. Asad (fl. 296/909), the cousin of Dāwūd b. Abī Dāwūd b. ʿAbbās, the governor of Balkh, who is said to have overrun Fayrūz, the king of Zābulistān.[176] With al-Ḥārith and his cousin, Dāwūd, we have a reference to the Bānījūrīd line, a relatively obscure minor dynasty of princelings, which during the end of the third/ninth century pledged allegiance to the ʿAbbāsids.[177] Al-Ḥārith b. Asad minted coins in 278/891–2 recognising the suzerainty of the caliph al-Muʿtamid (r. 256–79/870–92) and did so also in 285/898 for the caliph al-Muʿtaḍid (r. 279–89/892–902). The numismatic record, however, points to a shift of alliance, when in 292/904, al-Ḥārith acknowledged the Sāmānids as overlords.[178] If the material for this section of the Vienna manuscript were indeed redacted by Ibn Khurradādhbih, it most likely would have been recorded either at the end of the caliphate of al-Muʿtamid or during the beginning of al-Muʿtaḍid's reign.

The line of transmission framing the account speaks to an intersection of mercantile and courtly cultures, a theme foregrounded throughout much of the *Masālik.* The origin myth of the Khuṭṭalān steeds is narrated in the voice of a certain merchant (*tājir*), whose name appears to be ʿAbdallāh al-Shakhashī; however, as the pointing on the *nisba* is unclear in the manuscript, the name could be a jumbled form of Sijzī, i.e. from Sijistān.[179] He is said to have been well known in Balkh for his trade in breeds of large horses. The narrative of the Khuṭṭalān steeds is then transmitted to Abū l-Faḍl, who was the horse trainer (*rāʿi*)

[174] See Minorsky, *Vīs u Rāmīn*.

[175] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 180–1.

[176] Ibid., 39–40.

[177] Clifford Bosworth, *Islamic Dynasties*, 174, §85; idem, Bānīdjūrīds, *EI²*.

[178] Fedorov, Appanage Rulers, 200–1.

[179] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 181 note e.

for the son of al-Ḥārith b. Asad; he in turn passed the account on to the primary authorial voice (*ḥaddathanī*), who is left unidentified.

As with the story of the shepherd stolen away by beautiful water creatures and the description of the talismanic representation of the earth, it is still not entirely clear who the primary narrative voice of this account is. To presume that the narrative is original to the *Masālik*, one would have to posit an exchange between the horse trainer and Ibn Khurradādhbih, who served, at some point, as postmaster over the district of the Jabal. It is not hard to imagine why someone in such a position would have been in contact with this kind of equestrian lore. The Khuṭṭalān steeds, for instance, are described as pack horses (*barādhīn*), which are referenced earlier in the *Masālik* as those used in the Byzantine postal service.[180] Yet unlike other accounts in the *Masālik* that highlight courtly networks crossing Sāmarrāʾ, there is no independent historical record which would either situate Ibn Khurradādhbih in Khuṭṭalān at the court of al-Ḥārith b. Asad, or would place his horse trainer in Sāmarrāʾ.

The material presented in these final folios treats not only the marvels of rivers and springs, but also focuses a good deal on Transoxiana, and appears to fill out information on the region glossed over in the main body of the text. Khuṭṭalān is spelled earlier in the geography as Khuttal (i.e. without the emphatic *ṭāʾ*) and the two honorific titles used by its ruler are listed as *Khuttalān-shāh* (Khuttalān king) and *shīr-i Khuttalān* (lion of Khuttalān).[181] The fact that these honorifics are not referenced when describing al-Ḥārith b. Asad is perhaps to be expected, considering his status as a subordinate ruler to the ʿAbbāsid empire; however, that the region is spelled differently may strengthen the possibility that material from the appendix is indeed not original to the geography.

Al-Ḥārith b. Asad, who reigned into the fourth/tenth century, would represent the last ruler to be mentioned in the *Masālik*. This is of significance considering that the geography details a host of other Muslim potentates in the orbit of the ʿAbbāsid empire, apparently all pertaining to an earlier generation.[182] It is thus not unreasonable to hypothesise, given the lacuna at the end of the Vienna manuscript followed by the *bismillāh* marking off a new section, that this concluding material on the marvels of rivers and springs either represents, as de Goeje suggests, a later appendage, or reflects a composite text, with some of the material original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's composition, and other portions expanded through later accretions.

Considering the strong associations with Balkh, it could be that some of these accounts find their origins with the statesman, theologian, and geographer Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934), whose geographical writings are unfortunately lost, though, according to al-Muqaddasī, he had superior knowledge of Khurāsān due to his familiarity with the state registries (*dawāwīn*).[183] Following the focus on Transoxiana in the appendix, matched with the fact that al-Ḥārith b. Asad accepted Sāmānid suzerainty in the beginning of the fourth/tenth century, it is also possible that this material finds its origin in the geographical

[180] Ibid., 112.
[181] Ibid., 40.
[182] Ibid., 87–90.
[183] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 307, cf. 68.

writings of the Sāmānid *wazīr* Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Jayhānī, who was an associate of al-Balkhī. Al-Jayhānī served in the entourage of Naṣr b. Aḥmad from his accession in 301/913 until roughly 310/922. Like al-Balkhī, relatively little is known about either al-Jayhānī or the family of Sāmānid ministers who descended from him. As with al-Balkhī's geography, al-Jayhānī's lost *Masālik* has also been a kind of cypher for modern scholarship.[184]

Al-Muqaddasī mentions that al-Jayhānī had studied philosophy, astronomy, and geometry, and that he would gather together foreigners (*ghurabāʾ*) and ask them about the realms (*mamālik*) and the routes (*masālik*) to reach the various regions.[185] According to al-Muqaddasī, al-Jayhānī's geography described a panoply of wonders, along with digressions on the winds, mountains, medicaments, hills, trees, and rivers, and as such was vexatiously prolix.[186] The intersection between Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* and the geography of al-Jayhānī has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention. This is a point drawn out by al-Muqaddasī, who affirms the uniqueness of his own geography, which intentionally leaves out the countless marvels repeated in earlier works:

> If you examine the book of al-Jayhānī, you would see that it comprises the entirety of the original work (*aṣl*) of Ibn Khurradādhbih, and is built upon it, and if you were to examine the book of Ibn al-Faqīh, it was as if you were reading the book of al-Jāḥiẓ.[187]

Al-Muqaddasī describes how the books by Ibn Khurradādhbih and al-Jāḥiẓ were both very abridged (*mukhtaṣarān jiddan*) and were not of much value (*lā yuḥṣalu minhumā kathīra fāʾidatin*).[188] The shortened forms of these works are contrasted with the geographies of al-Jayhānī and Ibn al-Faqīh, each of which ran into multiple volumes. The abridgement of al-Jāḥiz and Ibn Khurradādhbih may be due in part to the later cannibalisation of their geographies. Al-Muqaddasī also states that he saw in the royal holdings (*khazāʾin*) of the Buyīd ruler ʿAḍud al-Dawla (d. 372/983) a geography in seven volumes bearing no title, but ascribed to al-Jayhānī, though some thought it to have been the work of Ibn Khurradādhbih.[189] While in Nishabur, al-Muqaddasī came across two separate abridgements (*mukhtaṣarayn*), ascribed to Ibn Khurradādhbih and al-Jayhānī respectively, which agreed in substance, though al-Jayhānī added some more material here and there.[190] Al-Muqaddasī, for his part, takes pains to affirm the originality of his own material, which he gathered not just through trips to royal libraries and book markets, but also, more importantly through his own empirical practice of eyewitness observation, achieved by his numerous travels across the various regions of the world. This process of ocular testimony informs a vision of authorship that looks askance at the normative citational practices of earlier geographical writing, where authors copied extensively without attribution from earlier sources.

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[184] See Charles Pellat, al-Djayhānī, *EI*²; Göckenjan and Zimonyi, *Orientalische Berichte*, 1–28.

[185] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 3–4; cf. Ibn Faḍlān, *Risāla*, §4.

[186] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 4.

[187] Ibid., 241. On the title of al-Jāḥiẓ's geography, see Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-ʿAlī's introduction to his edition, *Buldān*, 442–5; cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh,* 55, 76; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūra,* 372; Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, v, 2119; see also Pellat, Ǧāḥiẓiana iii, 154, §35; ibid., Ǧāḥiẓiana i.

[188] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 4–5; cf. Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, ii, 1664.

[189] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 4 note l.

[190] Ibid.

Al-Muqaddasī's comments on the confused authorship characterising the earlier writings in the field form part of a larger reflection on the derivative nature of the works preceding him. In the royal collection (*khizāna*) of the Buyīd *wazīr*, al-Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 385/955), al-Muqaddasī saw a geography ascribed to al-Balkhī containing maps (*ashkāl*). While in Nishabur, he was presented with the very same work from the collection of the *raʾīs* of the city and *adīb*, Abū Muḥammad al-Mīkālī (d. 379/990).[191] This second copy, however, was missing the name of its author and was thought, erroneously, to have been composed by the Persian historian, exegete, and man of letters, Ibn al-Marzubān al-Karkhī (d. 309/920), an associate of Ibn Khurradādhbih, who, according to Yāqūt, translated over fifty works from Persian into Arabic.[192] In Bukhārā, al-Muqaddasī once again saw the same geography, this time however, ascribed to Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fārisī, generally known to modern scholars as al-Iṣṭakhrī, who also took the topynomic Karkhī, which was evidently the source of this confusion. According to al-Muqaddasī, this final attribution was the correct one, for he had met several people, including the *muḥtasib* of Bukhārā, al-Ḥākim Abū Naṣr Manṣūr al-Ḥarīr al-Ḥarbī (d. 381/991), who personally knew al-Iṣṭakhrī and saw him compose the work.[193]

Despite the associational proximity between the geographies of al-Iṣṭakhrī and al-Balkhī, al-Muqaddasī, who drew from both authors, nowhere claims that al-Iṣṭakhrī took his material from al-Balkhī. In al-Muqaddasī's estimation, al-Iṣṭakhrī produced excellent maps, though he confused many of the toponyms and failed to explain the material in depth. Al-Muqaddasī acknowledges using al-Iṣṭakhrī's *Masālik* for his treatment of Kirmān.[194] He also quotes at various points the work of al-Balkhī, while his overall indebtedness to the two works appears to have extended beyond these direct citations.[195] Through a triangulation of al-Iṣṭakhrī's *Masālik* with al-Muqaddasī's citations of al-Balkhī, one can infer that al-Iṣṭakhrī drew from al-Balkhī's geography, although he appears to have done so without ever directly citing him. Using this entirely inferential method as a guide, de Goeje argued in a detailed study accompanying his edition of al-Iṣṭakhrī's *Masālik* that the lost geography of al-Balkhī, which must have been a relatively obscure text considering its complete absence from the biographical record, formed the basis for al-Iṣṭakhrī's *Masālik,* which in turn laid the groundwork for Ibn Ḥawqal's expanded geography.[196]

Regarding this problem of authorship, al-Muqaddasī's testimony has been the most valuable for separating out these works; however, matters are obscured slightly by the

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[191] On Abū Muḥammad, the Mīkālī family, and their control of the *riʾāsa* of Nishabur, see Bosworth, *Ghaznavids*, 179–85, cf. al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 186–7. Al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166), *Ansāb*, s.v. "Mīkālī," v, 329–30; Thaʿālibī (d. 429/1038), *Yatīma,* iv, 481–2, §106.

[192] Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, iv, 1574; vi, 2645–6, §1115; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 461–2; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 127–30, §748.

[193] On al-Ḥākim Abū Naṣr, see al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, s.v. ii, 236–7, "Ḥarbī." See also Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar*, 351, §583. Cf. Barthold, Preface, 18.

[194] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 475–8.

[195] Ibid., 10, 16, 64, 68, 255 note i, 260, 269–70, 280 note a, 305, 306 note b, 307.

[196] De Goeje, Die Iṣṭakhrī-Balkhī Frage; on the reception of de Goeje's Balkhī-school theory, see Nöldeke, Early Eastern Geography; Kramers, La question, 12–4; Barthold, Preface, 15–21; Tibbets, The Balkhī School.

fact that his account of the state of the field occurs in two different manuscript recensions which offer rather distinct assessments.[197] Whatever the case may have been, the conventions of citation which al-Muqaddasī both laments and enacts, may have led both to the disappearance of al-Balkhī's geography (as it was incorporated without direct citation into the later works of al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal), as well as to the notable abridgement of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*. All of this suggests an intertextual model of composite authorship, which readily resists the hermeneutic desire for intention and with it, historicisation.

The practice of building upon and expanding out the existing geographical works, generally without explicit recognition, offered one of the primary modes of composition. This process of citation also served as a means for expansion and redaction. Al-Muqaddasī chastises Ibn Khurradādhbih on multiple occasions, either for the unreliability of his work or the outdated state of his material.[198] Yet he also acknowledges the limitations of his own writing, for as the affairs of the world transform, over the course of time, so too does geographical information change.[199] The practice of copying from earlier geographical material could thus also provide an occasion for not only rote replication, but also revision and correction.

As for the surviving manuscript copies of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*, we may ponder the extent to which the material reflects either the redaction of earlier information or even a later form of emendation. Ibn Khurradādhbih is cited on multiple occasions as an authority within the Bodleian recension,[200] highlighting a collaborative form of composition, which may well have extended beyond Ibn Khurradādhbih's life. Two of these citations position him as the final transmitter (*rāwī*) in the anecdotes of al-Wāthiq's mission to the Cave of the Sleepers and the wall of Gog and Magog.[201] Such bylines underscore how anecdotes within the geography functioned as set pieces, which travelled widely beyond the *Masālik* and yet remained weighted to an authorial transmitter. While the Vienna manuscript does not transpose Ibn Khurradādhbih into the space of the text in the same manner, it remains unclear whether the variant passages and expansions that separate it from the Bodleian counterparts reflect authorial expansions or later emendations.

Just as the relationship of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik* to the lost geography of al-Jayhānī is only briefly touched upon in al-Muqaddasī's account, the extent to which Ibn Khurradādhbih built upon the geographical writings of his predecessors and contemporaries remains largely unknown. As a genre, works bearing the title *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik* came to represent a cumulative body of material, which was not constricted by conventions of singular authorship. Thus it was common for later works to cite the *Kitāb al-masālik* without identifying which author was intended.[202]

This is suggested notably in the opening to the famed Persian translation of the mirror

[197] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 5 note a.

[198] See al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 105.

[199] Al-Muqaddasī, "*dhakhartu mā ʿahidtu l-amra ʿalayhi fī waqtī wa-qad tataghayyaru l-umūru*," *Aḥsan*, 65 note k.

[200] MS B, fols. 1b, 17a, 78a,

[201] Ibid., fols. 54a, 61a; cf. MS H, fol. 141b.

[202] Cf. al-Maqdisī (fl. 355/966), *Kitāb al-badʾ*, iv, 19.

for princes, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, dedicated to the last great Ghaznavid ruler Yamīn al-Dawla Bahrām Shāh (r. 511–52/1117–57), by the statesman Abū l-Maʿālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī. The introduction presents the Ghaznavids as exporting religion throughout the idolatrous lands of Hindūstān, where the regions of war have converted into the abode of peace and where "everyone performs the same rituals (*ʿibādāt*) and recites the noble Qurʾān."[203] Abū l-Maʿālī continues that whoever reads the *Kitāb-i masālik wa-mamālik* would see how the domains of Bahrām Shāh extended from Iṣbahān, Tirmidh, and Khwārazm into the Ganga River valley. Abū l-Maʿālī does not specify which *Masālik* he has in mind, but he does not have to, for by this point the title had long become shorthand for a specific kind of geographical literature which was coupled with the interests of the state.

Ibn al-Nadīm, for his part, lists several authors who composed works under the title of *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik,* the majority of whom are identified as courtiers, administrators, or boon companions. He explicitly states that the earliest of these was by Abū l-ʿAbbās Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad al-Marwazī, who died in Ahwāz before finishing the work. While his death date is not specified, Ibn al-Nadīm writes that in the year 274/887–8 his books were taken to Baghdad and sold in the market of the booksellers and paper dealers.[204] Apart from Ibn al-Nadīm's account, the life of al-Marwazī is largely shrouded in mystery; however, one would presume, given the other authors mentioned, that either Ibn al-Nadīm was mistaken or al-Marwazī began his *Masālik* significantly before the work was put up for sale in Baghdad. Reason for this comes foremost by way of the littérateur, historian, and prominent poet of Baghdad, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith al-Kharrāz (d. 258/872), who is also said to have published a work under the same title. Al-Kharrāz, whose grandfather was a *mawlā* of the caliph al-Manṣūr, served as one of the main transmitters of the writings of the Persian historian and traditionist Abū l-Ḥasan al-Madāʾinī (d. ca. 228/843),[205] and was also, according to Ibn al-Nadīm, the author of the *Kitāb shiḥnat al-barīd*, a work on the constitution of the postal service, which evidently had direct bearing on the field of administrative geography and history.[206] The other two authors listed in the *Fihrist* as having published road books were both intimately connected to the state administration: Aḥmad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Sarakhsī (d. 285/899), the ill-fated tutor and *nadīm* of al-Muʿtaḍid,[207] and the Sāmānid *wazīr* Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Jayhānī.[208] Ibn al-Nadīm adds elsewhere that al-Jayhānī's geography had largely been ripped off (*salakha*) by Ibn al-Faqīh in his voluminous *Kitāb al-buldān.*[209] Other than Ibn

[203] Abū l-Maʿālī, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, 11–2.

[204] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 463–4. Cf. Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, ii, 776, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 75, §2796. All of whom copy the *Fihrist*; Ibn Anjab (d. 674/1276) states that al-Marwazī died in 274, though this makes explicit what Ibn al-Nadīm leaves ambiguous, *al-Durr al-thamīn*, 314–5. Ibn al-Nadīm references the Ṭāq al-Ḥarrānī archway, which was located near the bookseller's market (*sūq al-warrāqīn*), Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 92.

[205] On al-Madāʾinī, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 315–23; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xii, 54–6; Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, xiv, 124–29; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, x, 400–2, §114.

[206] On al-Kharrāz, see Ibn al-Nadīm, i, 323–4; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, v, 198–9, §2062; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 184–5, §444.

[207] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 459; ii, 197; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān,* i, 189–92; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, xiii, 448–9, §221; see Rosenthal, *Saraḫsī*, 13–39, 58–80.

[208] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 428; cf. Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, i, 455, §149, v, 2317–9, §963.

[209] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 473–4.

Khurradādhbih's geography, none of the works identified as bearing the title *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik* in the *Fihrist* have survived.

Ibn Khurradādhbih arguably shared the most in common with al-Sarakhsī. Both held the formal status as court companions to caliphs; both served in bureaucratic roles, Ibn Khurradādhbih as *ṣāḥib al-barīd* and al-Sarakhsī as *wālī l-ḥisba*. In addition to their geographies, both produced works on music. Al-Sarakhsī, however, appears to have fashioned himself more as a serious scholar, as the main pupil of the famed philosopher and geographer of Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī (d. ca. 260/874), under whom, incidentally, al-Balkhī is also known to have studied. The *Fihrist* situates al-Sarakhsī in the chapter on littérateurs and pleasure makers (§3.3), the domain of the *udabāʾ* and *nudamāʾ*, as well as in the chapter of the philosophers (§7.1), fields which Ibn Khurradādhbih, in contrast, did not straddle.[210]

In the *Tanbīh,* al-Masʿūdī offered a positive estimation of al-Sarakhsī's *Masālik,* referring to it as a fine work (*kitāb ḥasan*), which he included next to the road books of al-Jayhānī and Ibn Khurradādhbih.[211] However, in the *Murūj,* an earlier encyclopaedia, al-Masʿūdī disparaged a treatise (*kitāb*) he believed to have been falsely ascribed (*mansūb*) to al-Sarakhsī, consisting of reports of the nations (*akhbār al-umam*), which contradicted most of what Ibn Khurradādhbih had to say in his history (*tārīkh*) on the ancient nations before the advent of Islam.[212] It would appear that these two works ascribed to al-Sarakhsī were different, the first relating to the field of geography and the second dealing, in the main, with historical accounts.[213]

It may well be the case that al-Sarakhsī's *Masālik* stood in opposition to the geography of Ibn Khurradādhbih, although there is much to suggest that the two geographies also shared points of contact. According to al-Masʿūdī, al-Sarakhsī composed a treatise on the *aṣḥāb al-kahf* and recounted al-Wāthiq's mission to discover the Cave of the Sleepers directly on the authority of Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. Shākir.[214] This mission appears to have been an integral part of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*, as the Bodleian manuscript offers an *isnād*, "Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. Khurradādhbih said, 'Muḥammad b. Mūsā told me that…'"[215] The extant material shared between the two authors also included Sallām's adventure. Ibn Ḥazm recounts the anecdote in his heresiography, *al-Faṣl fī l-milal wa-l-niḥal,* on the authority of both al-Sarakhsī and Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, but not Ibn Khurradādhbih.[216] Again, the Bodleian manuscript makes a point (perhaps as a means of claiming priority?) of affirming the *isnād*

[210] Ibid., i, 459; ii, 195–7.

[211] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 75, cf. 51, 60.

[212] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §503.

[213] Admittedly, the passage in the *Murūj* is slightly ambiguous; Montgomery reads it to mean that al-Masʿūdī disparaged al-Sarakhsī's *Masālik,* Serendipity, 190–2; although it is not readily apparent that the text refers to a geographical work, nor is it consonant with al-Masʿūdī's latter assessment in the *Tanbīh*.

[214] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §§730–1, cf. idem, *Tanbīh*, 134. Al-Sarakhsī also wrote *Risāla fī aṣḥāb al-kahf wa-l-raqīm*, *GAS*, xii, 245; cf. Yāqūt, *Buldān,* iii, 60–2; Rosenthal, *Saraḫsī,* 61.

[215] MS B, fol. 54a.

[216] Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal,* i, 144. It is of note that the surviving sections from Qudāma's *Kitāb al-kharāj* do not include the full geographical material, see Heck, *Construction of Knowledge*, 3.

as passing directly from Sallām, a caliphal interpreter of one generation, to Ibn Khurradādhbih, a caliphal courtier of the next. The archival record both invites and resists, in its very imperfect state, such a theory of convergence between the geographies of Ibn Khurradādhbih and al-Sarakhsī.

In al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb al-aghānī*, Qudāma's father Jaʿfar, who was also in the service of the secretariat, transmits on the authority of Ibn Khurradādhbih, suggesting the larger bureaucratic networks through which the marvellous material of courtiers could travel.[217] What relationship Ibn Khurradādhbih might have had with al-Sarakhsī, however, is largely unknown, as the biographical record on both men is entirely fragmentary. One may speculate, given al-Masʿūdī's statement, that there was some rivalry between the two. In the associative logic of Ibn al-Nadīm's bibliographical taxonomy, the two shared a clear proximity that may bleed into resemblance, albeit as James Montgomery and Shawkat Toorawa have demonstrated, the exact placement of al-Sarakhsī in the *Fihrist* appears to be in a state of flux.[218] Based on the quotations of al-Wāthiq's missions to the Cave and the Wall, it is evident that the *Masālik* of al-Sarakhsī overlapped in some measure with the geography of his contemporary. Al-Sarakhsī fell out of favour due to an internal intrigue, which is often depicted as having arisen from heretical beliefs that he promulgated. His disgrace perhaps also contributed to the almost complete effacement of his writings, only fragments of which have survived. Although the priority of Ibn Khurradādhbih is generally taken for granted, one may speculate whether material from al-Sarakhsī's geography also converged in the manuscript tradition of Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Masālik*, either through an authorial process of adaptation and/or a later scribal history of emendation. While there is nothing in the surviving manuscript record to indicate al-Sarakhsī's presence, there is little to confirm that the later additions found in the Vienna *Masālik* are indeed original to Ibn Khurradādhbih's authorial composition.

In terms of the codicological practices of the period, it was quite common for editors and scribes to mix and match material where they saw fit, in the course of redacting disparate material into a single codex. This is the case, for instance, with the unique manuscript containing the Farīghūnid Persian geography, the *Ḥudūd al-ʿālam*, which also includes the *Jahān-nāma,* a Persian geography by Muḥammad b. Najīb Bakrān (fl. 604/1208),[219] as well as with Bodleian MS Hunt 538, which abruptly concludes Ibn Ḥawqal's geography with a long excerpt from the *Masālik* of Ibn Khurradādhbih. While there is an argument to be made that the additional accounts at the end of the *Masālik* are part of an original authorial design, they could also suggest that material from later geographical sources, such as al-Balkhī or al-Jayhānī, was appended to the work in the course of editorial redaction. This aporia of authentication is born out of the textual practices of transmission that shape the dissemination of writing for the period.

Across a range of fields, from exegesis to historiography, it was common for transmitters (*ruwāt*) to expand and improve upon the material that they inherited from their masters.[220]

[217] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, xxii, 201. On Jaʿfar b. Qudāma, see al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 110, §3623; Heck, *Construction of Knowledge*, 23–4.

[218] Toorawa, Proximity, 241, 246–7; Montgomery, Serendipity, 197–8.

[219] See Storey, *Persian Literature*, ii, 120; Krachkovski, *Istoria arabskoi*, 325–6.

[220] See Schoeler and Toorawa, *Literature in Islam*, 73, 77–8.

As is characteristic for geographical writings, the *Masālik* is not known to have disseminated through the redaction of a specific transmitter (*rāwī*). However, Ibn Najjār (d. 643/1245) in his biographical dictionary, identifies three figures who transmitted directly on the authority of Ibn Khurradādhbih, all men of letters from Baghdad: 1. Abū ʿAlī l-Kawkabī (d. 327/939), known for historical and belletristic accounts (*ṣāḥib al-akhbār wa-l-ādāb*);[221] 2. Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥakīmī (d. 336/948), a littérateur, originally from Balkh, who composed several belletristic works, including a treatise of humour and jokes, *al-Fukāha wa-l-duʿāba*, and the *Ḥilyat al-udabāʾ*, which contained historical accounts (*akhbār*) on men of letters;[222] 3. Abū Bakr al-Sarrāj (d. ca. 315/928), an author of a history of grammarians, the *Akhbār al-naḥwīyīn,* who went by the *laqab, "Tārīkhī*," because of his interest in collecting historical information. Additionally, Abū Bakr was also known to have transmitted from other caliphal *nudamāʾ*.[223] The biographical sources individually assign Ibn Khurradādhbih, al-Kawkabī, and al-Ḥakīmī the title *kātib*, suggesting an administrative network connecting the secretariat in the transference of learning across generations.[224]

Before listing these three scholars of Baghdad, Ibn Najjār describes Ibn Khurradādhbih as a transmitter of historical accounts and belletristic material (*rāwiyat al-akhbār wa-l-ādāb*). After referencing these literati, Ibn Najjār goes on to list the titles of Ibn Khurradādhbih's writings (*muṣannafāt*).[225] This terminology evokes both the oral and written circulation of material. Although the transmitters may have received isolated oral accounts from Ibn Khurradādhbih, they may also have transmitted entire works.

There is evidence for both models of dissemination. The account of Sallām's mission, for instance, appears to have travelled through an *isnād*-network, as attested in the *Dalāʾil al-qibla* by the Shāfiʿī judge Ibn al-Qāṣṣ (d. 335/946), who relates the adventure from a certain Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī who read it directly (*qaraʾa ʿalā*) before Ibn Khurradādhbih.[226] In contrast, Ibn Khurradādhbih is cited in the *Aghānī* almost always on the authority of ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kātib, who appears to have been the primary transmitter of his book on music and musicians, the *Kitāb al-lahw*; although no transmitter is explicitly mentioned in the surviving selections of the work itself.[227] It would be perfectly congruent with the normative practices governing the circulation of books for the *Masālik* to have been transmitted via one or more of Ibn Khurradādhbih's companions.

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[221] Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 647, §4132.

[222] On al-Ḥakīmī, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist,* i, 170, 466; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 85–8, §52; Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, v, 2305–6, §968; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 30–1, §309.

[223] On Abū Bakr al-Sarrāj, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 270; al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 603–4, §1114, cf. xvi, 508; al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, i, 465, s.v. "Tārīkhī"; Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, i, 5–6; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 35, §1505; his date of death is unknown, and is approximated from his placement in al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, xxiii, 644.

[224] On the range of meanings for the term *kātib* during this period, see Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfur*, 60–2.

[225] Ibn al-Najjār, *Dhayl*, ii, 12.

[226] See Ibn al-Qāṣṣ (d. 335/946), *Dalāʾil al-qibla,* British Library, MS Or. 13315, fol. 48a.

[227] See, for instance, al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, iii, 303, 345; iv, 269; v, 156, 400; vi, 154, 283–4, 294; on one occasion al-Iṣbahānī cites Ibn Khurradādhbih via ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Kātib, which may be an error for ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kātib, or may somehow be connected to the Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī mentioned by Ibn al-Qāṣṣ, ibid., x, 112.

From later geographers who followed after the *Masālik*, to the contemporary littérateurs and administrators who were Ibn Khurradādhbih's associates, and finally to the copyists who took on the task of circulating the work, there were multiple occasions for readers to participate not only in transmitting the text, but also in redacting and expanding it where they saw fit. Such a process may be at work in the appendix of the Vienna manuscript. The same extends to many of the prominent variants which are preserved only in the main body of the text.

PYRAMIDS, VARIANTS, AND CONTAMINATION

Beyond the appendix, there is other material absent from the Bodleian recension that, at first glance, appears to have been authored by Ibn Khurradādhbih. This is the case, for instance, with an account of treasure hunting in the pyramids of Giza. The anecdote opens with a description, shared in both the Vienna and Bodleian copies, of how the two largest pyramids of Giza were covered with hieroglyphics (*musnad*), containing every marvel of medicine and astrology.

However, the Vienna manuscript continues with an adventure into the belly of one of the smaller pyramids. The adventure opens with the following transmission, "He said, 'I was told by Ismāʿīl b. Yazīd al-Muhallabī...'"[228] Although it is not specified, presumably, the antecedent of 'he said' (*qāla*), refers to Ibn Khurradādhbih. As for al-Muhallabī, he served as a secretary (*kātib*) to Luʾluʾ (d. 304/916–7), a commander in the service of Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 270/884), the ʿAbbāsid Turkish general and *de facto* ruler of Egypt and Syria. Luʾluʾ and his entourage broke off with Ibn Ṭūlūn and joined the ʿAbbāsid prince al-Muwaffaq (d. 278/891), the effective ruler of the empire, to fight the Zanj revolt in 269/883.[229] As de Goeje notes, this would be a likely *terminus ante quem* for its placement within the *Masālik*.[230]

Accompanied by Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Wāsiṭī, the head secretary (*kātib*) of Ibn Ṭūlūn, and a group of labourers, al-Muhallabī details how they entered the pyramid by prying open a passageway that led to an open courtyard filled with statues. On the sides of the courtyard were chambers with onyx urns in the shape of different animals, which contained mummies (*mūmiyāʾī*). In the north chamber was a giant sarcophagus (*jurn*), which the expedition set on fire in order to force it open. They found under the head of the royal corpse a white onyx tablet, which had cracked from the heat of the fire. When joined together, the tablet portrayed on one side two images of gold. One image was a man holding a serpent; the other was a figure seated on a donkey, holding a staff. On the other side of the tablet was a third figure of a man mounted on a camel bearing a rod. The tablet was presented to Ibn Ṭūlūn, who summoned an artisan to join it together. Collectively, the group concluded that the three images corresponded to Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad.[231]

This process of emplotment is designed to affirm the salvific power of Islam as prophesied in the wonder of the pyramids. Yet, poised against the ability of the state to assimilate

[228] MS V, "*qāla fa-ḥaddathanī,*" fol. 66b; cf. Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 159 note g.

[229] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. III, 2028–9, 2080–2; cf. Popović, *Revolt of African Slaves*, 119ff.

[230] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, ix, xviii–xix.

[231] Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 160.

these pharaonic relics is a morbid fascination with decay and destruction. Al-Muhallabī's underground adventure closes when Ibn Ṭūlūn gives him one of the urns containing the remains of a mummified corpse. Once at home al-Muhallabī took a stick to move the mummy in the urn, when from inside it suddenly began to swell with something (*fa-jaʿala yatanaffasu bi-shayʿin*):

> I kept fiddling with it until I had gotten it out, but it was only strips of cloth wound around each other. I started unwrapping them until I came to a piece of bull's leather around which the strips had been wound, and as I reached the end of the strips blood started to flow from the leather. I still do not understand the meaning of it all, God alone knows best.[232]

Rather than offering closure, the tale from the crypt ends with an uncanny confusion at what appears to be bleeding tissue. The opening up of the pyramids presents an established pattern for the articulation of imperial dominion with caliphal precedence.[233] Yet there is also wrapped in the fabric of the narrative a *memento mori* harkening to the transience of life and political rule.

This overtly teleological legitimisation of an Islamic religious order finds ready parallels in earlier narratives associated with Umayyad expeditions to marvellous buildings and ancient graves and the accompanying anxieties surrounding territorial expansion and the fragility of temporal rule. These accounts include such marvel stories as: (1) the discovery of Solomon's table by the general Ṭāriq b. Ziyād (d. 102/720) in Toledo; this usually accompanies (2) the account of how Roderick (Ludhrīq), the ill-fated Visigoth king, unlocked a bolted temple in Toledo and discovered talismanic statues confirming the impending Arab conquest of Iberia;[234] (3) the adventure sent by the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–85/685–705) to locate the fabled City of Brass, a mission shrouded in Qurʾānic imagery and Solomonic lore;[235] and (4) the mission dispatched by the founder of the Umayyad caliphate, Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41–60/661–80), which is said to have successfully discovered the barrier designed by Dhū l-Qarnayn to hold back Gog and Magog and with them the apocalypse.[236]

These accounts of the marvels accompanying early imperial expansion are circumscribed within early ʿAbbāsid discourse by a narrative symmetry that marks the prodigious collapse of the Umayyad caliphate. According to a widely circulated anecdote, transmitted by the likes of Ibn al-Kalbī and al-Madāʾinī, the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad (r.

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[232] Ibid. In a similar vein, Ibn al-Nadīm relates an anecdote concerning the discovery of fresh blood (*damm ʿabīṭ*) in a pharaonic tomb which immediately clotted once exposed to air. He quotes this from a book on the wonders of the world, entitled *Akbhār al-arḍ wa-l-ʿajāʾib mā ʿalayhā wa-mā fīhā min al-abniya wa-l-mamālik wa-ajnās al-umam,* which Ibn al-Nadīm ascribes to one of the Āl Thawāba, a family of Christian secretaries who served in the ʿAbbāsid administration during the end of the third/ninth century, *Fihrist*, 2:444–5.

[233] See al-Idrīsī, *al-Anwār*, 33–5, 106–7; Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ*, i, 324–6, 330. See Cooperson, Al-Maʾmūn, the Pyramids, and the Hieroglyphs.

[234] See Ibn Ḥabīb, (d. 238/853), *Tārīkh*, 140; see also Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr,* 206; Ibn Rusta, *Aʿlāq*, 79.

[235] Ibn Ḥabīb, *Tārīkh*, 143–5; al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, i, 242; see also Fudge, Signs of Scripture.

[236] Related by the Egyptian historian Saʿīd b. ʿUfayr (d. 226/840) in al-Bakrī, *Masālik,* ii, 29.

127–32/774–50), like Roderick before him, brought an ancient curse upon himself when, during a treasure hunting foray in the ruins of Palmyra (Tadmur), he broke the locks on a sarcophagus (*jurn*) which held the corpse of the queen of the city. The curse that was to signal the downfall of the Umayyads was translated for the caliph from a hieroglyphic (*ḥimyarī*) inscription carved on a brass tablet, located above the queen's head.[237]

All of these accounts circulate prior to the Ṭūlūnid adventure in the pyramids and may well have informed how the anecdote was plotted into the *Masālik*. Despite what would appear to be a very strong case for the placement of the excavation of the pyramids as integral to the geography, the account is missing from the two Bodleian witnesses, and the ensuing reception history. The unidentified voice introducing the anecdote ('he said,' *qāla*) also gives room for pause.

As *kātib* to the general Luʾluʾ, al-Muhallabī's eyewitness corroboration adds an imprimatur of state authority in the course of transmission. Given the historical relationship between Luʾluʾ and the prince regent al-Muwaffaq, there is reason to believe that Ibn Khurradādhbih, or another writer who travelled in the same milieu, would have had access to the adventure, whose historicity is affirmed independently through Ṭūlūnid dynastic records. The account of an expedition to open the pyramids during the rule of Ibn Ṭūlūn is detailed in several later sources, none of which, importantly, appear to be aware of the episode in the Vienna recension, a further indication of its limited circulation.[238]

From the earliest reception history of the *Masālik*, Arabic geographical writers drew from the Bodleian archetype (β) for both Sallām's adventure and the description of the pyramids, and not the extended versions of these accounts preserved in the Vienna manuscript. While these variations and their reception are not in and of themselves conclusive regarding the stages of composition, it is evident that the archetype for the Vienna manuscript (ω), at least in regard to its versions of Sallām's adventure, its account of the pyramids of Giza, and the final appendix, were excluded from the reception history. As de Meynard and de Goeje readily admit, the Bodleian copy represents a significant abridgement of the geography. Based on the record of reception, it is evident that an abridged form of the *Masālik* disseminated from an early period and that it was this version that was widely cited by later geographers. However, this process of abridgement does not in its own right mean that β-archetype was composed prior to the ω-counterpart. It remains to be seen the extent to which the additions in the Vienna manuscript are original to an authorial form of the geography or merely reflect the delectable residue of later contamination. A good array of the differences separating the Bodleian and Vienna copies may stem from posterior accretions or improvements.

This arguably could be the source of the expanded details of Sallām's adventure. The

[237] On the authority of Ibn al-Kalbī, see al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, i, 307; al-Ḥimyarī (d. 573/1178), *Mulūk Ḥimyar*, 83; as transmitted by al-Madāʾinī, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 152–3. Cf. Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 160; al-Ṭūsī, *ʿAjāʾib-nāma*, 200; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, ii, 17–8; al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 169–70. Both the Umayyad conquest of Toledo and the curse of Palmyra are associated with the Prophet Solomon, and with it an Umayyad ideology of a Solomonic pact, see Fudge, Signs of Scripture, 91–2; and Borrut, *Mémoire*, 217–28.

[238] See al-Balawī, *Sīrat Ibn Ṭūlūn*, 194–6; Abū Jaʿfar al-Idrīsī (d. 649/1251), *Ahrām*, 35–6, 132; al-Maqrīzī, *Mawāʿiẓ*, i, 128, cf. 339.

Vienna manuscript is the only version that attempts to geographically identify the actual location of the population of Muslim converts before the rampart; though admittedly the section in question survives as a palimpsest through a later restoration that has pasted over the original manuscript. This version also includes Sallām's translation of an ancient inscription on the wall, said to have been written in the first language (*al-lisān al-awwal*) which corresponds, word for word with the Qurʾānic verse predicting the apocalyptic destruction of the barrier (Q 18:98).

The notion that material from the Qurʾān was written in a primal language prior to the revelation to Muḥammad in a non-Arabic medium would seem to implicate the hotly contested theological issue concerning the eternality of the Qurʾān. It is precisely during this period that certain theological circles were advancing the creedal position that the Arabic form of the Qurʾān was a temporal reflection (*ʿibāra*) and representation (*ḥikāya*) of an eternal indivisible speech, which transcended all human linguistic form.[239] Such an argument, while fervently debated, resonates with Sallām's translation of the Qurʾānic inscription written in an ancient, primal language. The inclusion of this moment of Qurʾānic translation in the expanded version of the adventure could reflect an attempt to embed a subtle theological claim into a widely circulated account, while its exclusion may speak to an abridgement with a theological agenda.

Such a reworking is not entirely unique to the differences separating the Bodleian and Vienna recensions. The Arabic collection of stories, the *Qiṣaṣ al-Qurʾān* by Abū l-Ḥasan al-Būshanjī (d. 467/1075), the grandson of the head of the Karrāmī movement in Nishabur, Ibn Hayṣam (d. 409/1019), contains a redaction of the mission that appears to have circulated amongst populist Muslim preachers for a particular theological end.[240] As a theological and juridical movement, the Karrāmiyya developed a significant presence in eastern Iran; they focused on religious piety and conversion and viewed themselves as operating within the normative framework of Sunnī orthodoxy.[241]

What is unique about al-Būshanjī's treatment is that he gives two redactions of Sallām's adventure. While the second version draws from the ubiquitous β-recension found throughout the reception history, the first version he quotes is significantly different, and appears to reflect a retelling of the story. Al-Būshanjī relates that he saw in the historical accounts (*akhbār*) on the caliphs that al-Wāthiq wanted to learn about the wall, so he sent one of his wise boon companions (*nudamāʾ*) to discover its location. Sallām is not mentioned by name, nor is his itinerary followed in the traditional course through the Caucasus. Rather, the unidentified adventurer heads straight to Khurāsān, where we are told that either ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir, or his son, was in power. From there the mission was sent on to the Ṭāhird governor of Transoxiana, travelling through the lands of the Turks and above China. Before reaching the wall, the caliphal delegate found a community of Muslims. However, rather than following the description in the *Masālik* of converts fluent in Arabic and Persian, having mastered the Qurʾān, and in possession of schools and mosques,

[239] See Josef van Ess, Ibn Kullāb und die *Miḥna*.

[240] On al-Būshanjī, see al-Fārisī (d. 529/1135), *Muntakhab*, 732, §1628; ibid., *Mukhtaṣar*, 416–7, §2302; cf. Van Ess, *Ungenütztе,* 68–73.

[241] On the Karrāmiyya, see Van Ess, *Ungenütztе*; Bosworth, Karāmiyyah in Khurāsān; Melchert, Competing Movements; Shafīʿī Kadkanī, Muḥammad b. Karām-i Sijstānī.

al-Būshanjī's account affirms the exact opposite, "at the wall there were Muslims who did not know anything about the precepts of religious law (*sharāʾiʿ*)."[242]

After concluding this first version, al-Būshanjī then follows this with the traditional narrative of Sallām's adventure, where the Muslim community is described as bilingual and in complete mastery of the Qurʾān.[243] The first account, however, makes a very subtle theological claim, namely that Muslims could exist in spaces where the formal teachings of religious law had not yet reached them. This was a position enunciated within early Ḥanafī creedal material, reflecting an elaboration of the Murjiʾī theological position that privileged faith over acts in the process of conversion.[244] The circulation of the adventure in Karrāmī circles, with their own missionary activities across the frontiers, suggests that the memory of the caliphal mission could model how conversion was conceived. The story was evidently deployed prior to al-Būshanjī, as an affirmation that one could be a believer through faith, without fully grasping the actual religious obligations of Islam. This notable reconfiguration of the adventure suggests how such geographical literature could be reconfigured for a specific set of ideological ends. Thus, the Vienna version of the adventure with its noticeable digressions from the dominant reception may reflect an earlier recension that was censored or failed to circulate. It may also be the case that the expansion of the account points to a later process of improving the text. Alternatively, one could imagine a combination of the two, with multiple forces of expansion, rearrangement, and convergence which originate and extend beyond Ibn Khurradādhbih's authorial composition.

The same stands true for the other significant variants, such as the ransacking of the pyramids, and the final appendix where the prospect of our control over the meaning of the text survives only through a single manuscript witness. While these variants may be authorial, they could also indicate a later process of 'determined variation,' whereby subsequent scribes or editors intentionally improved the text, a practice entirely in keeping with the reception and reinscription of manuscript culture.[245] Given the range and nature of these variants, the shortcomings of subjecting the *Masālik* to the artificial strictures of a critical edition are legion. The very artefact of the critical edition forces us to trace after a vanishing horizon of authorial intention, while often arbitrarily bracketing out variants as either earlier stages of composition or signs of spurious contamination.[246]

Beyond the confines of Lachmannian stemmatics governing the logic of a critical edition, there are other ways of presenting the surviving manuscript record. The textual archaeology of a "diplomatic transcription," which would not seek out the "best reading," but rather transcribed the distinct redactions individually, could add greater transparency to the reception history, while elucidating the structure and content of the manuscript witnesses

[242] Al-Būshanjī, *Qiṣaṣ*, 606.

[243] Ibid., 606–7. For a Ḥanafī-Murjiʾī analogue, see the exchange between Abū Muṭīʿ al-Balkhī (d. 199/814) and Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), *al-Fiqh al-absaṭ*, in Abū Ḥanīfa, *al-ʿĀlim*, 41–2.

[244] On the affinity between the Karrāmiyya and the Murjiʾa, see al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936), *Maqālāt*, i, 141; on the Murjiʾī theological position concerning faith and acts, see Schacht, An Early Murciʾite Treatise; Madelung, The Early Murjiʾa.

[245] A category employed by Greetham in various contexts, *Textual Scholarship*, 281–3, 289, 303.

[246] On the 'grail of intention' animating the cult of the *codex optimus* versus the cultural and historical significance of reception history, see Greetham, Phylum-Tree-Rhizome, 102–3.

in their own terms.[247] Beyond the printed book, digital formats offer particularly pragmatic solutions to the problem of the archive. The text of de Goeje's edition, shorn entirely of its arcane critical apparatus and thus the polyvalent reality of divergence, already exists as a text file floating around the Internet.[248] While such a presentation makes the *Masālik* accessible to complex word searches in the aggregation of information, without the important record of variance marking the manuscripts, it sustains the illusion of a unified, stable text. However, other hyper-textual possibilities of digital presentation could be particularly beneficial in elucidating the kinds of archival problems of radical variance.[249] Yet, regardless of the medium, without further evidence, the hermeneutic dilemma posed by the archive remains in some basic sense insoluble, torn between the twin forces of intention and reception.

UNCERTAINTY, PATRONAGE, AND ONOMASTIC RUPTURE

The problem with such textual ambiguity is that it makes the project of the historicisation all the more challenging. As with the adventure in the pyramids, a further allusion to the political climate may be teased out through networks that connected Ibn Khurradādhbih and the court poet al-Buḥturī. The Vienna recension twice quotes verses composed by al-Buḥturī, once from his famed *qaṣīda* on Madāʾin, and the other from an elegiac poem al-Buḥturī dedicated to Isḥāq b. Kundājīq, when the Khazar general and governor of Mawṣil and Jazīra, was conferred the title Dhū l-Sayfayn in 269/833.[250] This honorific echoes the title, Dhū l-Wizāratayn ('Possessor of the two vizierates'), which was granted in the same year to Ṣāʿid b. Makhlad (d. 276/889), referencing his service to both al-Muwaffaq, *de facto* ruler of the ʿAbbāsid empire, and his imprisoned brother, the caliph al-Muʿtamid.[251] Isḥāq b. Kundājīq was instructed in a letter by Ṣāʿid, written on behalf of al-Muwaffaq, to capture the caliph al-Muʿtamid, who sought refuge from his brother with the general Ibn Ṭūlūn. After having detained al-Muʿtamid, Isḥāq returned him, disgraced, to Sāmarrāʾ.

As James Montgomery has argued, it would appear incongruent for Ibn Khurradādhbih to dedicate the geography to al-Muʿtamid and then to include an elegy honouring someone who so publicly humiliated the caliph. From such a line of analysis, Montgomery posited, rather reasonably, that the unnamed patron addressed in the exordium to the Vienna recension was the prince regent al-Muwaffaq, or someone within al-Muwaffaq's entourage, such as his son, the future caliph al-Muʿtaḍid.[252] As for the dedication, it bears noticeable resemblance to al-Jāḥiẓ's opening in his *Kitāb al-buldān*, with its epistolary-style proemium

[247] See Masai, Édition diplomatique, 4 (1950), 180; West, *Textual Criticism*, 94n22.

[248] The text can be accessed on the websites of the major aggregators of medieval Arabic texts, e.g. http://www.alwaraq.net; http://www.tebyan.net; http://www.islamport.com.

[249] See Buzzetti and McGann, Critical Editing in a Digital Horizon, 67–70.

[250] MS V, fol. 53b; Ibn Khurradādhbih, *Masālik*, 124; cf. al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān,* p. 974–9, §386, ll. 35–6; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. III, 2037–9. On Isḥāq b. Kundājīq, see Golden, *Khazar Studies*, see i, 202–4.

[251] See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ser. III, 2083; cf, Sourdel, *Le vizirat*, 316–22.

[252] Montgomery, Serendipity, 209–10.

also dedicated to an unnamed patron.[253] The Bodleian manuscript, in contrast, offers a radically different introduction, which is entirely missing a dedication. Montgomery read this variance as an indication that Ibn Khurradādhbih revised the *Masālik* for a new patron, a revision perhaps born out of the chaotic political landscape which in the years prior to the accession of al-Muʿtamid saw a succession of caliphs murdered, one after the other, in a series of bloody coups.

As a recipient of courtly patronage, Ibn Khurradādhbih would have had to navigate this internecine terrain. Despite his formal status as *nadīm* to al-Muʿtamid, there is much to support Montgomery's thesis, which sets Ibn Khurradādhbih with the partisans of al-Muwaffaq. In addition to the citations in the *Masālik* (i.e. the verse in praise of Isḥāq b. Kundājīq and the account of the secretary of Luʾluʾ, who was aligned with al-Muwaffaq against the Zanj), there is other material on the life of Ibn Khurradādhbih that bolsters this line of analysis. Ibn Khurradādhbih is known to have been an associate of the wealthy Christian aristocrat ʿAbdūn b. Makhlad (d. 310/922–3), the brother of the *wazīr* Ṣāʿid b. Makhlad who converted to Islam under al-Muwaffaq and ordered the detainment of al-Muʿtamid. Ibn Khurradādhbih joined al-Buḥturī in the monastery (*dayr*) in Sāmarrāʾ associated with ʿAbdūn, for the celebration of Easter in the spring of 269/883.[254] According to his own account, al-Buḥturī recited poetry in honour of his host, ʿAbdūn, as well as his brother, Ṣāʿid, who was at that moment with al-Muwaffaq, battling the leader of the Zanj revolt, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad (d. 270/883). Buḥturī also declaimed verses in honour of Ibn Khurradādhbih. Buḥturī was rewarded two hundred dinars and gifts in kind, while Ibn Khurradādhbih received a robe of honour from the host.[255] The entire occasion occurred just two months after the detention of al-Muwaffaq, suggesting the ways Ibn Khurradādhbih negotiated a network which extended beyond the embattled caliph.

This historical context of patronage would appear to offer further support for the view that the elliptical dedication framing the Vienna manuscript may not have been directed to the imprisoned caliph. Yet, it is not at all clear that the apocopated doxology that opens the Bodleian manuscript reflects an earlier recension:

> Praise be to God in thanks for His blessing! I bear witness that there is no deity but God, in affirmation of His unicity (*bi-waḥdāniyyatihi*) and that God is most powerful, submitting to His sublimity (*li-ʿaẓamatihi*). May God bless and give peace upon Muḥammad, His Prophet, the best of His creation, and his family.[256]

These short lines stand in marked contrast to the introduction of the Vienna recension, which with its in rhyming prose reflects a stylised form of belletristic composition.

After this short *ḥamd*, the Bodleian text immediately follows with a description of the contents of the work and then the opening statement by the author, "Abū l-Qāsim ʿUbayd

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[253] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Buldān*, 462. On the epistolary form as wedded to the largely belletristic traditions of the secretariat, see Schoeler and Toorawa, *Literature in Islam*, 63–4.

[254] On the monastery of ʿAbdūn, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, ii, 520. Also see al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt*, 270–3.

[255] For the monastery and the cultural and religious implications of Muslims participating in Christian festivals, see Kilpatrick, Monasteries, 19–37, 24–5. Also al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349), *Masālik al-abṣār*, i, 311; al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān*, i, 253–4, 554, iv, 2300, §§184, 232, 864.

[256] MS B, fol. 1b.

Allāh b. ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih stated...," once again paralleling the Vienna recension. Montgomery reads the Bodleian opening as an earlier recension embedded within the theology of the period. However, a case could be made that this introduction, rather than an original statement, is a perfunctory addition reflecting a later process of abridgement. The first folio of MS B, which contains both the title page (fol. 1a) and the opening passage (fol. 1b), is copied out in a distinct hand from the rest of the text, while the folio itself appears to be a later emendation inserted into the manuscript. Additionally, the text of the manuscript is consistently written out with eleven lines per folio side. This follows a regimented pattern throughout the entire manuscript, save in the emended opening folio which consists of thirteen lines.

As for the interrelated notions of unicity and sublimity referenced in this terse doxology, they form part of a standard teleological argument from design for the singular existence of God. While one can find echoes of such sentiments within ʿAbbāsid letters,[257] they also form part of a later homiletic reconstitution of geographical literature. This is the case, for instance, with the *Kitāb al-ʿaẓama* by the traditionist Abū Shaykh al-Iṣbahānī (d. 369/979), which emerges out of the context of *ḥadīth* scholarship. Abū Shaykh orders an array of wondrous accounts germane to the geographical interest in marvels, from the Alexander Romance to the City of Brass, around the principle that God's sublimity (*ʿaẓama*), as manifest through His marvellous creation, offers indisputable proof of His unitary existence. The collection opens with a chapter entitled, "The injunction to contemplate the signs of God, mighty and glorious, and His power, and sovereignty, dominion, sublimity (*ʿaẓamatihi*) and unicity (*waḥdāniyyatihi*)."[258] The entire framework is designed as a traditionist rebuttal to the *ahl al-raʾy*, who focus their attention not on the nature of God's creation, but rather on the very nature of God.[259] There is thus nothing in the cursory invocation that could not have been penned by a later redactor or scribe, as the material speaks to normative generalities of Islamic theodicy.[260] In contrast, the Vienna dedication, with its reference to an unnamed patron and its description of Ptolemy and the field of geography, suggests a concrete process of composition and authorship entirely relevant to Ibn Khurradādhbih's historical context. Moreover, material from this introduction, and not the Bodleian invocation, circulates within the later reception history of the *Masālik*.[261]

Also not to be ignored is that directly after the Vienna dedication, the text explicitly identifies Ibn Khurradādhbih as the protégé of the caliph (*mawlā amīr al-muʾminīn*), suggesting his privileged status aligned with and protected by the caliph. Such a reference further complicates this entire series of speculations. The extent to which the allusions scattered in the *Masālik* carry politically charged valences relevant to the contexts of patronage which frame the production of the work is also a question that warrants further consideration. Ibn Ṭūlūn is another fly in the ointment, as his presence in the text stands in for the royal figure who both legitimates the expedition in the pyramids and gives it

[257] See, for instance, Ibn Rusta's introduction, which strings together the argument from design entirely through Qurʾānic citations, *Aʿlāq*, 3–4. Cf. Montgomery, Serendipity, 203–4.

[258] Abū Shaykh al-Iṣbahānī, *ʿAẓama*, i, 209, cf. 236, 251–2, 255.

[259] Ibid., i, 270–87, cf. 280–1.

[260] For a fuller treatment of this subject, see Zadeh, The Wiles of Creation.

[261] See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, ii, 1665n3.

meaning. Shortly after his detention by Isḥāq, al-Muwaffaq was forced to declare Ibn Ṭūlūn *persona non grata,* denouncing him from the public audience chamber, the *dār al-ʿāmma*, and having his name cursed in the pulpits at the congregational Friday prayer; while at the same time Isḥāq b. Kundājīq was appointed, albeit nominally, governor over the Levant and North Africa, which still remained well under Ibn Ṭūlūn's control.[262] Likewise, Luʾluʾ, who abandoned Ibn Ṭūlūn and joined forces with al-Muwaffaq, soon after fell out of favour with the prince regent who imprisoned him in 273/887 for a period of nearly ten years.[263] Why either Ibn Ṭūlūn or Luʾluʾ would be included in the *Masālik*, considering their status as outcasts of the ʿAbbāsid ruling elite, may point to the later interpolation of the material into the geography well after it was politically meaningful.

The codicological limits of the *Masālik* reflect the polysemous reality of recension and redaction, which encourages a multiplicity of interpretive interventions. Thus, reading the variants as authorial stages of composition posits a process of revision that, through de Goeje's thesis, could be readily historicised. Such a line of analysis certainly is appealing, as it grants a historical specificity to the messy reality of the archive. The heuristic method of tracing variants through the citational practices of the ensuing reception history also gives entrée into the circulation and reconfiguration of textual cultures, within an easily historicised chronological development and periodisation. However, by viewing the surviving manuscript witnesses of the *Masālik* as stages of abridgement, governed not only by authorial design, but also by the promiscuous practices of interpolation, redaction, and expansion, we invariably lose a certain amount of epistemic control over the text, and with it the specific historical contexts that first animated the material. As such, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate the anachronistic transmission of earlier sources and the later accretions of emendations and expansions from an authentic core of original material, which could be usefully managed by anything like an authorial intention.

Affirmative statements about the original design of the *Masālik* should thus be bracketed by a recognition of the protean reality of the textual variance inhabiting the archival record. However, there is a good deal that can be positively asserted about the work itself. The geography offers a description of the earth oriented around Mesopotamia, positing *Īrānshahr,* a traditional Sāsānian appellation, as the *axis mundi*. This discourse is reflected, for instance, in the *Šahristānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, a Middle Persian geography redacted during the early ʿAbbāsid period.[264] The *Masālik* was evidently produced in a period when Sāmarrāʾ was still the caliphal capital, which it remained until 279/892. This is highlighted not only by Sallām's mission during al-Wāthiq's reign, which makes a point of mentioning Sāmarrāʾ three times as the seat of ʿAbbāsid power, but also by the repeated recurrence of the palatine city as a central node within the sweeping network of postal and trade routes. The geography, at least in some form, appears to have circulated during the reign of al-Muʿtamid, while Sāmarrāʾ remained the capital. This period also coincided with the caliphate seeking an increase in tax revenue.[265] Against such a backdrop, the relevance of

[262] See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. III, 2048.

[263] Ibid., ser. III, 2112, 2146.

[264] *Šahristānīhā ī Ērānšahr,* 8–10, on *zamīg ī ērān-šahr*, see §1, 38.

[265] On the efforts to raise revenue under al-Muʿtamid, see al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/946), *Akhbār*, 108–9; al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt*, 271–2; El-Sāmarrāie, *Agriculture in Iraq*, 181, 215.

the superannuated information of earlier administrative practices could have taken on a new significance.

As for Ibn Khurradādhbih, apart from what is preserved in his own writings and in later Arabic authorities, it is also difficult to make positive statements about his life, the full nature of his oeuvre, or his exact relationship to centres of power. No classical source references the date of his birth, while to my knowledge only Ḥājjī Khalīfa offers a date of death, which he says occurred around (*ʿalā ḥudūd*) the year 300/912, a turn of phrase that sounds more like a guess than an authoritative statement.[266] The geographers and historians who quote Ibn Khurradādhbih occasionally add details that bear upon his life. For instance, when citing Sallām's adventure, al-Muqaddasī mentions that Ibn Khurradādhbih served as a caliphal minister (*wazīr*) responsible for the selection of material to be deposited in the caliphal library. This statement may have been based, more than anything, on al-Muqaddasī's desire to give credence to Sallām's account — all versions of which, he states, find their origin in Ibn Khurradādhbih.[267] While today we view Ibn Khurradādhbih primarily as a geographer, he was also renowned as a historian, particularly of pre-Islamic Persian history, and there is much to suggest that his historical and geographical writings overlapped.[268]

The vast majority of the information on Ibn Khurradādhbih comes from the bio-bibliographic account preserved in the *Fihrist*. Ibn al-Nadīm offers a list of eight titles, which while not including the *Tārīkh* mentioned by al-Masʿūdī, covers the *Masālik* and the *Kitāb al-lahw*, as well as other works generally related to *adab* and Persian lore, such as a collection on court companions, *Kitāb al-nudamāʾ wa-l-julasāʾ*, and treatises on drinking and cooking, and a genealogy of Persians. Also given is a full name, Abū l-Qāsim ʿUbayd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Khurradādhbih, as well as an account of how his forefather was a Magian who converted under the Barmakids. Ibn al-Nadīm further identifies Ibn Khurradādhbih as a court companion of al-Muʿtamid who served as the director for the post and information over the Jabal. This skeletal outline is hardly expanded upon in the other sources. As for the ancestral namesake, al-Ṭabarī refers to a certain Khurradādhbih al-Rāzī, who may be the forefather of the entire family; he appears as the primary *rāwī* for an account on the flight of the last Sāsānian emperor Yazdagird III (d. 31/651) from the invading Arab armies, transmitted to al-Madāʾinī via Rawḥ b. ʿAbdallāh of Baghdad (fl. 187/803).[269] The dates would thus match the Khurradādhbih of Ibn al-Nadīm's account, whose stately conversion would have taken place sometime during the middle or latter half of the second/eighth century.

The fragmentary nature of Ibn Khurradādhbih's biography is compounded by the fact that many key details advanced in several modern accounts of his life are factually inaccurate or misleading. De Goeje did a good deal of the spade work uncovering stray references, here

[266] See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, i, 278.

[267] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, 362.

[268] See al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §9; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, i, 278. The *Ghurar* ascribed to al-Thaʿālibī drew extensively from Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Kitāb al-tārīkh*, which evidently contained Sallām's account and poetry from Bahrām Gūr, which are also found in the *Masālik*, 118, 165–6, al-Thaʿālibī, *Ghurar*, 440, 556–7, cf. 130, 257, 262, 378, 415, 444–5, 458, 486, 604.

[269] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ser. I, 2873; the *floruit* for Rawḥ b. ʿAbdallāh is taken from the birth date of his son in al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 122–3, §5040.

and there, and was able to draw out a series of speculations, many of which, unfortunately, Mahammed Hadj-Sadok in his entry on Ibn Khurradādhbih for the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* misinterpreted as historical facts. Two obvious problems are the claims that Ibn Khurradādhbih studied under the famed musician Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 235/850) and was promoted to the director-general of the *barīd* in Baghdad and later in Sāmarrāʾ. Both of these statements can only be inferred from the source material. Nowhere in the sources is there any suggestion that Ibn Khurradādhbih took over the administration of the capital cities, though this was advanced inferentially by Sprenger and de Goeje, largely as a means of giving the geography even more historical authority.[270] Likewise, the *Kitāb al-aghānī* cites Ibn Khurradādhbih on several occasions as transmitting reports from Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī. However, there is no direct claim that he was a pupil of the famed musician. Nor for that matter does Ibn Khurradādhbih in his *Kitāb al-lahw* claim to have studied music under Isḥāq; rather he repeatedly cites the written collection (*kitāb*) of Iṣḥāq's father, Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 188/804) for his information on early singers.[271] For his extended biographical sketch of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī, al-Iṣbahānī mentions how Isḥāq and the poetess Zahrāʾ al-Kilābiyya lamented the death of ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih, who appears to have been Ibn Khurradādhbih's father. Zahrāʾ adds that ʿAbdallāh particularly admired Isḥāq and was amazed by his skill.[272] Although Ibn Khurradādhbih was clearly associated with Isḥāq, his exact relationship with the famed musician is not clarified in the sources.

There also appears to be a thorough confusion over Ibn Khurradādhbih's full name. By far the most common form is the ancestral name, Ibn Khurradādhbih, without the citation of other onomastic elements. However, it is not entirely clear which descendant of Khurradādhbih he was. While the patronymic (*kunya*), Abū l-Qāsim, is generally agreed upon, the sources present the following variants in first name (*ism*) and linage (*nasab*):

1. ʿUbayd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Khurradādhbih
2. ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih
3. Muḥammad b. Khurradādhbih
4. ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Khurradādhbih

Ibn al-Nadīm follows the first option, which is substantiated by the likes of Yāqūt, who quotes largely from the *Fihrist*, and by Abū l-Ṣafāʾ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), who copies from Yāqūt.[273] This is also followed by Ibn Najjār and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), both of whom draw in some measure from Ibn al-Nadīm.[274] Ibn Najjār relates an account where Ibn Khurradādhbih quotes the story of Khusraw and Shīrīn from his father, Aḥmad. In contrast, al-Iṣbahānī, who consistently uses the second option, quotes Ibn Khurradādhbih

[270] De Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, ix.

[271] One may speculate as to whether in the transmission to al-Iṣbahānī, who prided himself on the oral conveyance of material, a move had been made to advance Ibn Khurradādhbih's citations from Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī as communicated through an authoritative *isnād*, rather than a written source, itself arguably a reflection of distinct values of citation. Only once in his manifold references to Ibn Khurradādhbih does al-Iṣbahānī mention his book (*kitāb*), *Aghānī,* viii, 348.

[272] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, v, 328–9; cf. de Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, viii.

[273] Yāqūt, *Udabāʾ*, iv, 1573–4, §679; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xix, 229, §7446.

[274] Ibn Najjār, *Dhayl,* ii, 11–3, §269; Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, v, 317–8, §5000. Similarly, al-Ziriklī, *Aʿlām*, iv, 190.

on the authority of his father, ʿAbdallāh, relating an account concerning the life of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī.[275] This second form is what is found on the title pages of both the Vienna and the Bodleian recensions, and this is followed by al-Masʿūdī and Ḥājjī Khalīfa.[276]

De Goeje preferred the second option and advanced a theory, first proposed by Fraehn, that the father of Ibn Khurradādhbih was the same ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih mentioned in al-Ṭabarī's history as the governor who, in 201/816–7, conquered the king of Daylam and the mountains of Ṭabaristān, regions which until then had remained beyond the territorial control of Muslim rulers.[277] The identification of Ibn Khurradādhbih's father as al-Maʾmūn's governor, however, is not made explicit in any of the sources with which I am familiar (i.e. his father *was* the governor...). In addition to the ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbdallāh on the title page, the Bodleian recension presents the third option, in the main body of the text, which is picked up on the title page to the Leiden manuscript of Ibn Ḥawqal's geography.[278] This appears to echo Ibn al-Faqīh, who offers the fourth variant, stating that the author of the *Masālik* was ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Khurradādhbih, which, incidentally is the same form used by Ibn al-Qāṣṣ.[279]

So far we have three different options for the first name (*ism*) of Ibn Khurradādhbih's father: Aḥmad, Muḥammad, and ʿAbdallāh. Likewise, ʿUbayd Allāh, ʿAbdallāh, and Muḥammad are possibilities for Ibn Khurradādhbih's name. As for the first name, ʿAbdallāh and ʿUbayd Allāh are often indistinguishable in manuscripts, while the Muḥammad of the Bodleian and Leiden manuscripts may well be a confusion for one of his forefathers, a point which appears to be substantiated by Ibn al-Faqīh and Ibn al-Qāṣṣ. As for his father, all three names are associated with the Prophet, Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh, whose heavenly name was Aḥmad. Thus it could be that Aḥmad and Muḥammad are variants of the same name.[280]

Likewise, in the genealogical sequencing of the *nasab*, names of forefathers often would be dropped out. This explains why ʿUbayd Allāh b. Khurradādhbih is one of the most common forms of Ibn Khurradādhbih's name, which entirely skips over reference to his father. Such onomastic conventions could also suggest that his full name included multiple elements, which were confused over time. One possible explanation is that the name of Ibn Khurradādhbih's grandfather has been fused with that of his father; thus we would have something like ʿUbayd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih.

Such a reading makes it more plausible that Ibn Khurradādhbih, who was the court companion to the caliph al-Muʿtamid during the last half of the century, could be related to ʿAbdallāh b. Khurradādhbih, if we are to assume that this is the same person who was the governor of Ṭabaristān during the beginning of the century. This would make ʿAbdallāh his grandfather and not his father. Such a line of analysis, needless to say, strains the form of al-Iṣbahānī's citations.

In two extended passages from the *Kitāb al-diyārāt* of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shābushtī (d. 388/998), which appear to be from the lost *Kitāb al-nudamāʾ wa-l-julasāʾ*, Ibn Khurradādhbih

[275] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, v, 400.

[276] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh,* 75; ibid., *Murūj*, §9; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, ii, 1665.

[277] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ser. III, 1014–5; de Goeje, Préface, *Masālik*, vii.

[278] Ibn Ḥawqal, *Masālik*, 3.

[279] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān*, 410; idem, *Mukhtaṣar*, 203 note k; Ibn al-Qāṣṣ, *Dalāʾil al-qibla,* British Library, MS Or. 13315, fol. 48a.

[280] See Schimmel, *Islamic Names*, 31.

relates anecdotes pertaining to the court of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–48/847–61). Like his accounts of al-Wāthiq's reign, these are diegetically situated in the past. Conversely, al-Iṣbahānī cites Ibn Khurradādhbih as a direct transmitter of the poetess ʿArīb (d. 277/890–1), who was descended from the famed Barmakid line.[281] A nonagenarian, ʿArīb was still active during the court of al-Muʿtamid, setting the caliph's poetry to music.[282] Such later material highlights a career of writing that continued to develop at the end of the century; a point further substantiated by al-Masʿūdī's extended quotation from the *Kitāb al-lahw*, which he presents, albeit in a very stylised form, as occasioned by an exchange between Ibn Khurradādhbih and the caliph al-Muʿtamid.[283]

As with the question of the relationships binding the surviving manuscripts, the genealogical problem of parentage (can we ever really know?) also follows Ibn Khurradādhbih. These two problems of pedigree may be profoundly connected. Not to be ruled out from the mercurial confusion over Ibn Khurradādhbih's name is the possibility that there were multiple figures from the same family over the course of a generation, who participated in the production and circulation of this corpus of material. Charles Pellat hypothesises that a similar process is at work with al-Jayhānī's *Masālik* and the names of the Jayhānī family in the Sāmānid court.[284] Such a theory of generational composition passed down through relatives would help to explain the persistent recourse to anachronism which extends across the *Masālik*, as well as adumbrate the distribution of variants preserved in the two manuscript recensions as reflections, not only of multiple stages of composition by a single author, but also the participation of several figures in the production of the work. However, without further evidence such theories rest on conjectural grounds, substantiated only through an inferential process that attempts to make sense of a fragmented archive that baffled even the earliest bibliophiles.

As for the actual namesake of the ancestral convert to Islam, Hadj-Sadok advanced that it should be vocalised as Khurradādhbih, which he took to mean "created by the excellent sun." This vocalisation has so supplanted Khurdādhbih, which was once the standard reading, that most American and several European research libraries catalogue our author as Ibn Khurradādhbih, taking their cue, ultimately, from Hadj-Sadok's entry in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Hadj-Sadok drew his interpretation from Ignatii Krachkovskii, who noted it as the explanation of the Russian scholar of Middle Persian, Alexander Freimann.[285] This reading, however, is highly dubious on philological grounds and does not appear to correspond to any known Zoroastrian or Middle Persian onomastic evidence.[286] In contrast, Khurdādhbih, the form of the name as it was known throughout nineteenth-century literature, can be easily explained through the common Middle Persian name Hordād (*ḫwrdʾt*), suffixed with *weh* (*wdh*), meaning the 'great Hordād,' directly related to the Avestan *Haurwatāt*, one of the seven Ameshāspands in the Zoroastrian pantheon of

[281] Al-Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, xxi, 55, 59.

[282] Al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt*, 99, 101.

[283] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, §§3213–27.

[284] Pellat, Djayhānī, *EI²*.

[285] Krachkovskii, *Istoriia,* 147nn2–3.

[286] The geminated root is not explained in Middle Persian from sun, *xwar* (*hwl*); while *xwarrah* (*GDE*), fortune or glory, would not adequately follow the Middle Persian word order to produce "created by the excellent Glory." Cf. Gignoux, *Noms propres sassanides*, 187, §1035.

deities.[287] This common name, written in early New Persian as Khurdād, is also the third month of the year in the Persian calendrical system and would have been widely known in the ʿAbbāsid period through the yearly land tax (*kharāj*) cycle with the official intercalation of the Hijrī and Sāsānian calendars.[288]

While the modern convention of transcribing his name as Ibn Khurradādhbih has no support in the classical authorities,[289] it reflects the broader reality of how texts and their meanings are products of a collaborative process of interpretation, subject to the demands of readers and their proclivities. In turn, these practices of reading and writing shape the form of how the texts themselves are read across generations. This multivalent reality of the textual condition inevitably veils the author in the diachronic course of reception.

Admittedly, this state of onomastic and archival uncertainty presents an epistemic impasse. The citational values animating the circulation and transmission of classical Arabic writing were predicated on the reality of composite forms of authorship. This proves true for the *Masālik* of Ibn Khurradādhbih, which both encourages and resists the chimera of authorial design. The common practice of transmission based on meaning (*riwāya bi-l-maʿnā*), rather than on literal form (*bi-l-lafẓ*), extended from the quotation of poetry to the citation of *ḥadīth*, and inevitably put the transmitter in the position of mediating and thus shaping the material transmitted. While such ambiguity can often empirically obscure the privileged form of original intention, as Borges delightfully contends, like all acts of translation so many degrees removed from the veritable there-ness of the event, a good deal also remains to be gained.

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[287] See ibid., 97–8, §445.

[288] See Reza Abdollahy, Calendars, *EIr*.

[289] Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Mizān*, v, 317.

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