

PRACTICE OF POWER AND LEGITIMATION



UMAYYAD EFFORTS AT LEGITIMATION:  
THE Umayyads' SILENT HERITAGE

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*Introduction*

The Umayyads (ruled 661–750 CE) left to their successors in the Islamic world – not only to their successors as rulers of the empire, the ‘Abbāsids, but also to Muslims at large – a formidable political, intellectual, and communal legacy. This legacy, however, has often been poorly appreciated. Sometimes it has been dismissed completely, at other times acknowledged only grudgingly, even by modern scholarship. The origins of this dismissive attitude toward the Umayyads are well-known. A powerful stream of anti-Umayyad rhetoric had begun to circulate already during the years of their rule among groups who opposed them, especially the supporters of their ‘Alid rivals. This anti-Umayyad outlook was further cultivated and eventually set down in written form under the ‘Abbāsids who, in 750, supplanted them as rulers of the empire. As Wellhausen put it, “[...] their enemies had the last word, and their history in consequence suffered severely.”<sup>1</sup> One aspect of this process was a denigration of the Umayyads as usurpers, that is as rulers who were by their very nature illegitimate because they were not of the prophet’s clan of Hāshim (to which both ‘Alids and ‘Abbāsids belonged). To this illegitimacy of the Umayyads as non-Hashimites were added allegations that the Umayyads were not concerned with piety and the “true” Islamic values. This charge found shorthand expression in the many reports that smear the Umayyads

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<sup>1</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall* (transl. Margaret Graham Weir, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1927; reprint Beirut: Khayats, 1963), xv. Cf. Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz* (Berlin Georg Reimer, 1902), XIII: “Bei den Arabern haben eben ihre Feinde das letzte Wort behalten, darunter hat ihre Geschichte stark gelitten.” Wellhausen speaks of “the Arabs” in this sentence, but in his thoroughly nationalist view, the Umayyads represented the “Arab” movement and the “Arab kingdom” was that of the Umayyads, who are the subject of the preceding sentence. G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661–750* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 11–18, offers a concise summary of the attitude of Muslim tradition to the Umayyads.

as being merely “kings” (*mulūk*) rather than properly religious leaders. They were, to resort to old Arabian criteria of legitimacy, lacking in both *nasab* and *ḥasab* – condemned both by their birth and by their deeds. As far as the latter are concerned, one does not have to search very far in the literary accounts about the Umayyads to find reports of their oppressive policies towards those who challenged their rule – commonly described as *jawr*, “tyranny,” by their enemies.<sup>2</sup> The sources are also replete with descriptions of the Umayyads’ “sinfulness,” usually focusing on the fondness of some of them for wine, on their lavish court life, or on their supposed ignorance of God’s revelation. In the minds of some modern scholars, these old charges by the Umayyads’ enemies were confirmed by archaeological evidence, such as the naked bathers in the frescoes of Quṣayr ‘Amra or the buxom female figures in stucco in Khirbat al-Maḥjar, which enhanced an image of the Umayyads as devoted mainly to the cultivation of their own power, wealth, and worldly pleasures.

We cannot doubt that the Umayyads took seriously the need to maintain their power, for as rulers they and their henchmen were willing to take brutal measures to crush any perceived opposition. The liquidation of the little coterie of dissidents in Kufa led by Ḥujr ibn ‘Adī al-Kindī in the time of the *amīr al-mu‘minīn* Mu‘āwiya and his governor Ziyād, the attack on Medina by Yazīd I’s general Mūsā ibn ‘Uqba, the crushing of al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī and his small party at Karbalā’ by Yazīd’s governor ‘Ubaydallāh ibn Ziyād, and many other examples make it clear that the Umayyads were not afraid to take off their velvet gloves to defend their position of supremacy. While some Umayyads may indeed have been pious (‘Umar II ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz comes first to mind), others surely were not, and some, such as Yazīd II and al-Walīd II probably deserve at least some of their reputation as libertines. In this, of course, the Umayyads probably differed very little from the ‘Abbāsids and most other important families of the time.

Modern scholarship for the most part, of course, recognizes that this “dark view” of the Umayyads is an exaggeration fashioned by their opponents as polemic, and not to be taken at face value. Recent work, particularly by A. Borrut, has shown that the negative “historiographical vulgate” about the Umayyads, while powerful, was accompanied

<sup>2</sup> For example, see the poem by the Khārijite rebel Mirdās ibn Udayya, in Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf* (ed. Max Schloessinger and M. J. Kister, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), 158, line 18.

by other kinds of sources that provide a variety of different points of view, and that in any case this vision of a single ‘Abbāsīd perspective on the Umayyads greatly oversimplifies the much more complex reality of texts that were repeatedly reshaped, in both late Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd times.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that this pejorative vision has influenced modern perceptions of the Umayyads – we might even see it reflected in the very title of Wellhausen’s famous book, *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, which, on the one hand, is an epigram of the nationalist interpretations characteristic of Wellhausen and his era, but on the other hand seems to echo the old charge of Umayyad *mulk*.

The deeply-entrenched conviction that the Umayyads’ actions were rooted almost entirely in a kind of blind and narrow self-interest contributed to a general view of Islam’s origins that saw the Umayyad age as a kind of interruption, rather than as an organic or natural part of Islamic community’s early development. According to this view, the movement begun by the prophet Muḥammad had crystallized as a state already in the days of his first successors (the so-called *rāshidūn*), and under their leadership and through the zeal of the faithful, this state grew rapidly to embrace an empire stretching from North Africa to Iran. The Umayyads’ hegemony, however, began immediately after the first civil war, and ultimately continued the paralysis and internecine strife seen in that bitter conflict, when the craven political interests of some overwhelmed the more idealistic commitment of others in the community. In this view, the Umayyads, as reprobates of dubious religiosity, were seen as a kind of obstacle that needed to be cleared away before the Muslim community could resume its march down the road to legitimate, “true” Islamic rule.<sup>4</sup> And this, in turn, made it almost unthinkable to suggest that the Umayyads could have contributed much of a legacy to their successors in the Islamic community – except, perhaps, to serve as examples of how Islamic rulers should not behave. They were, to paraphrase a recent author, too deeply involved with their own tribal identity and politics, and insufficiently committed to the new religious values, to successfully legitimize an Islamic state.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Antoine Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir. L’espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72–193/692–809)* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> One sees this attitude even in the works of Ignaz Goldziher, e.g. *Muhammed-anische Studies II* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1890), 28–34; transl. R. C. Barber and S. M. Stern, *Muslim Studies II* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1971), 38–43.

<sup>5</sup> Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses. The evolution of the Islamic polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 26: “Islamic civilization thus took shape in an

When one looks more closely at the Umayyad period, however, one finds that in fact the Umayyad rulers undertook many measures to legitimize their rule, and that their efforts in this arena provided a sound foundation for the political and other activities of the Islamic community, in their own time and long after their demise. On the one hand, they engaged in efforts at what we can call inward legitimation, that is, efforts directed at persuading those who were already members of the Islamic community that the Umayyads deserved to lead them. This included, most obviously, their efforts to counter the charges raised by those who openly challenged their power – notably the ‘Alids, the Zubayrids, the Khawārij, and numerous other rebels, such as Ibn al-Ash‘ath. It also included their efforts to deflect the less overt accusations against their power, raised by the pious and other disaffected groups.

The Umayyads also faced a broader and even more important challenge, however: that of legitimizing the very community they led, a process we can call outward legitimation, because it was directed in the first instance toward non-Muslims. To understand the need for this, however, we must back up and consider how Islam began.<sup>6</sup> The original movement initiated by Muḥammad had emphasized the importance of affirming God’s oneness, of acknowledging the reality of the Last Judgment, and of behaving righteously, in accordance with God’s revealed law. The movement Muḥammad built around belief in this package of religious ideas and practices seems to have had an ecumenical character and originally included, from what we can tell, not only followers of the Qur’anic revelation but also some righteous Christians and Jews (and perhaps others) as well. This was possible

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intensive interaction of religious and tribal power [...] The key element [...] was a tribal hostility to settled life which, having become religiously fixed, constituted one of the fundamental constraints within which Islamic culture and the Islamic polity were to evolve. The Arabs escaped absorption into the cultures of their subjects because morally they stayed in Mecca. But because morally they stayed in Mecca they were to find it impossible to legitimate a Muslim state in the settled lands.” An exception is found in Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State. The Reign of Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 92–96, who discusses Umayyad legitimation in ways similar to those presented below.

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller exposition of the ideas presented in the remainder of this paragraph, see F. M. Donner, “From Believers to Muslims: Confessional Self-Identity in the Early Islamic Community,” *Al-Abhath* 50–51 (2002–2003), 9–53.

because, like those who followed the Qur'ān, righteous Jews and Christians believed in one God, in the Last Judgment, and in living according to God's law as enshrined in the Torah or Gospels, both of which are accorded some recognition in the Qur'ān as valid scriptures. All such people seem to be included in the Qur'ānic term "believer," so it seems best to call the community in this early stage the "Believers' movement." It was this loosely-defined Believers' movement, led by the first "commanders of the Believers" (sing. *amīr al-mu'minīn*), that underwent a rapid expansion during the mid-seventh century, in the process bringing under their sway large parts of the Near East, from North Africa to eastern Iran. A generation or two after the prophet's death, however, this Believers' movement appears to have undergone a process of re-definition that dissolved the formerly close ties between those Believers who followed the Qur'ān and those who followed the Torah or the Gospels. What emerged was a more sharply-bounded community of Qur'ānic Believers only, now self-consciously identifying themselves as "Muslims," who continued to dominate the political establishment of the empire. Muslims (Qur'ānic Believers) henceforth considered themselves, and were seen by non-Muslims, to be distinct from the Christians, Jews, and others (Zoroastrians?) who had, in the early stages of the Believers' movement, formed one community with them.

This transformation in self-conception – from a community of Believers to a community of Muslims – took place mainly during the Umayyad period, and the limited evidence about it suggests that it may have been spearheaded by certain Umayyad caliphs and their intellectual advisers. Part of this process of redefinition involved affirming the legitimacy of Muslims as a community with a religious identity distinct from that of Christians, Jews, and other monotheists. The challenge Muslims faced in establishing their own distinctiveness was complicated by the similarity that exists between many of Islam's basic doctrines and those of Judaism and Christianity (e.g., prophecy, revealed holy book, last judgment and afterlife). As leaders of this new community living in a time when the overwhelming majority of their subjects were still non-Muslims, the Umayyads needed to persuade non-Muslims that the Muslims should be acknowledged as an authentic religious community in their own right. It may seem obvious to us today that the Muslims would have been recognized as such; but in the seventh century, many may have assumed that what we now call

Islam was not actually a new religion, but rather was a heretical deviation of one of the older monotheisms.<sup>7</sup> Although it has been convincingly argued that the title of John of Damascus's famous tract, "The Heresy of the Ishmaelites," cannot be taken as evidence that John himself saw Islam as a kind of Christian heresy,<sup>8</sup> the startling report of al-Wāqidi, that the Byzantine emperor sent gold, workmen, and mosaics (i.e. tesserae?) to al-Walid for use in rebuilding the prophet's mosque in Medina in AH 88<sup>9</sup> if true, suggests that even at that date Islam's confessional distinctness was not clear to everyone, even some in high places.

Inward and outward legitimation cannot, however, be entirely separated from one another; the two processes were often intertwined, or should be seen as twin aspects of a single policy. Successful demonstrations of the independence and authentic identity of the Islamic community (outward legitimation), for example, also helped strengthen a ruler's claim to be the appropriate (legitimate) ruler of the community, and it reaffirmed in the minds of successive new generations of Muslims their own authenticity. Conversely, Umayyad success in gaining clear, unequivocal recognition as the legitimate political and religious leaders within the Islamic community enhanced the political cohesion and shared goals of the community; and this, in turn, strengthened their efforts at outward legitimation, that is, at convincing Christians, Jews, and others that they, the Muslims, constituted a distinct religious community.

Our efforts to reconstruct the Umayyads' efforts at legitimation are severely constrained, however, by deficiencies in our sources for the seventh and early eighth centuries. This makes it difficult to get a clear

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, one modern scholar has proposed that the Dome of the Rock inscriptions of the 690s actually reflect not Islamic conceptions, but rather those of a non-trinitarian form of Christianity. See Christoph Luxenberg, "Neudeutung der arabischen Inschrift im Felsendom zu Jerusalem," in K.-H. Ohlig and G.-R. Puin, eds., *Die dunklen Anfänge, neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam* (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2005), 124–47. (I thank Gabriel S. Reynolds for bringing this article to my attention.)

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam. The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 68; Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin, 1997), 484–85. It should be remembered, however, that John probably wrote his text in the 730s or 740s, well after the time that Islam began to crystallize as a separate confession from the matrix of the Believers' movement.

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk* (ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1879–1901), ii/1194. (Hereinafter cited as "Ṭab.")

picture of the early Believers' movement and of its evolution into a community of Muslims through a process of reconceptualization of the nature of the Believers' identity. The later Islamic writings that are our main source of information naturally tend to project back on to the earliest days of the movement the notion that Islam as a distinct confession already existed in earlier times, so we must read these sources against the grain of the tradition, keeping a special eye out for stray bits of information that do not conform to the later view. In what follows, we can only sketch the outlines of – or sometimes barely mention – some of the major initiatives the Umayyads undertook in order to establish their legitimacy and that of the Islamic community they ruled.

#### *The Development of Islamic Cult and Ritual*

The Umayyad caliphs seem to have played a large part in defining the ultimate form of basic Islamic rituals, including the daily prayer (*ṣalāt*), the Friday prayer, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Obviously, these basic rituals of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage, all of which are mentioned in the Qurʾān itself, were already practiced in some form by the Believers before the Umayyads came to power.<sup>10</sup> But it seems that some of these rituals were at first only loosely defined, and came to be more clearly regulated in the Umayyad period. It is, unfortunately, impossible to trace in detail the Umayyad rulers' contribution to the formation of these rituals. This is because the traditional Islamic narrative sources naturally wish to portray all these rituals as having been fully defined already during the lifetime of the prophet himself. Nevertheless, one finds in various sources persistent traces and stray references that suggest that the Umayyads were involved, in a meaningful way, in shaping and modifying these ritual practices. In asserting this we differ from the conclusions of Goldziher, who states flatly that “[t]he government did little for the consolidation of religious matters.”<sup>11</sup> The following paragraphs catalog a few cases we can identify.

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<sup>10</sup> The cogency of this claim rests, of course, on the assumption that the Qurʾān text is of early date and reflects early conditions in the community of Believers. For a defense of this assumption, see F. M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins. The beginnings of Islamic historical writing* (Princeton: Darwin, 1998), chapter 1.

<sup>11</sup> Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* II, 28–29; *Muslim Studies* II, 38.

i) *Ritual prayer (ṣalāt)*, and its basic components (kneeling, prostration) are mentioned repeatedly in the Qurʾān, but the sacred text nowhere lays out exactly how prayer is to be performed, how many prayers are to be performed per day, or exactly when they should be performed. The most we can say from the Qurʾānic evidence is that it enjoined Believers to be mindful of God at all times and to express this mindfulness in frequent prayer. The process by which the prayer rituals coalesced into the now-canonical pattern of five prayers per day, each with a set number of *rakʿas* to be performed at clearly specified times, and with full consensus on all details of the *rakʿas* themselves, still lacks definitive study.<sup>12</sup> It is, of course, possible to argue that the Qurʾān's very vagueness on details of prayer is an indication that the ritual was firmly established in all respects already in Muḥammad's day; in this view, the vagueness would be explained by the assumption that for the original audience of the Qurʾān, the details of the prayer ritual were universally known and hence needed no exact specification. We encounter occasional reports, however, that suggest that the prayer ritual was not so universally known, or at least that some people were concerned that extraneous actions or movements might inadvertently become incorporated in it. One such report tells us that Muʿāwiya's governor Ziyād "ibn Abīhi" observed that, after prayer in the mosques of Kufa and Basra, worshippers took to clapping their hands to remove the dust they had picked up during their prostrations. He therefore ordered that a layer of pebbles be spread on the floor of these mosques, fearing that the clapping might come to be considered an integral part of the prayer ritual.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, however, Ziyād's concern suggests that the prayer ritual in his day was not so

<sup>12</sup> For a start, see S. D. Goitein, "Prayer in Islam," in his *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), 73–89; important is Uri Rubin, "Morning and Evening Prayers in Early Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987), 40–64, which addresses mainly the prayer times. Leone Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam* (10 vols., Milan: U. Hoepli, 1905–1926), I, 228–29 (Introduzione, § 219 note 1), alleges that the number of prayers was not set at five even in the time of ʿUmar II. See also the studies of Becker and Mittwoch mentioned in note 29, below, which touch on many aspects of Islamic ritual.

<sup>13</sup> Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1866), 277. (I am grateful to Elizabeth Urban for calling this report to my attention.) Further references (some attributed to ʿUthmān rather than Ziyād) are noted in Estelle Whelan, "The Origins of the *Miḥrāb Mujawwaf*: A Reinterpretation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18 (1986), 205–23, at p. 212 and fn. 58.

universally known that it could not acquire “uncanonical” accretions.<sup>14</sup> We also find reports that suggest that the times of prayer remained uncertain long after Muḥammad’s day. Mu‘āwīya’s governor of Egypt, Maslama ibn Mukhallad, reportedly issued an order that the whole city of Fuṣṭāṭ should observe uniform times for prayer – implying that hitherto, each tribal quarter had different times.<sup>15</sup> Apparently the later Muslim heresiographers portrayed the Azāriqa Khārijites, who raised insurrections against the Umayyads between about 685 and 700 CE, as performing only two prayers daily. They were considered hard-core scripturalists, concerned with acting in accordance with the Qur’ān, so they prayed in keeping with their understanding of Qur’ān 11:114, “[...] and perform prayer at the two ends of the day and the beginning of the night...”<sup>16</sup>

If details of ritual prayer were still being defined in the Umayyad period, however, the Umayyads, as leaders of the community, could be expected to have played some role in the process of definition, and occasional stray reports in the narrative sources hint that their involvement sometimes aroused opposition. In reports about the rebellion of Ibn al-Ash‘ath against the Umayyads’ governor al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf in the first years of the eighth century, for example, one of Ibn al-Ash‘ath’s supporters, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr, enjoined the Iraqis to fight the *ahl al-Shām* at the battle of Dayr al-Jamājim “for their oppression in government (*‘alā jawri-him fī al-ḥukm*), their insolence in religion (*tajabburi-him fī al-dīn*), their contempt for the weak, and their killing the prayer (*imātati-him al-ṣalāt*).<sup>17</sup> His supporters included *qurrā*<sup>18</sup> who reportedly raised the battle cry, “Vengeance for

<sup>14</sup> It is reported that the rebel Ḥujr ibn ‘Adī and his followers heckled Ziyād’s deputy on the *mīhrāb* partly by pelting him with pebbles. In view of the story above, one wonders whether the pebbles were not merely convenient projectiles ready to hand, but also perhaps symbolic of the way Ziyād had himself introduced something new into the mosque, namely the pebbles themselves? See Tab. ii/115–16.

<sup>15</sup> Wladislaw B. Kubiak, *Al-Fuṣṭāṭ: Its formation and early urban development* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1987), 92, citing al-Kindī, *Wulāt Miṣr*, 38f. A similar report, according to which “Umar wrote to the [various] lands [to set] the times of prayer,” is found in ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta’rikh* (ed. J. Aguadé, Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1991), 105 (no. 297).

<sup>16</sup> Keith Lewinstein, “The Azāriqa in Islamic Historiography,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 54 (1991), 251–68, at 261.

<sup>17</sup> Tab. ii/1087.

<sup>18</sup> The term *qurrā*, traditionally interpreted to mean “Qur’ān reciters,” has been the subject of debate since M. A. Shaban proposed that it actually meant “villagers”

the ritual prayer!" (*yā li-thārat al-ṣalāt*).<sup>19</sup> Just what these references mean remains unclear; had the Umayyads or their powerful governor in Iraq introduced a new style of prayer ritual, or imposed a regularized form of it, to which Ibn al-Ash'ath's followers objected? For the moment these questions must remain unanswered, but the reports suggest that in some unspecified way the Umayyads were considered to have changed or meddled with the prayer ritual.

ii) *The call to prayer*. An integral part of the daily prayer rituals in Islam is the call to prayer (*adhān*). The Qur'ān uses the word *adhān* only once (9:3), but in a context that clearly does not refer to the call to prayer, and while the verb *adhdhana* "to call out" is used in various forms several times, it never refers to calling people to prayer. The Qur'ān does mention a call to prayer a few times, however, so we must assume that the practice goes back to the days of the prophet, but it uses the verb *nādā*, "to call out, summon, invite" (Q. 5: 58; *idhā nādaytum ilā al-ṣalāt*... "when you call to prayer..."; Q. 62:9, in the passive: *idhā nūdiya li-al-ṣalāti min yawmi al-jum'ati*... "when prayer is called on Friday..."). This suggests at least that the usual name for the call to prayer in Islam, *adhān*, was not settled upon until after the time of the prophet. However, the fact that this practice does not seem to have been referred to by an established technical term implies that the practice itself may not have become an integral and obligatory part of the prayer ritual until sometime after the time of the prophet, when the designation *adhān* was assigned.<sup>20</sup>

As for the minaret (*manāra*, *manār*, *mi'dhana*) from which the call to prayer has for centuries been announced, there do exist scat-

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(M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History, AD 600–750 (AH 132). A New Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 50–51 and *infra*. For a brief discussion of the issues raised see *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd ed.), "Ḳurrā' [T. Nagel], to be supplemented by Redwan Sayed, *Die Revolte des Ibn al-Ash'at und die Koranleser. Ein Beitrag zur Religions und Sozialgeschichte der frühen Umayyadenzeit* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz, 1977), who refutes Shaban, and by Norman Calder, *The qurrā' and the Arabic lexicographical tradition*, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 36 (1991), 297–307, who proposes yet another meaning for the term.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Sayed, *Revolte des Ibn al-Ash'at*, 342, citing Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-Islām* (Cairo, 1947–1951) III, 229; also cited without attribution in Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 70.

<sup>20</sup> See also I. K. A. Howard, "The Development of the *adhān* and *iqāma* of the *ṣalāt* in early Islam," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 26 (1981), 219–28, who discusses the possible evolution of the wording of the *adhān*, and Jonathan Bloom, *Minaret: symbol of Islam* (Oxford: Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 1989) [= Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, VII], esp. 21–35.

tered references to various Umayyad caliphs establishing minarets.<sup>21</sup> Bloom has shown, however, that during the Umayyad period the call to prayer – whatever it might have been called – was likely delivered from the roof of mosques, reached in many cases by an exterior staircase. Hence “tower-minarets” seem to be a phenomenon of ‘Abbāsīd, not Umayyad, times.<sup>22</sup>

iii) *Mihrāb*. The *mihrāb*, or niche in the mosque indicating the *qibla* or direction in which prayer should be made, has been the subject of many investigations by renowned scholars. The word *mihrāb* occurs in the Qur’ān, but only in reference to pre-Islamic figures. Whelan, following suggestions first made by K. A. C. Creswell, has demonstrated convincingly that the concave *mihrāb* was first introduced by the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd I ibn ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 705–15) during his renovations of the mosque of Medina, and was then quickly adopted (or imposed?) in other mosques, great and small; earlier mosques, as Creswell pointed out, have no niche marking the *qibla*. In Medina, the concave *mihrāb* was situated where the prophet himself is said to have prayed, and thus commemorated the prophet’s prayers toward Mecca, whereas elsewhere, while symbolically reminding worshippers of the prophet’s behavior, it served also a liturgical function as facilitating a focus on the imām leading prayer and on the sacred “prayer area” (*sutra*).<sup>23</sup> The question is whether in inaugurating the use of the *mihrāb* al-Walīd was only providing a new way of marking the *qibla*, which was known and accepted, or whether the *qibla* itself remained uncertain or variable until this time. One sometimes finds traditions stating, for example, that “two *qiblas* are not valid (or appropriate) in [one] country” (*lā tuṣliḥu qiblatāni fī arḍin*),<sup>24</sup> which suggest that more than one *qibla* may, for a time, have been used. Suliman Bashear has collected references to an early Syrian mosque that has a first niche in the east wall, followed by a somewhat later one in the south wall, and

<sup>21</sup> E.g. Ṭab. ii/1271. The sentence, which summarizes al-Walīd’s virtues in the eyes of the people of Syria, notes that he built the mosques of Damascus and Medina, and “established the minaret.” See R. Hillenbrand in EI (2), “Manāra, Manār” for other examples.

<sup>22</sup> Bloom, *Minaret*, 175 and *infra*.

<sup>23</sup> Whelan, “Origins of the *Mihrāb Mujawwaf*.” Cf. K. A. C. Creswell, “The origin of the concave mihrab,” *Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, 1964* (New Delhi: Organising Committee XXVI International Congress of Orientalists and Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1970), vol. 4, 237–38.

<sup>24</sup> Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, 15 vols., Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1946–1956), IV, 200, nos. 2576 and 2577.

has suggested that in the early community of Believers several *qiblas* may have been observed – that is, that there was presumably some divergence of opinion on what the *qibla* should be, so that eventually the Muslims then had to select one of them as official and authentic.<sup>25</sup> That this choice should have been made by the *amīr al-mu'minīn* al-Walīd seems, under the circumstances, plausible.

One is tempted to conclude that the Umayyads – in this case, specifically al-Walīd, who rebuilt the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the Great Mosque of Medina, and other mosques<sup>26</sup> – were engaged in an effort to refine and standardize the prayer ritual so as to unequivocally direct it towards Mecca, the city of the prophet, as is of course now the norm. This may be understood as part of the broader process whereby the earlier, more ecumenical Believers' movement started by Muḥammad and his early followers was redefined in terms we now recognize as Islamic: that is, as a religion specifically of those who followed the Qur'ān and took Muḥammad as their prophet, in distinction from Christians and Jews.

iv) *The maqṣūra or enclosure.* An ancillary part of the furniture in the mosque is the *maqṣūra* or special enclosure or sheltering box in which the ruler or governor could perform prayers. The Umayyads seem to have been the first to build a *maqṣūra*. Some reports attribute this to Mu'āwiya in Syria and simultaneously to his governor Marwān in Medina.<sup>27</sup> While not related directly to ritual matters, the creation of the *maqṣūra* shows the Umayyads actively involved in modifying the setting in the mosque in which prayer took place.

v) *Friday prayer.* It is noteworthy that neither of the distinctive components of the Friday prayer – the sermon (*khuṭba*) and the pulpit (*minbar*) from which the sermon is delivered – are mentioned in the Qur'ān. The very phrase “O you who believe, when the call to prayer goes out on Friday...” [Q. 62:9], which is the only reference to Friday prayer in the Qur'ān, does not tell us that there was a special Friday prayer ritual, as the association of “prayer” and “Friday” seems merely

<sup>25</sup> Suliman Bashear, “Qibla Musharriqa and Early Muslim Prayer in Churches,” *Muslim World* 81 (1991), 267–82.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān* (ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1885) 106–107; Ṭab. ii/1271.

<sup>27</sup> Ṭab. ii/70, placed in AH 44=664–65 CE; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'rikh*, 119 (no. 342); Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif* (ed. Tharwat 'Ukkāsha, Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1969), 553.

coincidental.<sup>28</sup> Becker, Mittwoch, and Goitein have discussed the possible origins of this ritual; the former two ascribe it to the Umayyad caliphs, but Goitein sees it as dating to Muḥammad's time.<sup>29</sup> However, occasional reports attribute innovations in the Friday prayer ritual, such as sitting between the two parts of the *khuṭba*, to Umayyads, particularly Mu'āwiya.<sup>30</sup> It may be, then, that the ritual, if it went back to the time of the prophet, continued to evolve in some details in the Umayyad period.

The retrospective narrative sources describe Muḥammad as addressing his followers in Medina from a low, 3-step platform or *minbar* which was also used by his first successors. Mu'āwiya is said to have had his governor in Medina, Marwān, raise the *minbar* of Medina by putting a platform of an additional six steps under it, so that it became 9 steps high. In Mecca, the first *minbar* came in 56/676 when Mu'āwiya brought his from Syria.<sup>31</sup> Other sources, however, claim that Muḥammad had preached the *khuṭba* on the ground.<sup>32</sup> Much remains to be clarified about the *minbar* but these reports suggest, once again, that the Umayyad caliphs were involved in adjusting or "perfecting" the role of this component of the prayer ritual.

vi) *Pilgrimage to Mecca (ḥajj)*.<sup>33</sup> Muslim and almost all Western scholarship has uniformly accepted the idea that the *ḥajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca was based on a pre-Islamic ritual that was adopted and reinterpreted by Muḥammad himself and that has subsequently been

<sup>28</sup> F. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins* (Princeton: Darwin, 1998), 52–53.

<sup>29</sup> C. H. Becker, "Die Kanzel im Kultus des alten Islam," in his *Islamstudien* (Heidelberg: Quelle und Meyer, 1924), I, 450–71; idem, "Zur Geschichte des islamischen Kultus," *Der Islam* 3 (1912), 374–99, reprinted in his *Islamstudien*, I, 472–500; Eugen Mittwoch, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des islamischen Gebets und Kultus," *Abhandlungen der königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Classe*, 1913, no. 2. See also S. D. Goitein, "The Origin and Nature of the Muslim Friday Worship," *The Muslim World* 49 (1959), 183–95; reprinted in his *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, 111–25.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *Al-'Iqd al-farīd* (ed. M. S. al-'Iryān, 8 vols., Cairo: Maktabat al-istiḳāma, n.d.), V, 105.

<sup>31</sup> This information is collected in Fritz Meier, "Der Prediger auf der Kanzel (*minbar*)," in H. R. Roemer and A. Noth, eds., *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients. Festschrift für Bertold Spuler* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 225–48. Cf. also Ibn Ḥabīb, *Ta'riḫ*, 122 (para. 354): Mu'āwiya intends to remove the *minbar* of the prophet in Medina to Syria, but when he tries to move it, the sun is eclipsed and other evil signs occur, so he leaves it and adds six steps so that it become 8 steps.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'riḫ*, 119 (no. 344).

<sup>33</sup> See Carl Clemen, "Der ursprüngliche Sinn des *ḥaḡḡ*," *Der Islam* 9 (1919), 161–77.

practiced by Muslims unchanged for centuries. In the 1970s, however, Hawting proposed that the terminology of various parts of the *ḥaram* at Mecca suggests that it enshrines vestiges of rituals performed at other sanctuaries; these, in Hawting's view, were combined and applied to the Meccan sanctuary in order to establish clearly the new religion's autonomy from the earlier traditions of which it had been a part, in particular Judaism.<sup>34</sup> Hawting does not date precisely this process of "construction" of the Ka'ba-cult, but suggests generally that it occurred during the first century AH, that is, probably during the Umayyad period. This theory has been received mainly with silence and, while it has not won general support, it has to date never really been challenged.

One does not have to adopt such a profoundly revisionist perspective as Hawting's, however, to suggest that all details of the *ḥajj* rituals may not have been universally agreed upon in the Umayyad period, as occasional reports describe some specific differences in opinion.<sup>35</sup> One report suggests that 'Abd al-Malik instructed al-Ḥajjāj to follow the practices of the devout 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar when doing the pilgrimage rites at 'Arafa,<sup>36</sup> hinting at his desire to remain true to old practice, but it remains possible that the Umayyads may have taken measures to shape or refine aspects of the *ḥajj*. We know at least that the Umayyads, like many others, reshaped the surroundings of the Ka'ba in Mecca. The Ka'ba had been burnt during the second Civil War, and rebuilt along different lines by 'Abdullāh ibn al-Zubayr, who expanded the enclosure considerably by buying adjacent properties and incorporating them into the mosque area.<sup>37</sup> According to some reports, after Ibn al-Zubayr's death and the occupation of Mecca by

<sup>34</sup> G. R. Hawting, "The Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary at Mecca," in G. H. A. Juynboll, ed., *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 23–47. Although published only in 1982, the paper was first read at a colloquium held at the University of Oxford in 1975.

<sup>35</sup> Abū 'Ubayd, *Kitāb al-amwāl* 700 (no. 1620): Hijāzīs and 'Irāqīs differ on the ransom required of the pilgrim for certain lapses in the rituals.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, IX, 451 (end of biography of al-Zuhri). Al-Zuhri, then a teenager, reports as follows: "'Abd al-Malik wrote to al-Ḥajjāj, 'Imitate Ibn 'Umar in the pilgrimage rituals (*al-manāsik*),' so al-Ḥajjāj wrote to him on the day of 'Arafa, 'If you wish to go out, permit us [to accompany you].' So he went out, he and Sālim [Ibn 'Umar's son] and I with the two of them."

<sup>37</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Azraqī, *Kitāb akhbār Makka* (ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1858 [= *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka*, I]), 138–54, 307–309; Ṭab. ii/592.

‘Abd al-Malik’s general and governor al-Ḥajjāj, the latter undid the renovations and restored the Ka’ba as much as possible to its condition before the war.<sup>38</sup> Other reports,<sup>39</sup> however, make no mention of undoing Ibn al-Zubayr’s changes, but rather relate that Ibn al-Zubayr expanded the *ḥaram* area by buying and incorporating into the enclosure a number of adjacent properties and perhaps roofing over part of the enclosure. They then mention that ‘Abd al-Malik did some building in the *ḥaram*, not adding to it but raising some of the walls and gilding the tops of columns. Then his son and successor al-Walīd is said to have undone ‘Abd al-Malik’s work, spending large sums to decorate the Ka’ba; he brought to it for the first time columns of marble, roofed it (i.e. a portico?) with carved teak, gilded the capitals of the columns, dressed the inside walls with a marble facing, placed mosaics at the top of the arches, and put battlements at the tops of the walls of the mosque. While none of these measures necessarily involved making any changes in the *ḥajj* rituals, they do suggest that ‘Abd al-Malik and especially al-Walīd were concerned (as, perhaps, their rival Ibn al-Zubayr had been before them) to enhance the status of the *ḥajj* as one of the distinctive markers of the new faith they represented.

The limited evidence available, then, shows that certain Umayyad caliphs – in particular Mu‘āwīya, ‘Abd al-Malik, and al-Walīd I – were involved in standardizing, refining, and in some cases inaugurating specific features of, the basic rituals of Islam.<sup>40</sup> As political leaders of the community, the Umayyads thus appear to have been keenly aware of the advantages of – indeed, the necessity of – having ritual practices that were uniform within the community. By making them uniform, they helped establish the coherence of the Muslims as a new religious community in its own right; and by emphasizing those features of the rituals that linked them to the prophet and the Qur’ān, they helped establish clearly the distinctiveness of the Muslims from the Christians and Jews who had been their erstwhile associates in the earlier Believers’ movement.

<sup>38</sup> Ṭab. ii/854.

<sup>39</sup> In particular al-Azraqī, *Akhbār* 307–9. See also Ṭab. ii/1192–94.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Estelle Whelan, “Forgotten Witness: Evidence for the Early Codification of the Qur’ān,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998), 1–14, at 13: “[...] from the time of Mu‘āwīyah through the reign of al-Walīd the Umayyad caliphs were actively engaged in codifying every aspect of Muslim religious practice.”

*Umayyad Efforts to “Islamize” their Rule*

The Umayyads also made significant efforts to legitimize themselves in the eyes of their Muslim subjects by emphasizing the “Islamic” character of their rule – by linking their practices and goals with those of the prophet Muḥammad or the Qur’ān. We see efforts of this kind in many different contexts:

i) It is well-known that the later Umayyads (particularly Hishām [r. 724–43] and Marwān II ibn Muḥammad [r. 744–50]) constructed a series of theocratic arguments to legitimize their rule. These arguments, as preserved in the writings of the late Umayyad administrator ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Yaḥyā, have been studied in detail by Wadād al-Qāḍī,<sup>41</sup> and so need only be summarized briefly here. They include the following propositions:

- God bequeathed the prophethood of Muḥammad to the Umayyads (*khalīfat Allāh*), so obedience to the caliphs is a religious duty of Muslims.
- The Umayyads are portrayed as protectors of Islām / religion, protectors of the Muslim community, guardians of the unity (*jamā’a*) of the community, protectors of God’s standing among men, and upholders of Muḥammad’s practice (*sunna* – a concept, incidentally, which is not found in Qur’ān).<sup>42</sup>
- The community the caliphs rule is always referred to as “the prophet’s community,” thus linking it with the prophet (and distinguishing it from those of Christians, Jews, etc., who did not recognize the prophet).
- The fact that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, in emphasizing these religious arguments, always stresses that “religion means Islām”<sup>43</sup> shows that by this time – the end of the Umayyad period – the dynasty (through its spokesmen) was vigorously advancing the notion that the community was defined as an Islamic one (presumably meaning that it was one focused on the Qur’ān as God’s word and Muḥammad

<sup>41</sup> W. al-Qāḍī, “The Religious Foundation of Late Umayyad Ideology and Practice,” in *Saaber Religioso y Poder Político en el Islam. Actas del Simposio Internacional (Granada, 15–18 octubre 1991)* (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1994), 231–73.

<sup>42</sup> See Donner, *Narratives*, 44–45; Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 26, 30–39, says it was ‘Umar II who first used *sunna* in this way.

<sup>43</sup> Qāḍī, 270.

as God's prophet) rather than partaking of a looser "Believerish" identity.

It is worth noting that the main lines of this theocratic argumentation, as laid down in late Umayyad polemic, are the same ones that are adopted by many later Muslim rulers and constitute an important legacy bequeathed by the Umayyads to subsequent generations. But we should beware the tendency to assume – as many do – that these arguments were available already from the time of the prophet or his immediate successors. In fact, they were something that was developed by the Umayyads specifically to legitimize their rule; after the Umayyads fell, however, the utility (indeed, indispensability) of arguments like these were recognized by the 'Abbāsids, who quietly continued them with but slight modifications (e.g., redirecting them towards themselves).

ii) But efforts of this kind were not limited to the late Umayyad period. Some earlier Umayyads had also attempted to establish their legitimacy by tying themselves and their policies to the prophet and the Qur'ān. Perhaps the simplest technique was the Umayyads' adoption of the phrase "*khalīfat Allāh*" as a title for the ruler. This is first attested in documentary form on a coin of 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>44</sup> The earlier title for the ruler of the community, as attested in documents (mainly inscriptions), was *amīr al-mu'minīn*, "commander of the Believers." *Amīr al-mu'minīn* made clear the ruler's position at the head of the Believer community, but it is not mentioned in the Qur'ān. *Khalīfat Allāh* had the advantage of being a Qur'ānic phrase; it seems to have no explicitly political meaning in the Qur'ān, but was sufficiently vague that it could be reinterpreted as a designation for the Umayyad rulers – whom, of course, we now call "caliphs." Adopting the term *khalīfat Allāh* thus explicitly linked the Umayyads' governance with the Qur'ān, and could be construed to convey the notion that God both chose and guided them as rulers.

iii) Another decisive measure taken by the Umayyads, beginning with 'Abd al-Malik, to link themselves to the prophet and the Qur'ān, was the issuance of the reformed coinage. The new coin issues featured

<sup>44</sup> P. Crone and M. Hinds, *God's Caliph: religious authority in the first centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 4–23, argued that the title *khalīfat Allāh* was used already as early as the *amīr al-mu'minīn* 'Uthmān (r. 644–56), but all references to its use before Mu'āwiya are drawn from later literary sources.

a strictly aniconic design that often included the Muslim statement of faith (*shahāda*) and sometimes a short passage from the Qurʾān, and they were always written in the Arabic script, by this time closely identified with the Qurʾān. As the coinage reform under ʿAbd al-Malik has been discussed extensively elsewhere,<sup>45</sup> we need do no more than call attention to it here as another way in which the Umayyad state's identification with the prophet and the Qurʾān was promulgated.

Akin to the coinage reform were efforts to systematize the weights and measures of the empire using the measures of prophet as the standard; this was reportedly attempted by Muʿāwiya as early as AH 43.<sup>46</sup>

iv) The Umayyads also projected an image of themselves as legitimate Islamic rulers through some of their many constructions. The Dome of the Rock in particular, with its lengthy interior inscriptions based on Qurʾānic verses, comes to mind. Scholars are still not in agreement on just what ʿAbd al-Malik intended when erecting this lavish monument, and this is not the place to delve into a discussion of such matters,<sup>47</sup> but there can be little doubt that its construction by the *amīr al-muʾminīn* must have reinforced the association of the Umayyad rulers with the Qurʾān and, hence, with the prophet, and certainly asserted a public claim to royal splendor, sovereignty and piety. The construction by al-Walid of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, on the site of the Church of St. John the Baptist, can similarly be seen

<sup>45</sup> For an introduction to the literature on this theme, see Michael L. Bates, "History, Geography, and Numismatics in the First Century of Islamic Coinage," *Revue Suisse de Numismatique* 65 (1986), 231–63. Note the interesting report in Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh*, 128–29 (no. 380), that people liked the reformed coins, which were criticized only by some ʿulamāʾ who disliked the fact that the coins had the name of God on them and were handled by Jews and Christians, whom they considered unclean. This suggests that it was among the ʿulamāʾ in particular that was found the kind of "us" vs. "them" mentality of Muslims vs. non-Muslims that caused, or went along with, the dissolution of the original Believers' movement.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Taʾrīkh*, 118 (no. 341). Cf. G. R. Hawting, "The Umayyads and the Hijāz," *Proceedings of the Fifth Seminar for Arabian Studies* (London: Seminar for Arabian Studies, 1972), 39–46. In general, George C. Miles, *Early Arabic Glass Weights and Stamps* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1948) [= *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, 111.]

<sup>47</sup> As an introduction to the debates over the Dome of the Rock, one can consult two works that will lead readers to all earlier interventions: Amikam Elʿad, "Why Did ʿAbd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock: A Re-examination of the Muslim Sources," *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* 9 (1992), [= Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (eds.), *Bayt al-Maqdis. ʿAbd al-Malik's Jerusalem I*], 33–58; Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *The Early Islamic Monuments of al-Haram al-Sharif. An Iconographic Study* (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989) [= *Qedem* 28].

as a spectacular effort to advertise and enhance the reputation of the Umayyads, as imperial rulers and as champions of the prayer cult that would lead the faithful to salvation in paradise.<sup>48</sup>

*Elaboration of the Islamic Origins Story*<sup>49</sup>

The basic story of Islam's origins is now so familiar to us that it hardly needs to be summarized: a pagan background in Arabia, the revelation of the Qur'ān to the prophet Muḥammad, his preaching of monotheism and righteous behavior in Mecca, the establishment by him of a new Islamic community in Medina, the expansion of Muḥammad's followers into the Near East after his death, and the rule by the Muslims over these vast areas under the leadership of the caliphs and in the name of God's revealed law.

The articulation of this narrative, which took place largely during the Umayyad age, represented a major step in the process of outward legitimation of the Islamic community. But it also was a milestone in inward legitimation, for it provided the later community – right up until today – with a coherent explanation for its own origins, an explanation that stressed the validity of Muḥammad's claim to be a prophet, and that underlined the community's foundations in the career of Muḥammad and the teachings of the Qur'ān, and the unbroken continuity of the Islamic community from Muḥammad's time forth.

The Umayyads appear to have played an important role in fostering the construction of this origins narrative, the goal of which was to help establish the legitimacy of the Islamic community. The Umayyads thus portrayed themselves not only as rulers, but as rulers of a community going back without interruption to the prophet Muḥammad, of whose sovereignty they were therefore the heirs. They cultivated narratives about the *Sīra* (life of the prophet) by patronizing early traditionists.<sup>50</sup> 'Abd al-Malik is said to have corresponded with 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr

<sup>48</sup> Finbarr Barry Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the makings of an Umayyad visual culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> I have treated this topic in much greater detail in *Narratives of Islamic Origins*; for this reason I will provide only the briefest summary here.

<sup>50</sup> On this theme see Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder. The life of Muḥammad as viewed by the early Muslims: a textual analysis* (Princeton: Darwin, 1995), 62 (on the traditionist Khālid ibn Ma'dān) and 95 (on Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib); Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*, 96.

(d. 94/713), who is known to have collected some of the first accounts on the life of Muḥammad and the early community,<sup>51</sup> and some reports describe ‘Abd al-Malik as seeking out leading traditionists when passing through Medina and as having a group he referred to as “our informants” (*ḥuddāthu-nā*).<sup>52</sup> The pious traditionist Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyib (d. 713), one of the early collectors of traditions about the prophet, was for a time in the court of Marwān in order to relate reports about the prophet’s life,<sup>53</sup> and he is depicted as a confidant of al-Walīd, who had great reverence for him.<sup>54</sup> One report presents ‘Abd al-Malik as being very knowledgeable in Qur’ān and law, and using his knowledge to test the young Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 742),<sup>55</sup> a student of both ‘Urwa and Sa‘īd, and the real architect of the biography of Muḥammad as we know it; he continued to be part of the Umayyad court under the later Umayyads, particularly Hishām.<sup>56</sup> It seems, then, that the Umayyads from an early date were concerned to cultivate the narrative about Islam’s beginnings. The Umayyads’ interest in collecting such accounts was apparently not entirely passive, moreover, as occasional anecdotes reveal. In one report the traditionist Ma‘mar ibn Rāshid (d. 770), who studied with al-Zuhrī, informs us, “I asked al-Zuhrī, ‘Who wrote the document on the day of al-Hudaybiya?’ He laughed and said, ‘It was ‘Alī, but if you asked these – meaning the Banū Umayya – they would say ‘Uthmān’.”<sup>57</sup>

<sup>51</sup> E.g., Ṭab. i/1284–88, an account of the battle of Badr derived from a letter sent by ‘Urwa to ‘Abd al-Malik.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (ed. E. Sachau et al., 9 vols., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1904–1940) V, 96, for a couple of reports. In this case Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab (d. 94/713) avoids contact with ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd, but the story makes clear that ‘Abd al-Malik and al-Walīd both took the initiative in contacting scholars when passing through Medina, as well as referring to “their” scholars.

<sup>53</sup> Ṭab. i/1313–15.

<sup>54</sup> Ṭab. ii/ 92–93; Ṭab. ii/1232–33.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Umar ibn Shabba, *Ta’riḫ al-madīna al-munawwara* (ed. F. M. Shaltūt, 4 vols., Beirut: Dār al-turāth and Dār al-Andalus, 1990), II, 723–25.

<sup>56</sup> See Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (12 vols. Hyderabad [Deccan]: Dā‘irat al-ma‘ārif al-nizāmiya, AH 1325–27), IX, 449 on Hishām testing al-Zuhrī for accuracy. ‘Umar II also consulted him on legal issues: Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, *Kitāb al-amwāl* (ed. Khalīl Muḥammad Harrās, Cairo: Maktabat al-kulliyāt al-azhariya, 1968), 764–65 (no. 1848).

<sup>57</sup> Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba* (ed. W. ‘Abbās, Beirut: Mu’assasāt al-risāla, 1404/1984), no. 1002. NB. The account of the al-Hudaybiya incident in Ibn Ishāq’s *Sīra* ([ed. F. Wüstenfeld, 2 vols., Göttingen: Dieterich, 1858–60], 746–47), has ‘Alī as the scribe.

The Umayyads seem also to have been concerned with underlining the fact that the community they ruled was the direct descendant of the original Islamic community founded by the prophet Muhammad. This continuity over almost a century was demonstrated through the historiographical themes “cult and administration” and “taxation,” which showed how in matters of ritual practice and practical government the procedures of the earliest Muslims were still followed by the Umayyads. The fact that some of the information in these historiographical themes appears to have been derived from archival records suggests that the Umayyads (or more probably scholars working in their court and with their blessing) may have taken an active part in cultivating these themes.<sup>58</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The information we have sketched above suggests that the Umayyads may have been involved in encouraging (or perhaps even imposing) a sharper definition of actual cultic practice among the Believers, and that they cultivated and encouraged, through their patronage, the efforts of scholars who were the architects of the Islamic origins narrative. From this evidence it seems that the Umayyad caliphs – or at least some of them – were keenly aware of the need to establish not only their own legitimacy as rulers, but the very claim of the Islamic community to have warrant in God’s word as revealed to Muḥammad. In the words of Whelan, “[...] the most innovative of the early caliphs acted consciously and with considerable sophistication in their formulation of symbols expressive of the mission of Islam and their own roles as its leaders.”<sup>59</sup> In this sense, the Umayyads can be credited with helping to establish the fundamental identity of the Muslim community which all their political successors and indeed all later Muslims have taken for granted. Through their leadership in this undertaking, it was the Umayyads, more than any other single group, who legitimized the very existence of the Muslims as an autonomous religious community on an equal footing with the long-established monotheistic communities of Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians.

<sup>58</sup> For a fuller treatment of the content of these themes, see Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 166–73.

<sup>59</sup> Whelan, “Origins of the *Miḥrāb Mujawwaf*,” 216.

Many – indeed most – of these efforts bore fruit more amply for the Umayyads' successors than for the Umayyads themselves. All later Muslims inherited, and further elaborated, the general outlines of the Islamic origins narrative that had emerged under the Umayyads and, apparently, partly under their patronage. They also observed the cultic rituals that had crystallized and had been given consistency, in many cases, under the Umayyads. The Umayyads' reformed coinage along aniconic, Qur'an-oriented lines became the "classic" pattern for Islamic coinage and was similarly emulated by most later dynasties. Most later rulers called themselves caliphs or (as in the case of the Mamluks and Ottomans) acknowledged the existence of a caliph whose representative or agent they claimed to be.

As we have seen, the Umayyads attempted to establish their own legitimacy as rulers by reaffirming ties between themselves and the prophet Muḥammad or between themselves and the text of the Qur'an. As this became the fundamental element in most later attempts at "Islamic" legitimation, we must say that these measures of the Umayyads were in a very real sense not only Islamic, but that indeed they helped define what "Islamic" meant: rooted in the teachings of the prophet and the Qur'an. To put it another way: it is not going too far to say that the Umayyads practically created Islam out of the inchoate and more ecumenical practices and beliefs of the early Believers' movement launched by Muḥammad decades earlier. That fourteen centuries later we still talk about Islam and an Islamic community is at least partially, and maybe entirely, due to the efforts of the Umayyad caliphs, and must be reckoned as their greatest legacy. But it was a legacy that has been, in a sense, a silent one, for it was so fundamental that we are usually not even aware of it. Rather, we assume its presence, which seems to us as natural as the air we breathe, without (normally) thinking of its existence.

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