

## THEMES OF THE IBĀDĪ/OMANI *SIYAR*

ABDULRAHMAN S. AL SALIMI

CHIEF EDITOR OF AL-TASAMOH JOURNAL

### Abstract

Most of the previous investigations into Omani history or Ibādī literature have included *siyar* among the early sources without providing a complete and independent picture of them. Little or no attention has been paid to what these *siyar* represent. This study is therefore an attempt to fill some of these gaps in the scholarship on Omani *siyar*. The aims of this study of the *siyar* are: 1) to determine their basis and themes; 2) to discover which Ibādī areas are more receptive to the introduction of the *siyar*; and 3) to determine how geographical distribution may have affected the structure and content of the *siyar*. Likewise, it is the aim of this article to show what the essential strategies of producing the *siyar* were, and to find out how these changed over time. In other words, this study explores the stages of the writing of the Omani *siyar* and seeks to explain how and why these stages were developed.

This paper aims at providing a broad overview of the themes of the Ibādī/Omani *siyar* in political- religious correspondence. This should provide a foundation for further research on the topic, given that it is impossible to do justice to the huge corpus of documentary texts in a limited work such as this. Therefore, it explores the significance of producing the *siyar*, making an attempt to deal with each separate objective — e.g. theology, Omani socio-politics — as an independent theme by cross-analyzing the texts examined. In this context, it briefly considers the *siyar* as a whole or supplemental with other works i.e. Omani, Ibādī and contemporary Eastern literature as a whole, using the latter mainly as sources of materials to complete the themes of the former. So far, Wilkinson has been the only scholar to produce a theory on this subject, although he includes the *siyar* among the Ibādī *fiqh* works.<sup>1</sup> Apart from that, Wilkinson has provided the background to the themes of *siyar* and made useful insights

<sup>1</sup> J.C. Wilkinson, 'The Omani Manuscript Collection at Muscat: Part II', *Arabian Studies* 6 (1978), 199–207.

into the constitution of the Ibādī community, its political and socio-economic history, and the disputes within it over dogma.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, a detailed study of theological aspects of the *siyar* is presented while allowing discussion of the dogmatic dispute between the Nizwā and Rustāq schools to shed light on the socio-political history of Oman.

### 1. Theological Aspects of the *Siyar*

The *siyar* reveal the interesting conventions of early theological discussions among the Ibādī imams in Basra. In order to understand the theological position of the Ibādīs in the *siyar*, it is necessary to analyse the compilations that have produced their doctrinal views from two angles: a comparative one in which Ibādī theological views on Islamic doctrine are given, and the epistles substantiating arguments of the Ibādī scholars.

The feature that stands out of earlier theological compilations appears to be the growth of divergent separate dogmatic views within Islamic society with their accompanying literature. The arbitration settlement following the battle of Şifḥīn between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya had displeased all of the groups involved, especially Mu‘āwiya, and remained a focal point of socio-political and theological attention for decades to come. The factors that provoked the battle of Şifḥīn had existed before the murder of the caliph ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (VII).<sup>3</sup> According to Abū al-Mu‘thir’s *sīra* (LXI), people were divided into three parties: the ‘Uthmānīs (the supporters of ‘Uthmān), the anti-‘Uthmānīs, and those who were called the Shukkāk, who neither supported nor opposed ‘Uthmān.<sup>4</sup> The development of separate doctrines in Islam happened after the Şifḥīn arbitration, when ‘Alī’s supporters split into two groups: the Shī‘a and the Khawārij. Abū al-Mu‘thir argues that, although the various Islamic sects seem different, they still had many beliefs in common.<sup>5</sup> The *siyar* have preserved the Ibādī arguments on the Şifḥīn affair, but have also presented the op-

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 199–207.

<sup>3</sup> A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge 1936), 36. On the Şifḥīn arbitration, see Martin Hinds, ‘The Şifḥīn Arbitration Agreement’, *JSS* 17 (1972), 93–129.

<sup>4</sup> For this development, a similar traditional view can be found with ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar; see J. van Ess, *Frühe Mu‘tazilitische Häresio-graphie* (Beirut 1971), 16, 17, 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, edited by Sayyida Kāshif Ismā‘īl. (Muscat 1984), 2:309.

position views. The *siyar* records of Ṣiffīn have been reported in al-Qalhātī's (seventh/thirteenth century) book, *al-Kashf wa-al-bayān*.<sup>6</sup> These arguments are also given in the *sīra* of Sālim b. Dhakwān (XXV), and in 'Abd Allāh b. Ibādī's letter to 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (XIV). Both the disputes concerning 'Uthmān's actions (*ahdāth*) and the arbitration between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya have been utilized as examples in the discussion of the concept of sin.<sup>7</sup> In the epistles of Abū 'Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd, interesting perspectives are found on the connection between sin and actions. Abū 'Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd (XVIII) both hold that self-will is a strong motivation that pushes man to sin; this is the doctrine of deliberate sin.<sup>8</sup> Watt, while tracing the beginning of the doctrine of predestination in Islam, found that the Khārijī outlook was seen to be fatalistic and predestinarian. As Watt asserts, the development of Khārijī doctrine on predestination is shown through the conception of the 'God who demands righteousness from His creatures'. This conception led logically to the doctrine of human responsibility, with its corollary doctrine of predestination, wherein man has the power to perform the duties imposed on him.<sup>9</sup> But the early Ibādīs themselves experienced a schism among themselves after Hārith al-Ibādī affirmed the doctrine of determination (*al-qawl bi-al-qadar*).<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, some Ibādīs agreed with Abū al-Hudhayl the Mu'tazilī, while the rest of the Ibādīs considered his view to be that 'capacity precedes the act'.<sup>11</sup> This subject was also considered by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, who asked Jābir b.

<sup>6</sup> See M. Kfafi, 'The Rise of Khārijism according to Abū Sa'īd Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Azdī al-Qalhātī', *Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts* (Cairo) 14 (1952), 29–48.

<sup>7</sup> See the first chapter of *Kitāb fihī ahdāth 'Uthmān, sīrah VII*; Abū al-Qāsim al-Barrādī, *Risāla fī taqyīd kutub aṣḥābinā: Dirāsa fī Tārīkh al-Ibādīyya*, edited by M. 'Azab and A. 'Uwād, (Cairo 1994. This work is based on MS, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriya number 21791 B. Cairo) Abū al-Qasim al-Barrādī, *Al-Jawāhir al-muntaqāt fī mā akhalla bihi kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* (Cairo 1302/1885), 219; Martin Hinds, 'The Murder of the Caliph 'Uthmān', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972): 450–69; Marin Hinds, 'Kūfan Political Alignments and their Background in the Mid-Seventh Century A.D.', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 2 (1971), 346–67.

<sup>8</sup> Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 42.

<sup>9</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London 1948), 46.

<sup>10</sup> J. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (Berlin and New York 1992–7), 2:204.

<sup>11</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn*, edited by Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd. (Dār al-Ḥikma, Damascus, 1415/1994), 20.

Zayd to clarify this topic. Jābir's reply referred to the Quranic verse: 'Whom God doth guide there can be none to lead astray, and for whom God rejects from His guidance, there can be no guide.'<sup>12</sup> Al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935–6) describes the early Ibādī parties in terms of the doctrine of *qadar*,<sup>13</sup> and shows that the Ibādī materials indicate early contact between the Ibādīs and the Qadariya. Ḥamza al-Kūfī, according to Abū 'Ubayda, shows that there was an arrangement with Ghaylān al-Dimashqī.<sup>14</sup> This arrangement between the Ibādīs and the Qadariya perhaps occurred at the end of the first/ beginning of the eighth century, when al-Ḥārith al-Ibādī founded his doctrine outside the Ibādī traditional school in an attempt to link his doctrine with 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād.<sup>15</sup> As van Ess suggests, the Ibādīs were not opposed to the Qadariya, but determinism won out under Abū 'Ubayda during the reign of al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75).<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Crone and Zimmermann report Ibn Ḥazm's claim that Ibn Ibād converted to Mu'tazilism, suggesting that he may have been remembered as an adherent of a Qadariya system.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that the origin of the split among Abū 'Ubayda's pupils was the issue of *qadar*, and those whose views resembled *qadarī* views were Shu'ayb b. al-Ma'rūf, 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd, and Hārūn b. al-Yamān.<sup>18</sup>

At the beginning of the third/ninth century, there was an Ibādī debate between Hārūn b. al-Yamān and Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl; according to al-Sālimī, Hārūn was among the Shu'aybiya<sup>19</sup> with whom the early Khawārij discussed the issue of *qadar*.<sup>20</sup> At this point, it is worth examining the definition of Shu'aybiya, since it appears in several Ibādī works. There is confusion in the heresiographies between the Shu'aybiya and the Sha'biya, and many scholars misunderstand the differences between the stances of these two sub-sects. It is sug-

<sup>12</sup> Qur'ān, *al-Kahf* 18:17.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 20. Useful views in this case are given by van Ess, *TG*, 2:202, 268.

<sup>14</sup> Van Ess, *Anfänge Muslimischer Theologie* (Beirut 1977), 230; *EP* s.v. 'Ghaylān b. Muslim al-Dimashqī'.

<sup>15</sup> Van Ess assumes that al-Ḥārith was alive in ca. 800, and hence was a contemporary of Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl. *TG*, 2:212; Crone, Patricia and Zimmermann, Fritz), *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān*, 202.

<sup>16</sup> Van Ess, *TG*, 2:189, 202.

<sup>17</sup> Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, (Oxford 2001), 202–3; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fī al-milal wa-al-ahwā' wa-al-niḥal* (Cairo 1317–21), 4:191.

<sup>18</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:204.

<sup>19</sup> A. al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-A'yān bi sīrat ahl 'Umān* (Cairo 1961), 1:158.

<sup>20</sup> Watt, *Free Will and Predestination*, 32.

gested that the Shu'aybiya is a sub-sect of the 'Ajārīda, and that the discussion between Shu'ayb and Maymūn regarding the topic of predestination led to schism among the 'Ajārīda in the last quarter of the first/seventh century.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, conflict over this issue has been recorded between the Ibādīs and the 'Ajārīda.

As for the Sha'bīya, it was a sub-sect of the Ibādīyya that was formed gradually at the end of the second/eighth century and the beginning of the third/ninth century by 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī, Shu'ayb b. al-Ma'rūf, Ayyūb al-Ṣawwāf and Abū al-Mu'arrij, then later by Hārūn b. al-Yamān.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, this development of Ibādism expanded in two ways. Politically, development occurred during the election to the Imamate of 'Abd al-Wahhāb in Tāhart, in North Africa; the leaders of the Sha'bīya in this regard supported the Nukkārīs against 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Theologically, expansion occurred during the debate between Maḥbūb and Hārūn. Thus there emerged at this point a new sub-sect of Ibādism, although it is not known what motivated the Sha'bīya's split nor after whom it was named. As mentioned above, al-Bisyāwī refuted the opinions of the Sha'bīya as anti-Ibādī, and listed the Ibādī scholars who were the proponents of the Sha'bīya.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, al-Bisyāwī notes that there were two Ibādī sub-sects at the end of the second/eighth century: the Ṭurayfiya or Ṭarfiya (the eponym of 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭurayf who was a military leader with 'Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā in Yemen (131/748) and the Sha'bīya.<sup>24</sup> Supporting this suggestion, there is a letter by al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb concerning the leaders of the Sha'bīya, who were 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Abū al-Mu'arrij, and Shu'ayb b. al-Ma'rūf.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, Abū Ghānim al-Khurāsānī, despite being one of their pupils who recorded Ibādī traditions from them in Basra, did not support the Sha'bīya.<sup>26</sup>

Imam al-Muhannā's epistle to Mu'ādh b. Ḥarb (XLIV) indicates a change in the conception of *qadar* in Oman, and his discussion of *qadar* caused a division in Omani society. One side, the Qadariya, claims that God does not create or form the actions of men. The other side believes that God creates belief (i.e. good) and disbelief (i.e. bad), and that He is responsible for people's actions. The con-

<sup>21</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 14.

<sup>22</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:204.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:139.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:204, 2:139. For the opinions of both schools, see *ibid.*, 2:73, 86, 94, 138, 139.

<sup>25</sup> A. Ennami, *Studies in Ibādism* (Cambridge University Ph.D. 1971), 10.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

flict between the Qadarīya and their opponents surfaced in Oman during the imamate of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd (208–26/824–41), when some of the Qadarīya began to settle and flourish in the cities of Sohar and Tuwām. These suggestions from the *siyar* material are confirmed when their contribution to the discussion of *qadar* is considered.

There is one significant piece of evidence: Abū ‘Ubayda, an anti-Qadarī, endeavoured to pursue the logic of his teacher Ṣuḥār b. al-‘Abbās and to introduce to the creed of the anti-Qadarī the idea that knowledge equals fate.<sup>27</sup> Abū ‘Ubayda (XVIII) informs his followers that the arguments of predestination ‘...reflect the Qur’ān, as much of it is about the virtue of knowledge of *qadar*’. Abū ‘Ubayda argues that ‘If He [God] did not predestine [people], His knowledge is still evident, though if He did predestine [them], this knowledge cannot be said to have shifted into predestination.’ But Abū ‘Ubayda continues, ‘... He [God] began with creation. He started by creating knowledge, since He showed in the Psalms what he was revealed, and signed his creation and order according to what he was confirmed.’ This indicates that Abū ‘Ubayda attributes the term *qadar* to God’s knowledge by following his teacher Ṣuḥār b. al-‘Abbās al-‘Abdī’s commentary. In this way, the development of the concept of *qadar* became an issue in Oman. Imam al-Muḥannās (226–37/841–51) epistle asserts that the action and destiny of people emanate from God’s knowledge. According to the commentary on this concept, the Ibādīs define *qadar* as God’s knowledge: God’s knowledge and His determination are two inseparable things. God requires His servants to do what He orders them to do according to their capacity, not their wish. The essential function of the doctrine of *qadar* is the portrayal of the ideal relationship between man and Creator. The discussion began among the early Ibādīs with the question of whether the origins of actions are attributed to God or to humans. Ḥamza al-Qadarī asked Ḥājib, ‘Do you accept the statement that good is from God and evil is from humans?’ Ḥājib replied, ‘We accept the statement when it comes from people, but not when it comes from you.’<sup>28</sup> This position is that of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: he affirmed that God creates only good, and that men’s evil acts come from themselves or from Satan; however, al-Ḥasan allowed that God’s guidance of men contained an element of succour, or grace (*tawfiq*).<sup>29</sup> It is in-

<sup>27</sup> Al-Shammākhī Aḥmad bin Sa‘īd, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, 2:233; van Ess, *Anfänge*, 38; M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge 1981), 142.

<sup>28</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:386.

<sup>29</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh 1985), 27.

teresting to note that the *siyar* show that ‘Imrān b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Nidābī [d. c. late second/eighth century], who was the imam of Nidābī<sup>30</sup> mosque in Basra, said to al-Rabī‘ b. Ḥabīb, ‘I cannot claim that God in his wisdom and justice asked his servants to do things which they are not able to do’. Al-Rabī‘ asked him, ‘Was not the guidance of God to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar not the same as to Abū Jahl’ (i.e. to those who follow the right path and those who went astray) ‘Imrān said, ‘No.’ Although ‘Imrān insisted on his opinion, this did him no harm within Ibādī circles.

Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 260/873) also reports the discussion of *qadar* in Ibādī *ḥalqas*, (circles of the leading ‘*ulamā’*’ including Qadarī scholars in Basra and an Ibādī called al-Ghazzāl, who came from Sohar to debate with them. Al-Ghazzāl said to a man from the predestinarian group, ‘Which is good, the action of God or the action of humans?’ The man replied, ‘It is God’s action that is good.’ Then al-Ghazzāl asked, ‘Is prayer part of God’s action or part of the servant’s action?’ The man replied, ‘It is part of the servant’s action.’ Then al-Ghazzāl asked, ‘Is sleep part of God’s action or part of the servant’s action?’ He replied, ‘It is part of God’s action.’ Al-Ghazzāl then said, ‘So the servant’s action is better than God’s action.’<sup>31</sup>

The Ibādī views generated yet more discussion. They claimed that God did not force any of His creatures to obey or disobey Him, and they also called the Sunni (i.e. the majority who favoured determinism) ‘Jabrīya’, since the majority view holds that God forces His servants to commit sins. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb comments that whoever does good or bad is simply executing God’s knowledge. Abū ‘Ubayda says that God commands obedience and makes it obligatory, and whoever obeys or disobeys, this is God’s knowledge. From this view, the debate on *qadar* is concerned with two main questions: who creates actions, and does God force people to do good or bad? An Ibādī called Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān asked Abū ‘Ubayda, ‘Does God force anyone to obey?’ Abū ‘Ubayda said, ‘I did not learn that God forces anyone either to obey or disobey. But you say that God forces the people of piety to be pious when he shows them its reward.’ Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān said, ‘People flock to the sins they commit with God’s knowledge.’ Abū ‘Ubayda said, ‘By God, it is not like that; rather, their souls tempt them and Satan lures them to do these sins.’ He provides as evidence a verse in the Qur’ān, which says, ‘...Satan

<sup>30</sup> Nidāb is a sub tribe of Azd in Oman; S. al-‘Awtabī, *Ansāb* (Muscat 1981 and 1984), 2:243.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Baraka Abī Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh, *Taqyīd* (Al-Sālimī Library, Oman) MS 55.MNHC

it was that tempted them.<sup>32</sup> He argued that God made people able to obey for the sake of reward, and prohibited them from disobeying for fear of punishment; He thereby encourages people to do what He prefers and chooses. So the servant chooses without any coercion on the part of God. As a result, he is either rewarded or punished for his actions.

In the following centuries, the development of this subject gave rise to discussions about God's will. Abū al-Mu'thir al-Ṣalt b. Khamīs (LXI) tries to give a different interpretation of the concept of *qadar*. He stated that creation is equivalent to *qadā'* (see *EI*<sup>2</sup>), or more specifically, the *qadar* is the creation itself. Thus Abū al-Mu'thir refutes the attack of both the Qadarīya and the Jabrīya. In the middle of the fourth/tenth century, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī (LXXXIX) asserted that *qadar* is ability (*istitā'a*). His view reflects the repudiation of the Mu'tazilī view that the specific ability to perform an action comes before action or simultaneously with action. In contrast, al-Bisyāwī's teacher, Ibn Baraka, argued that ability and power have the same meaning and have no independent existence, and that they are created in the servant who is given the ability and power at the point of acting, and is thus free to choose. But some Ibādī scholars suggest that ability is created simultaneously with action and not before or after it, and it is not one type of ability but more than one, for each action has its own corresponding ability. Thus al-Bisyāwī explains: if the ability were before action, there would be no motivation either to sin or to obey; so if a person were able, he would act. With respect to the notion of acquisition (*kasb*), it consists of every act that takes place with the ability to do that act. Ability means that people are accountable to God's will (*mashī'a*). Ibn Baraka states that 'the servant is not accountable for God's creation and ability; rather, he is accountable for his committing sins and disobeying the orders of God'.<sup>33</sup> So the question of fate can be laid aside until someone commits an action. Accordingly, the early Ibādīs generally recognize that determination and intention carry the same meaning. One is the intention in what God revealed to His prophets and in His guidance; the other is the intention in God's knowledge of His creation.

From this brief overview of Ibādī authorities, it is clear that *qadar* was the subject of heated debate until the fourth/tenth century, with the aim of defining the conception of fate. The *siyar* are thus informative guides to the Ibādī contribution to dogmatic discourse in

<sup>32</sup> Qur'ān, *Muḥammad* 47:25; Ibn Baraka, *Taqyīd*, MS 58.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Baraka, *Taqyīd*, MS 56.

Islam. Similar discussions defined the concept of movement (*ḥaraka*), where it is considered to be God's creation in the person at the time of action. By tracing this material from the formative period of Ibādism, Ibn Baraka views it as one of the essences of God since will (*irāda*) is one of the attributes (*ṣifa*) of God.

The Ibādīs formed their own opinions, and took up a middle position between those of the Qadāriya and the Jabriya. Of course, the influence of the Qadāriya was stronger than that of the orthodox Sunnis, yet for the Ibādīs in the centre of Basra, the topic of fate was under consideration until the end of second/eighth century, and only a minority of Ibādī scholars were influenced by the Mu'tazila then.

Another theme in the *siyar* is sin and its connection to belief. It is not yet known for certain whether or not this creed was originally influenced by Christianity.<sup>34</sup> In order to understand the term sin, examples of its use in Ibādī literature are given, starting with 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād's letter to 'Abd al-Malik. In this epistle, Ibn Ibād clarifies the differences regarding the concept of sin between the Khawārij and the Ibādīs, explains his own view, and introduces a refinement on the concept by distinguishing between the terms *mushrik* (idolater) and *kāfir* (disbeliever).<sup>35</sup> Throughout his reply, however, he employs the phrase *kuffār al-ni'am* (ingratitude), which means that he equates sin with *kuffār*, disbelievers, since sin is against belief.<sup>36</sup> Wensinck has shown that the connection between sin and disbelief is found originally in Prophetic tradition.<sup>37</sup> Abū 'Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd (XVIII) investigated the topic in order to find out how sin leads to disbelief. They distinguished two types of sin: 1) that which is committed intentionally and contrary to the sinner's better judgement, and 2) that which is committed unintentionally as a result of the sinner's ignorance. The matter of sin and disbelief also involves the issue of innovation (*bid'a*), of which there are two types: 1) that which involves polytheism and the ascription of partners to God, and 2) that which involves innovation in religion by monotheists.

The issue of sin was discussed among the Ibādīs in Basra at the beginning of the third/ninth century. Perhaps the most outstanding example of this is the debate in which both Ibādī leaders, Maḥbūb

<sup>34</sup> See Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 68; Cook's discussion of Jacob of Edessa in *Early Muslim Dogma*, 145.

<sup>35</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh 1969), 29.

<sup>36</sup> Farḥāt al-Ja'bayrī, *al-Bu'd al-ḥadārī lil-'aqīda al-ibādīya* (Muscat 1987), 508.

<sup>37</sup> Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 39.

and Hārūn, attempted to classify the concept of sin. According to Hārūn, sin is of three types: 1) sin that implies the disbelief of its perpetrator, 2) sin in which it is irrelevant whether or not the perpetrator is a disbeliever, and 3) sin that God forgives. In short, Hārūn identifies three classes of sin; they are, respectively, the major sin, the minor sin, and the sin of suspended judgment (*mawqūf ʿanhā*). It seems that Hārūn's intention was to link the conception of sin to the attitude of the grave sinner, and he deduced this from the conception of the intermediate position (*al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*) of the Muʿtazilīs. Perhaps he attempted to connect this issue with the doctrines of association (*walāya*), dissociation (*barāʾa*), and suspended judgment (*wuqūf*).<sup>38</sup> It should be made clear that the essence of the doctrines of association and dissociation has no connection with eschatological judgments, and concerns only the present world.

Imam al-Muhannā b. Jayfar (XLIV) also addressed the concept of sin. He equates sin with *kufṛ* (disbelief). Thus he investigated the actions that lead to sin, and classified sin into two types: 1) disbelief that consists of denial of revelation, and 2) disbelief that consists of disobedience and error in interpretation.

Alongside the matters of will and sin, the third subject of theological discussion is divine, Godly matters (*ilāhīyāt*), often referred to as 'belief in God's attributes'. This issue led to a profound investigation by Muslim scholars. While anthropomorphism (*tajsīm*) proved to be a major motive for the interpretation of the Qurʾān, the metaphorical expressions in the Qurʾān encouraged diverse theological opinions on the question of divine attributes. With regard to this development, Watt assumes that it most likely began at the end of the first/seventh century, and he connects it with the concept of *qadar*, since there were vigorous arguments about the Qurʾān that arose from questions about the meaning of God's speech.<sup>39</sup>

The articulation of Ibādī views began with Abū ʿUbayda in the first half of the second/eighth century. Maḥbūb recalls that it was said to Abū ʿUbayda that Muqātil b. Sulaymān used to say that God created Adam in His own form. Abū ʿUbayda said that Muqātil was wrong.<sup>40</sup> Maḥbūb and Hārūn both emphasized the metaphorical interpretation of the Quranic verses, and they adhered to the principle

<sup>38</sup> On the development of the conception of *wuqūf*, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden 1920), 178; van Ess, 'Skepticism in Islamic Religious Thought', *al-Abḥāth* 21 (1968), 1–18; Watt, *Formative Period*, 30; Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 44.

<sup>39</sup> Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, 49.

<sup>40</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:299.

of the unity of God's essence (*tawḥīd*). The controversial theological issues that were under discussion were: 1) God's attributes, 2) the vision of God on the Day of Resurrection, 3) the revelation by God on the night of 15 Sha'bān, 4) God's sitting on the throne (*istiwā*). There were disagreements between Maḥbūb and Hārūn. The central question was: Are the people who err in their conception of God's attributes disbelievers or polytheists?

The Ibādīs view God's attributes in a similar way to the Mu'tazila. According to them attributes did not have a kind of independent existence, but rather emerged from the unity of God's being. For example, what God knows, he knows by Himself or by His essence, and not by any knowledge distinct from Him.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the Ibādī view is that the speech of God does not change; what changes is only its reading and recitation.

As is well known, God's attributes became a significant political issue, causing a crisis during the *miḥna*<sup>42</sup> (the inquisition concerning the creation of the Qur'ān initiated by the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 196–218/812–33) when a debate developed over the nature of the Qur'ān and whether the speech of God was created.<sup>43</sup> Historically, the discussion of the creation of the Qur'ān arrived in Oman during the period of Imam al-Muḥannā, after the death of Maḥbūb [220s/830s], but the imam himself did not join in this debate.<sup>44</sup> For the Ibādīs in Iraq, however, it is necessary to give Ibn Baraka's outline of this debate. The Omanis at the end of the second/eighth century asked Abū Ṣufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Ṣufra about the creation of the Qur'ān, and he replied, 'I understood your letter, but I have not heard any of our scholars mention that the Qur'ān is created. What they say is that it is the speech of God.' Ibn Baraka reports that he met an Ibādī scholar in Baghdad called Ibn 'Amrūsh, who had contact with al-Rabī' b. Ḥabīb's contemporaries. Ibn 'Amrūsh stated that he had not heard anything on this topic, and that was among the Ibādīs, but he added that he preferred people not to dissociate from those who say that the Qur'ān is created. In addition, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Baḥrānī reported that he had been informed that Hayf b. Yaḥyā and 'Adl b. Yazīd discussed this

<sup>41</sup> Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, 49.

<sup>42</sup> *EP*, s.v. 'Miḥna'.

<sup>43</sup> W. Madelung, 'The Controversy on the Creation of the Koran', in J.M. Barral (ed.), *Orientalia Hispanica* (Leiden 1974), 1:504–25.

<sup>44</sup> A. al-Sālīmī, *Rawḍ al-bayān 'alā fayḍ al-mannān fī al-radd 'alā man idda'ā qidam al-Qur'ān*, edited by 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Sālīmī (Biddiya 1994); al-Sālīmī, *Tuḥfah*, 1:155.

topic.<sup>45</sup> These outlines suggest that the discussion of the creation of the Qurʾān arrived in Oman before Muḥannā's time, and the crisis probably began during the time when there was a strong influence from Baghdad.

The *siyar* collections preserve two epistles dealing with God's attributes during the middle of the third/ninth century.<sup>46</sup> The first is from 'Azzān b. al-Ṣaqr (d.268/882) (LV), who adopted a similar view to that propounded later by the Ash'ariya. The second is from the Rustamid Imam Abū al-Yaqzān Aflaḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb to the Omanis (LVI), in which the Ibādī imam of North Africa adopts the view that the Qurʾān is created. Yet perhaps this creed would never have come to the fore without influence from elsewhere. In order to understand the origins of the debate over the creation of the Qurʾān in Oman, al-Sālimī has dealt with the doctrines of the Jahmīya and the Qadariya where they existed in Sohar.<sup>47</sup> The early debate on this theological problem took place between Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb and Hāshim b. Ghaylān, and the Omani scholars, who concluded that God created all things, and without God nothing is created. Perhaps this position was suspended by Imam Muḥannā. However, Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb might have brought his view from Basra, where he grew up. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz followed by 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazarī (both in the second half of second/eighth century) were the first Ibādīs to discuss this subject and believed that the Qurʾān was created.<sup>48</sup> Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's view of the Qurʾān, as recorded by his pupils before he came to Sohar in the beginning of second/eighth century, was: 'Do not say that the Qurʾān is created nor that it is uncreated. Do not say that the Qurʾān is God or not God. Rather say that it is the speech of God.' The view of the Mashāriqa school that the Qurʾān was created has not been given wide attention, since it was noted and recorded for almost a century. As is clear from the above, it can be understood from their own materials.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Baraka, *Taqyīd*, MS 25.

<sup>46</sup> Ennami, *Studies in Ibādism*, 357, records that al-Barrādī shows that there were three different opinions in Oman about the creation of the Qurʾān: 1) the Qurʾān is the word of God and it is not a attribute of God, nor is it His essence (this view was held by Abū 'Alī Mūsā b. 'Alī [d. 230 AH]); 2) the Qurʾān is the word of God and His revelation to Muḥammad, and this issue is the one that may remain unknown (*mimmā yasa'u jabluhu*) (this view was held by Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb); 3) rejection of the view that the Qurʾān is created, and assumption of the attitude of making no decision (*wuqūf*).

<sup>47</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:140.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Ju'bayrī, *al-Bu'd al-ḥadārī*, 350.

## 2. The Dynamics of Socio-Political History in Oman

The relationship between the *'ulamā'*, or religious scholars, and governments is not confined to Ibādism; it is an aspect of other Islamic groups and doctrines as well. The issues of the role of the imamate and the relationship between government and *sharī'a* goes back to the earliest stages of Islam.<sup>49</sup> The *siyar* must be examined carefully for textual evidence of these concerns.<sup>50</sup> In order to grasp the function of Islamic doctrine, this question must be addressed: What was the contribution of each Islamic sect to Islamic society and state throughout history?

In Oman, the socio-political structure that has supported the imamate until the twentieth century has attracted the attention of several scholars,<sup>51</sup> leading them to study subjects such as Oman's religious learning, social structure, political history, and the imamate itself, which became an integral part of Oman's culture.<sup>52</sup> In this section, I will attempt to bring into perspective the relationship between these factors as portrayed in the *siyar* materials. This study is based on the chronology of events examined in the previous part of the article. Here the relationship between religion and state is discussed from the socio-political perspective, which combines both historical and social aspects.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Century of Islam* (Cambridge 1986); I. Lapidus, 'The Separation of the State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6 (1975), 363–85.

<sup>50</sup> Hamilton A.R. Gibb's view is that there is no Arabic word for 'state' as a general concept. Even for Ibn Khaldūn the word *dawla* often explicitly means and always implies membership in the ruling family. Similarly, the term *mamlaka* combines the concept of kingship and kingdom; for example, the interest of the state means the interest of the Umayyad family. See H.A.R. Gibb, 'The Evolution of Government in Early Islam', *Studia Islamica*, 4 (1955), 1–17.

<sup>51</sup> Laura Veccia Vaglieri, 'L'Imamate Ibādīteta dell' Omān', *Annali Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 3 (1949), 245–82; Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement in South-East Arabia: A Study of the Aflaj of Oman* (Oxford 1977), 138.

<sup>52</sup> Dale Eickelman, 'Religious Knowledge in Inner Oman', *Journal of Oman Studies* 6 (1983), 163–72; J.C. Wilkinson, *The Origins of the Omani State*, in D. Hopwood (ed.), *The Arabian Peninsula Society and Politics*. (London 1972), 67–88; J.E. Peterson, 'Oman's Odyssey: From Imamate to Sultanate', in B.R. Pridham (ed.), *Oman: Economic, Social and Strategic Development* (London 1987), 1–16; Thomas Bierschenck, 'Religion and Political Structure: Remarks on Ibādism in Oman and the Mazb (Algeria)', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 68 (1988): 107–27; J.B. Kelly, *Sultanate and Imamate in Oman* (Oxford 1959).

<sup>53</sup> John Wilkinson's theorizes (1987) that the Imamate of Oman is a social and tribal order rather than a legislative pattern. He tries to narrow the relationship

In the century that followed the end of Umayyad rule, the Ibādīs succeeded in establishing *imāmat al-ḡuhūr* (openly declared rather than hidden [*kitman*]) in Oman (132/749) and Yemen (129–31/746–8), and some ten years later in North Africa (145/763).<sup>54</sup> The activity of the Ibādīs in Basra influenced these regions through the pupils (carriers of knowledge)<sup>55</sup> of Abū ‘Ubayda.<sup>56</sup> Although the *siyar* do not preserve any exchange of letters between the leaders of Ibādism and their students, al-Kudamī did present the role of these students in Oman: ‘We do not doubt that the Omanis were not included in the true religion (*dīn al-istiḡāma*), otherwise they would have followed the Ṣufriya. However, in the course of time, the scholars and learned men did go to Basra to obtain knowledge from Iraq, and they came back to teach the people what they had not already known of religion.’<sup>57</sup> The Omanis elected al-Julandā b. Mas‘ūd as the first imam, who brought to an end the rule of the Julandānī dynasty, despite being himself a member of the family.<sup>58</sup>

The institutionalization of the *‘ulamā’* and the political organization of the imamate in Oman was imposed by force, because first, the ousted Julandānī dynasty revolted against their relative, the new imam al-Julandā,<sup>59</sup> and second, the Omanis wanted independence from the Abbasids. The Ibādī masters of Basra sent to Oman a group under the leadership of Hilāl b. ‘Aṭīya al-Khurāsānī (XXIX), in order to try to discourage tribalism, lest it cause revolt against the imam. When the imamate had been established, Imam al-Julandā sent Abū ‘Ubayda and Ḥājib so as to establish contact with Basra.<sup>60</sup> When the

between imams and *‘ulamā’* and considers that it was formed primarily by tribalism and Omani geography; see *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (Cambridge 1987), 205–12.

<sup>54</sup> *EP*, s.v. ‘Ibādiyya’.

<sup>55</sup> A surviving list of *ḥamalāt al-‘ilm ilā ‘Umān* (carriers of knowledge to Oman) includes Mūsā b. Abī Jābir (c. 87–181/706–97), Abū al-Mundhir Bashīr b. al-Mundhir (d. 178/794), Munīr b. al-Nayyir al-Ja‘alānī (c. 170–280?/786–893?) and Muḥammad b. al-Mu‘alā al-Kindī; see al-‘Awtabī, *Ansāb*, 1981), 2:229; Abū Ghānim al-Khurāsānī, *Mudawwana al-kubra* (Muscat 1984), 2:306.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Khalifāt, Muḥammad, *Nashāt al-ḥaraka al-Ibādiyya*, (Amman 1981), 103–15; Ennami, *Studies in Ibādism*, 122; *EP*, s.v. ‘Ibādiyya’; Wilkinson, ‘The Early Development of the Ibādīte Movement in Basra’, in Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale 1982), 125–48.

<sup>57</sup> Abū Sa‘īd Muḥammad bin Sa‘īd al-Kudamī, *Al-Istiḡāma* (Muscat 1984), 2:91.

<sup>58</sup> J.C. Wilkinson, ‘The Julandā of Oman’, *Journal of Oman Studies* 1 (1976), 97–108.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:93.

<sup>60</sup> Maḥbūb reflects this development of the Ibādī movement in the beginning of the second/eighth century in his *sīra*; *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:281.

imamate of Julandā was defeated by the Abbasids, Shabīb b. ‘Aṭīya (XXXI) took on the political role of *muḥtasib* (acting head of the community) due to his willingness to fill the gap that followed Imam Julandā, and so as to mediate with the centre of Ibādism in Basra. On the other hand, Shabīb asked for *zakāt* on Omani villages, but eventually ceded his rule to the sultan’s deputies when they came.<sup>61</sup> Shabīb’s *sīra* directs all people to revolt in order to gain an independent state that revives the political spirit of early Ibādism.

Nonetheless, relations with Ibādī regions continued in Basra, as can be seen in the case of Thābit b. Dirham in Oman (XXVII). More precisely, the authority of Basra was firm over all the Ibādī parties. This can be seen in ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Julandānī’s case: even though the *shurāt* (militia) in Oman killed him after the imamate of al-Julandā was defeated, the Julandānīs nevertheless submitted their case to the imams of Basra who refused to intervene.<sup>62</sup>

Having traced the growing role of the Ibādī spirit and its existence as a doctrine in Oman, the position of the Omani scholars, the *ḥamalāt al-‘ilm* (carriers of knowledge) can now be considered. When the latter returned from Basra to Oman, their awareness of the need for moral strength was behind the resistance to the Abbasids. At first, all missionaries trained in Basra, but as the imamate became established, the ‘*ulamā*’ developed their own local centres, perhaps influenced by tribalism. Mūsā b. Abī Jābir, the head of the carriers of knowledge, appeared again during this interregnum, and was among the people who elected al-Julandā to the imamate, but afterwards he became one of the missionaries. The new pupils who arrived from Basra wanted to take authority away from the former missionaries. Al-Sālimī notes that there was a kind of confusion about the relationship between Mūsā and Shabīb.<sup>63</sup> According to al-Barrādī, during this interregnum and before the imamate of al-Wārith (179–92/796–808), the Omanis revolted against the Abbasids under al-Kulandā b. al-Julandā until he was killed. Al-Kulandā seems to have been from the Julandānīs, although he was trying by his revolt to occupy Yemen as well as Oman.<sup>64</sup>

It is necessary to briefly mention the structure of the Omani state since the re-establishment of the imamate of Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān (177–9/793–5). Given that the connection between the Ibādīs

<sup>61</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:106.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:102.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:105; al-Barrādī also notes that Shabīb was from the Ṣufriyya; *Risāla*, 54.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Barrādī, *al-Jawāhir al-muntaqāt*, 170.

and the clan of al-Āzd continued in Basra,<sup>65</sup> this relationship appears to have occasionally shaped the local politics of early Islamic states between place, tribe, and doctrine. In other words, the Omani state consisted of three pillars: the tribe of Azd, Ibādism, and the internal politics of Oman. These three elements have formed the historical pyramid of Oman. Ibādī ideology helped to bridge the gap that originally existed between the Arabs and the other inhabitants of the land, whose previous rulers fell with the coming of Islam. In bridging this gap, Ibādī ideology effectively put a stop to the economic decline of the Julandā period at the end of second/eighth century.<sup>66</sup> Wilkinson adds that the Ibādī ideology, in part, determined the form of Omani political unity, but that it is the physical rather than the cultural factors that have allowed an independent Omani state to survive in some form for nearly 1,200 years.<sup>67</sup> It should be noted that the structure of the traditional Imamate system in Oman was distributed among several authorities: the executive authority, which lies in the Imamate, the legislative authority, which is represented by the *‘ulamā’*, and the military authority, which belonged to the *shurāt*.

In the latter part of the second/eighth century, the scholars living under the Imamate’s authority became *arbāb ahl al-hall wa-al-‘aqd*, and the scholars were able to unite Omani tribal leaders to elect Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān to the Imamate. Mūsā b. Abī Jābir was worried about having as imam one of the Omani tribal leaders, because he expected that the scholars would then not have any influence on the elections to the Imamate. Moreover, he felt this would raise tribal pride among the Omanis themselves.<sup>68</sup> Approximately two years later, Mūsā b. Abī Jābir discharged Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān from his office, and his statement (XXXIV) explains that he was dismissed for his excessive severity. Abū al-Muṭhir records that the scholars who elected Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān were themselves the ones who dismissed him. Mūsā b. Abī Jābir dismissed Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān from the Imamate because he had given his allegiance to al-Wārith b. Ka’b (179–92/796–808).<sup>69</sup> He may also have been dismissed because he was from the *shurāt* of Basra, and not actually from Oman.<sup>70</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī (LXXI) justifies his dismissal for yet another reason: that the *‘ulamā’* used him either as

<sup>65</sup> Wilkinson, ‘Early Development’, 140.

<sup>66</sup> Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement*, 142.

<sup>67</sup> Wilkinson, *Origins*, 69.

<sup>68</sup> Abū Qaḥṭān’s *sīra*; *al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:115.

<sup>69</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:65.

<sup>70</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:111.

an imam of defence until the war ended, or merely as the commander of an army. The biggest success of the *'ulamā'* was in transferring the capital from Sohar to Nizwā so they could preserve both the imamate and the connection between the coast and the interior of Oman. Ever since this period, Nizwā has been known as *bayḍat al-islām* (the seat of the imamate). Indeed, it was these situations that naturally allowed the *'ulamā'* to become an active political organization in Omani history, rather than remote religious scholars.<sup>71</sup> The remarkable achievement of the *'ulamā'* administration was that, when al-Wārith died, they selected his successor before the tribal leaders assembled, in order not to lose their role.<sup>72</sup>

The *siyar* that were written during the imamate of Ghassān b. 'Abd Allāh (192–207/808–23) seem to have been the most useful method for disseminating legislative rulings, when the *'ulamā'* existed as *mufṭīs*, counsellors, and viziers for the imams. The executive authority may, however, have been understandably reluctant to accept Munīr b. al-Nayyir's *sira* to Imam Ghassān b. 'Abd Allāh, when it directed the imamate of Oman to look outside its territory in an endeavour to expand the imamate's authority overseas into the Indian sub-continent (*ard al-Hind*). When the imam tried to protect the merchant traders of the Gulf, he had to establish an Omani navy to form a force against Indian pirates (*bawārij al-Hind*).<sup>73</sup>

Attempts to dominate Gulf trade were a major reason for the emergence of Oman as a state.<sup>74</sup> The interesting thing is that after Imam Ghassān's death in 207/823, his successor was not recognized until 208/824. This means that the state was in an interregnum, and rule of the state was effectively under the control of the *'ulamā'*.<sup>75</sup> However, Wilkinson suspects that Imam Ghassān may have died in 208/824, or that his successor was elected in 207/823.<sup>76</sup>

When 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd (208–26/824–41) succeeded to the imamate and was formally appointed by the *'ulamā'*, Hāshim b. Ghaylān (XXXVIII) indicated to him that he should keep an eye on the Qadariya and the Murji'a, whose missionaries had established their ideologies in Sohar and Tuwām. The flourishing of Omani cities was perhaps the main factor that attracted the doctrinal refugees,

<sup>71</sup> See Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement*, 143.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:111.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:123; al-Mas'ūdī, *al-Tanbih wa-al-ishraf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden 1967), 355.

<sup>74</sup> Wilkinson, *Origins*, 77.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:122.

<sup>76</sup> Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 10.

whether Ibādīs or others. The most important account occurs, for instance, in the *sīra* of Mūsā b. ‘Alī (XLII), in which it is recorded that the ‘*ulamā*’ agreed to dismiss Imam ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd from office, as his advanced age had made him unable to control the country’s affairs;<sup>77</sup> Abū Qaḥṭān adds that his mind was malfunctioning. This affair shows the inability of the ‘*ulamā*’ to deal effectively with claims against high and powerful state officials. The ‘*ulamā*’ discussed the idea of dismissing him, but Mūsā b. ‘Alī suggested that the scholars should control the army and run the state (LXVI). Thereafter, Oman had semi-independence, with complete autonomy over the military and the navy. Since the arrival of Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl in Oman during the imamate of Ghassān b. ‘Abd Allāh, his son Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb had become a judge in Sohar, and was then succeeded by another member of his family.<sup>78</sup> In light of these considerations, it is clear that families that had acquired religious knowledge in Oman, such as Maḥbūb’s (Raḥīlī) and Mūsā b. ‘Alī’s (Banū Sāma) families, became powerful authorities and continued to influence Oman’s political climate.<sup>79</sup>

The election to the imamate of al-Muḥannā b. Jayfar (226–37/841–51) brought prosperity to Oman, since he was both the imam and a scholar, and this distinguished him from the previous imams.<sup>80</sup> This can be seen in his *sīra* to Mu‘adh b. Ḥarb (XLIV), in which he discusses Ibādī theological and legal issues. During his reign, he restructured the imamate’s administration and reformed the military. A standing army replaced the militia (*shurāt*), thus strengthening the executive power. Al-Sālimī gives a description of the imamate’s army: the navy had three hundred ships, and the army had between 1,300 and 9,000 horses and camels, and also 10,000 foot soldiers, as well as a standing force composed of several ethnic minorities, including Indians.<sup>81</sup> These developments affected the constitutional structure of the state, since the intention of the imam was to weaken the legislative power in state politics. Some of the ‘*ulamā*’ were dissatisfied with these measures, and they decided to dismiss him. Mūsā b. ‘Alī, who was *rās ahl al-ḥall wa-al-‘aqd*, and who had the most influence, set out to discharge him from the office of the imamate. Imam al-Muḥannā told him, ‘O Abū ‘Alī (Mūsā), you are coming to me. I swear by God, if you obey the Omanis in what they wish, no imam

<sup>77</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:116.

<sup>78</sup> Crone and Zimmernann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, 313.

<sup>79</sup> Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 125, 174.

<sup>80</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:107; Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 153, 159.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:107.

would stay with them even for a year. Go back! I did not allow you to come, and you have not received permission to come.’<sup>82</sup> Abū Qaḥṭān, in his *sīra*, recognizes that Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb and Bashīr b. al-Mundhir knew that the conduct of al-Muḥannā was incompatible with the qualifications required for retention of the imamate, and so they secretly renounced him.<sup>83</sup>

The first imamate in Oman was the golden age that ended with the imamate of al-Ṣalt b. Mālīk (237–72/851–86).<sup>84</sup> Yet the socio-political theory of the time had no solution for dealing with an aged and invalid imam. Was it permissible to depose him from his office or not? This issue is similar to the one faced by the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, and now the Omanis faced the same situation.

The illustration of these relationships shows that all Omani imams in the first imamate, from the first, who was Julandā, to the last, who was either Rāshid b. al-Nazar or ‘Azzān b. Tamīm, were more or less targeted for dismissal from the imamate. The only exception is Ghassān b. ‘Abd Allāh.<sup>85</sup> The real importance of the first imamate is that it consolidated Oman as a state.<sup>86</sup>

Before summing up this section, the role of the *shurāt* in the *siyar* will be discussed, as it was mentioned that an armed force of Ibādīs was sent from Basra to establish the imamate of Julandā b. Mas‘ūd. The *shurāt* reappeared strongly during the interregnum period after the imamate of Julandā. However, when Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān held office as the imam, the *shurāt* were perhaps joined and backed by young Omani tribesmen. The *shurāt* were becoming a voluntary army inspired by Ibādī ideology. Abū al-Ḥawārī’s *sīra* (LXXXIV) describes the actions of Sa‘īd b. Ziyād, the head of the *shurāt* during the imamate of Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān, when he burnt the property of opposing tribes. The case of Sa‘īd b. Ziyād’s behaviour was debated among the ‘*ulamā*’ in Oman and Basra.<sup>87</sup> According to Ibn Baraka, Ibn Ziyād was exiled to Bahrain and later returned to Oman with the permission of Ghassān b. ‘Abd Allāh.<sup>88</sup> Imam Muḥammad

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 1:151.

<sup>83</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:117; al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfa*, 1:158–9.

<sup>84</sup> J.C. Wilkinson, *Sources for the early history of Oman, Studies in the History of Arabia* (Riyadh 1979), 54.

<sup>85</sup> See al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfa*: Julandā b. Mas‘ūd (1:93), Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān (1:111), ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd (1:134), al-Muḥannā b. Jayfar (1:151), and al-Ṣalt b. Mālīk (1:195); he also discusses the imamate of Rāshid b. al-Nazar and ‘Azzān b. Tamīm.

<sup>86</sup> Wilkinson, *Origins*, 54.

<sup>87</sup> Abū al-Ḥawārī’s *sīra*; *al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:341.

<sup>88</sup> Ibn Baraka, *Taqyīd*, 67.

b. Abī ‘Affān himself was among the *shurāt*, and was dismissed from the office of the imamate as a result of his behaviour. The *shurāt* system, however, went much further than the irregular and voluntary, non-professional army of the old system; it entirely revolutionized the basic concept of an army. The early imams were faced with a particular problem. After the *shurāt* ignored Imam al-Wārith’s orders and broke into the prison at Sohar to kill the Abbasid general ‘Isā b. Ja’far, who was a close relative of the caliph, in Dhū al-Ḥijja 189/November 805, it was essential to develop a new system of *shurāt* organization;<sup>89</sup> it was necessary to bring the *shurāt* under state authority. By the latter part of the imamate of Ghassān b. ‘Abd Allāh, *shurāt* members attacked and killed al-Ṣaqr b. Muḥammad b. Zā’ida al-Julandānī, even though he was under the protection of the imam’s governor in Samā’il; Abū al-Waḍḍāḥ and Mūsā b. ‘Alī were neither able to protect him nor stop the attackers, because they were both afraid of the *shurāt*.<sup>90</sup>

The *sīra* of Munīr b. al-Nayyir to Imam Ghassān b. ‘Abd Allāh (XXXVI) is considered one of the most important documents that describes the early *shurāt*. The author says:

Their opinions united on the strength of the truth and the rule of religion to recruit a force of three to four hundred *shurāt* leaders. We have been informed that some of these *shurāt* leaders were extremely pious people to the extent that they would return the surplus *dirhams* or the two *dirhams* of their expenditure to the treasury.

He comments on the changing of the *shurāt*:

After this first generation, others came later, claiming to follow the path of the *shurāt*, but they left the call of religion and proclaimed tribalism and adopted fanaticism amongst themselves. At the same time, the scholars were reluctant to oppose this trend, perhaps out of fear of them. Moreover, the *shurāt* led recruits who had not been approved by the Imam.

<sup>89</sup> *The History of al-Ṭabarī: Volume XXX; The ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate in Equilibrium*, trans. C.E. Bosworth (Albany 1989), 256; Al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad bin Yahya, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 356; al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:119; Sirḥān, ‘Annals of Oman’, 14; Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 185.

<sup>90</sup> Sirḥān, ‘Annals of Oman’ (translated by E.C. Ross in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* [1874]), 16; al-Sālimī, on the other hand, justifies why the imam did not condemn the killing: the imam might have either secretly instructed the *shurāt* to kill the man in order to avoid publicizing the involvement of the imam in this incident, or the murderer might have committed this killing because he knew he had the right to do so; see *Tuhfa*, 1:124.

These statements show the transformation of the *shurāt*'s affairs, and how criticism and disapproval caused the change in the *shurāt*. One practical effect seen in these accounts is the encroachment of the *shurāt* on the imam's authority, and how in the course of time fanaticism and dogmatism had appeared, especially when Imam al-Ṣalt was dismissed from the imamate. Imam al-Ṣalt describes the events (LXVI) saying that he commanded the *shurāt* and all those concerned, such as the soldiers, to fight, but they refused, and then he ordered them to proceed. They lagged behind and discipline became so weak that al-Ṣalt became afraid of the potential for violence between the soldiers and the people, and the threat of war and bloodshed. He adds that this was the reason why he had to move to his son's house without leaving the imamate. Wilkinson's hypothesis concerning the *shurāt* and the military power of the imamate may be correct. Since, in theory, the imam and his community are indissolubly bonded by a divine contract to support one another, it is the duty of the Muslims to obey their leader in the call to arms. Because the military capacity of the community is always at the imam's disposal, he has no need of a standing army; indeed, he is not permitted to have one.<sup>91</sup>

In 272/885, Oman went through a period of turmoil that led to the collapse of the imamate after the departure of Imam al-Ṣalt from the Imamate (LXXXI). Abū Qaḥṭān outlines the reasons that led to the collapse of the state of the Omani imamate (LXVI): 'In this state, there were people and youths with no piety, outwardly showing faith but concealing the love of life, and they displayed their religion for the sake of their life'. Omani tribal solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyya*) became involved in the issue, which turned into tribal schism and dogmatism, and then into five civil wars, until they themselves caused the downfall of their state, since the northern tribes were backed by the Abbasid governor in Bahrain, Muḥammad b. Nūr (Thūr or Būr?). The war and the imamate ended when Imam ʿAzzān b. Tamīm was killed in 280/885.<sup>92</sup> The *ʿulamāʾ*, the (legislative authority), were losing control, without being aware of the manipulation undertaken by

<sup>91</sup> Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement*, 140.

<sup>92</sup> *The History of al-Ṭabarī: Volume XXXVIII; The Return of the Caliphate to Baghdad*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 10; Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī al-Nashībī, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, edited by J.H. Kramers, (Leiden 1938–9), 38; al-Iṣṭakhrī, Abū Ishāq, *al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik*, edited by M.J. de Goeje, (Leiden 1870), 26. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *Tārīkh al-mustabṣir*, edited by Löfgren (Leiden 1951–4), 2:281; al-Sālimī, *Tuhfā*, 1:257. For an analysis of tribal affairs in the physical geography of Omani community structure, cf. Wilkinson, *Water and Tribal Settlement*, 137, 188.

tribal fanatics. Thus the relationship between the ‘*ulamā*’ and the tribal leaders was transformed. Al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī was the most prominent scholar backed by al-Ḥuddān and the northern tribes. Al-Faḍl (LXXXI) supported ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥawārī against Mūsā b. Mūsā, who had deposed Imam Rāshid b. al-Nazar. Furthermore, Mūsā b. Mūsā’s policy failed, because it was accepted by neither Imam Rāshid b. al-Nazar nor Imam ‘Azzān b. Tamīm. The civil war ended with the killing of al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawārī and Mūsā. It was really a conflict between the imams and the ‘*ulamā*’, in spite of the fact that all the imams of that period were controlled by the ‘*ulamā*’ and the tribal leaders.

As a consequence of this *fitna*, the ‘*ulamā*’ became divided over the theory of the physical nature of the imamate. The disagreement about deposing Imam al-Ṣalt b. Mālīk emerged as an extreme division between the moderate Nizwā and extreme Rustāq schools. The Nizwā school sought reconciliation over issues that had led to the crisis in the imamate at the end of the third/ninth century. The Rustāq school sought the legitimating of the Yaḥmad imamate by excommunicating the party that deposed Imam al-Ṣalt in 272/885. In the contemporary records of the Nizwā school, the outlines of the disputes appear in the *sīra* of al-Azhar b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far (LXXVI), and in the comments in the *sīra* of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Rawḥ (LXXVII); the main neutralist position is given in the *sīra* of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Nabḥān b. ‘Uthmān, who tried to sponsor the imamate of Abū al-Qāsim Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd Allāh. The views of both schools came from the second generation, who were Abū Muḥammad b. Baraka and his pupil Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī for the Rustāqīs, and Abū Sa‘īd al-Kudamī for the Nizwānīs. In the field of Ibādī technical legislation, the masters of both schools (Ibn Baraka and al-Kudamī) consolidated and improved the Ibādī Mashāriqa school by reforming its constitution.<sup>93</sup>

The geographers al-Iṣṭakhrī and Ibn Ḥawqal report that after the Abbasids destroyed the Omani state, the Omani Ibādīs moved to the interior of Oman, where they elected their own imam in Nizwā.<sup>94</sup> The importance of the ‘*ulamā*’ was to preserve Ibādī ideology, and to become pragmatic rather than dogmatic, transforming the imamate from *ḡubūr* to *difā* (defence). However, the alliance between both schools prevented any possible foreign intervention and the re-estab-

<sup>93</sup> See their book list; Al-Sālīmī, Abdullāh bin Humayd, *Al-Lum‘a al-Mardīya min al-ashī‘at al-Ibādīyya*, MNHC, Muscat, 1983.

<sup>94</sup> Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-ard*, 38; al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik*, 26.

lishment of the imamate. Abū al-Ḥawārī (LXXXIV) recounts how the Omanis revolted in the interior, where they were able to kill Baḥīrā, the deputy of Muḥammad b. Nūr. Moreover, Abū Qaḥṭān (LXVI) and Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Rawḥ (LXXVII) give a list of imams who were elected during this forty-year interregnum:

[The ‘*ulamā*’] elected to the imamate Rāshid b. al-Nazar twice, ‘Azzān b. Tamīm, al-Ṣalt b. al-Qāsim al-Kharūṣī twice, and al-Ḥawārī b. ‘Abd Allāh, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Ḥuddānī [known as Abū Sa‘īd al-Qurmatī]. Therefore, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Kharūṣī was elected as *shārī* imam in 280/893, but soon abdicated and resigned from the imamate, then al-Ḥawārī b. Muṭraf al-Ḥuddānī twice, ‘Umar b. Muḥammad b. Muṭarrif al-Ḥuddānī, Muḥammad b. Yazīd, al-Ḥakam b. al-Milā twice, and ‘Azzān b. al-Hizabr.

Unfortunately, they did not name them in chronological order. Muḥammad b. Rawḥ states that ‘the Omanis elected eight imams after Imam Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, although they elected some of them as *shirā*’ and some as *difā*’.<sup>95</sup>

Abū al-Muṭṭhir (LIX) does not know whether the imams mentioned in the above list were just or unjust imams; nor is there any evidence concerning those imams who had backing from either the Rustāq or Nizwā schools. They were more likely supported by the Nizwā school, since all the Rustāq *siyar* fail to list or praise them. Abū al-Muṭṭhir’s *sīra* (LXII) to Muḥammad b. Ja‘far questions why the latter allowed Imam ‘Azzān b. al-Hizabr to choose whether or not to fight, since he was an imam of *shirā*’ and therefore should have fought. In the course of this interregnum in the imamate, the consequent adoption by Imam ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Ḥuddānī (Abū Sa‘īd al-Qarmatī) of the Carmathian heresy was regarded by the ‘*ulamā*’ as just cause for his removal.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Sirḥān reports: ‘My own opinion is that none of the imams mentioned after al-Ṣalt b. Mālik were universally recognised by the people of Oman, and that their rule did not extend over the entire country. They were recognised in certain districts and not in others, by some of the tribes only, and not by all of them. For after the dissension which had arisen amongst them, the people of Oman had ceased to act in unison, and could not agree in the choice of an Imam’; Sirḥān, ‘Annals of Oman’, 25.

<sup>96</sup> See his details in al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:266; Sirḥān, ‘Annals of Oman’, 23; Ibn Ruzayq, *History of the Imams and Seyyids*, translated by Rev. G.P. Badger (Hakluyt Society 1871), 26. This imam (Abū Sa‘īd) followed the Carmathians, so al-Sālimī clarified the statute of this imam: ‘[The ‘*ulamā*’] elected him to the imamate before they discovered that he had left the Muslim faith and converted to the Carmathian heresy. The ‘*ulamā*’ then elected al-Ṣalt b. al-Qāsim to the imamate’; al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:266. See also the *sīra* of Abū al-Ḥawwārī: ‘We disassociate ourselves from

Until 320/939, the Omanis were united under Imam Abū al-Qāsim Saʿīd b. ʿAbd Allāh. Both the Rustāq and Nizwā schools were satisfied with his reign, and they formed an alliance. The restoration of the imamate had put great pressure on the Rustāq school to change their conceptions of the imamate; hence, they allied themselves with the Nizwā school, and this resulted in their preference for the pattern of elective imamate; thus this came to be the position of both Ibādī schools. With respect to the ʿulamāʾ in Oman, the election to the imamate of Abū al-Qāsim Saʿīd b. ʿAbd Allāh brought back the Ibādī ideology to Oman.

The ʿulamāʾ had developed the concept of *jabābira* (tyrant rulers) to describe outside influences or opposing foreign powers, and this concept gave rise to feelings of Omani nationalism.<sup>97</sup> The ʿulamāʾ presented the imamate as a vehicle for the unity of the people throughout this period. Abū al-Muʿthir ordered that houses belonging to followers of the Carmathians should be burnt down so they could not return.<sup>98</sup>

The domination of the Nizwā school is attested in Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī's account (LXXXVIII) of Imam Ḥafṣ b. Rāshid's war against al-Muṭahhar b. ʿAbd Allāh after he was elected twice to the imamate. Al-Sālimī concludes that it is possible that this imam had a negative attitude towards the Rustāq school, with its extreme dogmatism regarding Mūsā b. Mūsā and Rāshid b. al-Nazar.<sup>99</sup> If this statement is true, then the imam's authority would still need the approval of the ʿulamāʾ and their legislation. Occasionally, they produced *siyar* which were like *masāʾil* or *fatāwā* (legal opinions); they contain their comments and refutations regarding the nature and obligations of the imamate, as in the *sīra* by Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Manaḥī.<sup>100</sup>

In 407/1016, the Omanis were able to restore the imamate of *zubbūr*. However, there is a stark difference between the first and second imamates of Oman, in the sense that the second imamate could not re-establish the power of the first, due to lack of substantial resources. The essential role of the ʿulamāʾ had made them aware that the state required them to integrate with the tribal leaders, even if these leaders had committed sins. Abū ʿĪsā al-Sirrī justified this by

Abū Saʿīd al-Qarmaṭī, also from his associates, those who suspended judgment on him and those who doubt his allegiance'; *ibid.*, 1:269.

<sup>97</sup> Wilkinson, 'Water and Tribal Settlement', 139.

<sup>98</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:360.

<sup>99</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:317.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. the previous paper in the third period of the *siyar*.

arguing that the Imamate needs someone who has power and wealth, even if he is known to be a grave sinner. In cases such as this, scholars should bring the sinner forward and ask him to repent; if he does, then they may elect him as imam. Abū ʿĪsā provides proof of this by showing what the *ʿulamā* did when they elected al-Khalīl b. Shādhān. Regarding the necessity of integrating a new state, Imam Rāshid b. Saʿīd produced his manifesto in order to end the conflict between the Rustāq and Nizwā schools by declaring Rustāq dogma official.

It is clear from the *siyar* and the literature mentioned in the new stage of the imamate that the *ʿulamā* attempted to reconstruct the policy of the imamate and to legislate on the constitution of the imamate. This is evident in the following *siyar*: *Fī al-tawḥīd wa-al-imāma kayfa hiya*. *Fī al-farq bayna al-imām al-ʿālim wa-ghayr al-ʿālim*, and *Kitāb al-Imāma*. The finest example of this legislation can be seen in *al-Muṣannaḥ* by Abū Bakr ʿAbd Allāh b. Mūsā al-Kindī.<sup>101</sup> It is certain that all of the authors of these works were scholars of the Rustāq school. Some *siyar* show that the imam's policy and legislation had to be recommended by the *ʿulamā* throughout the imamate of Rāshid b. Saʿīd, as the *ʿulamā* had to appear to control the state.<sup>102</sup>

The relationship between imams and *ʿulamā* in the subsequent period of the second imamate seemed to suffer a breakdown. Three points serve as evidence of this.

1. In the *sīra* by Imam Rāshid b. ʿAlī (CII), the imam submits his repentance (which was more like a manifesto) for the manner in which he had excommunicated the judge Nijād b. Mūsā for his behaviour without the *ʿulamā*'s prior approval. This *sīra* also includes the *ʿulamā*'s acceptance of the repentance but also their approval of the excommunication. The evidence in this *sīra* suggests that discord recurred within the *ʿulamā* in controlling the policies of the imamate, as some of the *ʿulamā* opposed the imam. Al-Sālimī remarks that 'the Rustāq's party revolted against Imam Rāshid b. ʿAlī, and they also made an effort to depose him from the office of the Imamate. The heads of this party were Mūsā b. Nijād and Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Abī Jābir, who started the mutiny from Rustāq city.'<sup>103</sup> Increasingly, the clash within the *ʿulamā* developed into two rival factions: the *ʿulamā* of Jawf (in the interior of Oman), who tried to select their own

<sup>101</sup> Wilkinson presents the point of view of *K. Kanz al-adīb wa-sulāfat al-labīb* (a work probably of the second half of the eleventh/eighteenth century) by Sālim b. Saʿīd al-Sāʿighī (MS Cambridge Univ. Library [add 2896]); see J.C. Wilkinson, 'Ibādite Imams', *BSOAS* 39 (1976), 534–51.

<sup>102</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfā*, 1:312.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:321.

imam, and the *'ulamā'* who allied themselves with Imam Rāshid b. 'Alī. Eventually, the imam fought Mūsā b. Nijād, and the latter was killed in 496/1119.<sup>104</sup> This account of a scholar being murdered by an imam reminds us of the great *fitna* (civil war) in Oman in 275–80 AH.

2. Upon investigation of the time period of the *siyar*, it appears that there were several imams at the same time in the *'Umānī miṣr*, and that they controlled different regions of the country. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī discusses a case in which there were two imams in one *miṣr*, one in Tūwām and the other in Sohar.<sup>105</sup> Thus the Ibādī theory of state, namely that there should be one imam in each *miṣr*, began to change.<sup>106</sup>
3. The election of an imam depended on the candidate's affiliation with a certain school. This is evident in the *sīra* of al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī about Ḥafṣ b. Rāshid, and in the *sīra* of Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Umar. A third example is the debate in the *sīra* of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Nizwānī and his pupil Abū Bakr al-Kindī (CXVII), when the people of Nizwā refused to acknowledge the advice of the Rustāqī imam Muḥammad b. Abī 'Affān expressed in his *sīra* (CXIV). Another example is the local support of the Ghatafān in Bāṭina: they submitted their pledge to defend the imam in office (CXVIII). Some of the *'ulamā'* during this period seem to have been tribal leaders, and therefore controlled strong forces in the overall structure of the Imamate. This can be seen clearly in Nijād b. Mūsā's family. On examining the *siyar* closely, it can also be seen that there was interference between the tribal elements and the Rustāq school, perhaps as a result of the manner in which the imam was elected. In any case, during this period, Imam Rāshid b. 'Alī's conduct led to a split in the Rustāq party, but it would seem that other imams might have been present at the same stage. It is possible that one of these imams was Muḥammad b. Abī Ghassān.

Such situations led to the final clash at the end of this stage in 579/1183 between Imam Mūsā b. Abī al-Ma'ālī and Muḥammad b. Mālik b. Shādhān (the leader of Yaḥmad). This caused both the imamate and the school to split and be divided between the tribal leaders (CXIV). Al-Baṭāshī claimed that Muḥammad b. Mālik might have been an imam, and probably the last imam of this era.<sup>107</sup> If this

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 1:322.

<sup>105</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 2:191.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfa*, 1:336; al-Sālimī lists three imams of the second imamate who were not recognized: 'Āmir b. Rāshid b. al-Walīd al-Kharūṣī, who was elected to the imamate in 476/1083; Rāshid b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ghassān al-Kharūṣī who remained in the imamate for eight and a half years; and al-Khalīl b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. al-Khalīl b. Shādhān.

<sup>107</sup> Wilkinson, 'The Omani and Ibādī Background to the Kilwah Sīrah: The

suggestion is correct, then it is difficult to accept that both imams fought when Oman had already developed into a feudal system controlled by imams and tribal leaders, and the second imamate came to an end.

In this period, the struggle between the imams and the *'ulamā'* can be observed, first between Rāshid b. 'Alī and Nijād b. Mūsā and later between Abū al-Ma'ālī Mūsā and Muḥammad b. Mālīk, and it can also be seen that the Yaḥmad tribes were able to unite under the Banū Kharūṣ. However, at the same time, the Azd of 'Atīk became prominent. Thus it can be seen that there was a transfer of tribal leadership from the Azd of Yaḥmad to the Azd of 'Atīk. This was the first major change since the previous era began with the challenge to the authority of Julandā, and this heralded the appearance of the Nabhānī dynasty. A specific date for when this happened has not been identified. Perhaps this dynasty came into being with the feudal system in the latter half of the fifth/eleventh century and then gradually developed.<sup>108</sup>

In the following five centuries, Oman was controlled by the Nabhānī dynasty.<sup>109</sup> However, it should be realized that, as stated by Wilkinson, there was more than one Nabhānī family involved in the early history of this period. There is a period of at least 250 years for which there is no evidence that they ruled in Oman. Also, there seems to be no continuity between early and later Nabhānī history.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, this stage is characterized by a certain pattern of conduct in the relationship between rulers and religious scholars, now that the *'ulamā'* faced a dynasty that was both Omani and Ibādī. The *'ulamā'* had not faced such a situation since the end of the Julandānīs.

Tracing the historical development of Oman throughout this period is something of a puzzle. Miles gives an account of the end of the sixth/twelfth century and the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth. For forty years, there appears to be no rivalry between the

Demise of Oman as a Political and Religious Force in the Indian Ocean in the 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Century', in R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith (eds), *A Miscellany of Middle Eastern Articles in Memoriam Thomas Muir Johnstone 1924-1983* (Longman 1989), 272-305.

<sup>108</sup> See al-Baṭāshī, Sayf bin Humud, *Ithāf al-A'yān fī Tārīkh ba'd 'ulamā' 'Umān*, 1:390.

<sup>109</sup> For further information about the Nabhānī dynasty, see Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 212-18.

<sup>110</sup> Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 213. Wilkinson characterizes this age as 'the Ibādite dark age'; Wilkinson, 'Bio-Bibliographical Background to the Crisis Period', *Arabian Studies* 3 (1976), 155.

Nabhānīs and the Ibādīs.<sup>111</sup> For approximately two and a half centuries, the *'ulamā'* seem to have lacked the ability to elect an imam. Historical sources do not show any imams between 579–809/1183–1406. It was only in 809–32/1406–29 that the *'ulamā'* appointed Imam Mālik b. al-Ḥawārī (or al-Ḥawārī b. Mālik?).<sup>112</sup> Perhaps the Nabhānīs became rulers of a decentralized state system based on tribes and regions. Occasionally, the *'ulamā'* succeeded in electing several imams and controlling the interior of Oman.<sup>113</sup>

From this historical background, the relationship between the *'ulamā'* and the imamate can be clarified. In this stage, the subject matter of the *siyar* is based on political crises. For example, Abū Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. Mufarraj produced a *sīra* in 887/1482 confiscating the property of the Nabhānī family, since they were supporting tyrants who forcibly occupied people's properties. Following this situation in 917/1511, Imam Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl gave his own approval for confiscating the properties of the Nabhānīs. The crisis extended to confiscating the properties of the Rawāḥī tribe, since they had backed the Nabhānī leaders, Sulaymān b. Sulaymān and Muẓaffar b. Sulaymān, in their war against the imam in 909/1503.<sup>114</sup>

The *siyar* preserve valuable information about the relationships not only between the *'ulamā'* and the rulers, but also between the *'ulamā'* and the tribes. This can be seen, for example, in *sīra* (CXXIV), which supports Imam Abū al-Ḥasan b. Khamīs b. 'Āmir (839–46/1436–43) against the tribe of Yaḥmad. What is interesting is that there were also schisms within the *'ulamā'*, especially when Ibn Maddād produced his *sīra* excommunicating Imam Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (906–42/1500–35) and his son Imam Barakāt (942/1535). Some of the *'ulamā'* at this time wrote against this *sīra* in support of the imam and his son. The origin of the schism among the *'ulamā'* was the issue of selecting an imam for each school. This can be seen in the war of Bahlā castle between Imam Barakāt and Imam 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Qarn in 967/1560.

At the beginning of the eleventh/seventeenth century, a new era in Oman started, and a new union appeared as a national reaction to the political unrest, when the settled groups of central Oman united

<sup>111</sup> S.B. Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf* (London 1966), 135.

<sup>112</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:369; Sirḥān, 'Annals of Oman', 31.

<sup>113</sup> See the list of Omani imams in al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:274; Sirḥān, 'Annals of Oman', 24; Ibn Ruzayq, *History of the Imams and Seyyids*, cxxv.

<sup>114</sup> For more on these *siyar*, see the previous paper in the fourth period of *siyar*; see also al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:373.

under Imam Nāṣir b. Murshid al-Yaʿrubī. It is apparent that the Nizwā school maintained its moderate character and was able to eliminate the restrictive nature of the Rustāq school, and even flourished in the city of Rustāq itself. What is really distinctive in this series of events is the strong desire of the *ʿulamā* to construct and formulate an Islamic constitution for the imamate and to form a society based on an Islamic ideology.

### 3. Collaboration among the Ibāḍīs in Different Areas

This section offers an overview of the collaboration involved in the disputes among the Ibāḍī-ruled areas that the *siyar* record. The early inter-Ibāḍī relationships and their development will be discussed and this collaboration already covered in part through examining the *siyar* literature will be outlined. Wilkinson has extensively studied local *siyar* to highlight the early development of Omani Ibāḍīs in East Africa.<sup>115</sup> A similar approach is adopted here to examine the Ibāḍīs in Asia. The *siyar* are considered from three aspects: 1) the areas in which the Ibāḍīs were present, such as Iraq, North Africa, Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt, 2) the nature and relevance of Ibāḍism to the issues discussed, and 3) the development of Ibāḍī ideology in each area where the *siyar* documents and materials originate.

#### *Iraq*

The Ibāḍīs originated in Basra after they split from the extremist Khawārij. As a result of the emergence of Ibāḍī doctrines, the political organization of this new group contributed to the fragmentation of these communities. According to Ennami's list, it is clear that during this stage the Ibāḍī scholar Jābir b. Zayd produced and exchanged several letters and epistles with other early Ibāḍī scholars.<sup>116</sup> It is significant that Ibn Jaʿfar mentions in his *Jāmi* two epistles by Jābir (XV, XVI); the first is attributed to Jābir himself, and the second records his legal views. Perhaps these were written by his pupils; both seem to have been used in Oman in the early third/ninth century by the *ḥamalat al-ʿilm*.

<sup>115</sup> Wilkinson, 'Oman and East Africa: New Light on Early Kilwan History from the Omani Sources', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 6 (1981), 272–305; idem, 'Omani and Ibāḍī Background'.

<sup>116</sup> Ennami, 'A Description of New Ibāḍī Manuscripts from North Africa', *JSS* 15 (1970), 63. There are also seventeen letters by Jābir b. Zayd to his pupils belonging to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture, Muscat (9188–204).

The Ibādī strategy in Basra was to use the epistolary form to communicate with the members of the missionary network about their policies and doctrines. The epistles of Basra indicate that Abū ‘Ubayda advised his followers to continue their activities secretly (XIX); these activities seem to have been directed towards the local people of Basra. Some of the early Ibādī leaders emigrated to Basra (XX). These *siyar* reflect the fact that a more flexible policy existed throughout the period of *kitmān* (concealment). Nonetheless, during the revolts in Arabia towards the end of the 120s/740s, the demands of the Ibādīs outside Mesopotamia prompted Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib b. Mawdūd (XXIII) to order the Ibādīs to organize themselves. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Kindī, known as Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq (129–31/746–8), produced his epistle during the revolt he led in Arabia. The exact location of the drafting of this epistle is unknown; perhaps it was written in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa, as he did not go to the Hijaz. The religious committee of Basra was still controlling the revolt when A. Sufyān Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb in his *Kitab A. Sufyān* claims that the roots of ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā in the Yemen, of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam in *Maghrib* (North Africa) and al-Julandā b. Mas‘ūd in Oman were all organized by Abū ‘Ubayda.<sup>117</sup> The epistles provide detailed documentation of what was arranged in Basra when the imamate was in a state of concealment (*kitmān*). These arrangements are interesting, for it can be seen that later Ibādī history transformed their ideology in the *kitmān* period and used the *izāba* in North Africa.<sup>118</sup>

Since the development of early Ibādī doctrine has already been studied,<sup>119</sup> the study now focuses on how the early epistles of Basra were tailored to the different Ibādī areas. It can be seen that the proto-Ibādī policymakers of Basra influenced the Ibādī communities in two ways:

1. Responsiveness. The Basran policymakers highlighted the need for the Ibādī communities to implement suitable responses to events that arise unexpectedly. For example, Abū ‘Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd’s letter (XXVI) to the people of the Maghrib concerning the murder of al-Ḥārith b. Talīd and ‘Abd al-Jabbār orders the enforcement of the concept of suspended judgment (*wuqūf*) regarding their status between association (*wilāya*) and dissociation (*barā’a*).

<sup>117</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 2:265.

<sup>118</sup> *ET*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. ‘Ḥalkā’.

<sup>119</sup> Ennami, *Studies in Ibādism*, 126.

Perhaps Omani scholars (XXVII) were involved in the tribal crisis after the imamate of al-Julandā b. Mas'ūd had ended, since their authority was destroyed. The masters of Basra became involved in the community when they issued an order for the excommunication of the two tribal leaders, Qutayba b. Dirham and Sadūs b. Yūsuf, who worked in slave trading. For the Ibādīs of North Africa, although their state was founded by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustam, the question arose as to who should succeed him. At this time, the master of Basra was Rabī' (XXXIII), who supported the succession of 'Abd al-Raḥmān's son 'Abd al-Wahhāb against his rivals. The authenticity of this epistle is debated, and van Ess doubts that Rabī' intervened in this matter.<sup>120</sup> The North African scholars indicate that the recommendation of 'Abd al-Wahhāb for the imamate came when Abū 'Ubayda al-Jannāwnī sent his letter to the Imam (XXVIII). Regarding van Ess's point, one could agree with him, since Rabī' himself was a scholar rather than a politician. On the other hand, the Omani scholars needed a *fatwā* from Basra about Sa'īd b. Ziyād, who was their leader, when he burnt the property of opposing tribes. Despite the fact that Mūsā b. Abī Jābir was alive and was the leader of the Omani scholars, the *fatwā* came from Abū Ayyūb Wā'il b. Ayyūb, who considered Sa'īd b. Ziyād to be a tyrant.<sup>121</sup> It is obvious from these *siyar* that they were usually written to clarify Ibādī opinions on issues that resurfaced. The Ibādī parties were widely dispersed, but they were still controlled by the centre at Basra. Occasionally, the Basrans sent with each of their letters a delegation responsible for producing a solution to controversial issues, as can be seen in their letter to the Omanis (XXVII).

2. Obligation. Based on the survey of the early *siyar*, it can be seen that the concept of obligation was in use at the time of Abū 'Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib. The *siyar* are meant to illustrate the duty of each party. These epistles were usually written in an exhortatory style to instruct followers. They were directed at those who were the *arbāb ahl al-ḥall wa-al-'aqd*. Yet it is not known whether the masters of the Ibādīs in Basra dispatched their theological epistles as a matter of policy, or rather as counsel to their pupils. In any case, the theme of obligation is echoed in the *shurāt* system of the early Ibādīs, as is seen in

<sup>120</sup> Van Ess, *TG*, 2:199.

<sup>121</sup> Ibn Baraka, *Taqyīd*, 99.

the manifesto of Khalaf b. Ziyād al-Baḥrānī (XXX). Among the early Ibādīs, policy did not develop solely by the carriers of knowledge, but also by the *shurāt*, who were the soldiers of God. This can be seen in the early revolts in Yemen and Ḥaḍramawt, as well as in Oman.<sup>122</sup> The policy of these early Ibādīs was perhaps to develop their doctrine outside Basra via the *shurāt*, who were responsible for political organization, and also via the carriers of knowledge, who were responsible for holding and propagating doctrine. Proto-Ibādī leaders ordered *shurāt* to be vehicles for the support of the earliest revolts.<sup>123</sup> While the *shurāt* tended to appear in Arabia and Eastern Mesopotamia, in North Africa, revolution appears to have been under the control of the carriers of knowledge.

It is clear that a wide debate was held among the leading Ibādīs at the end of the second/eighth and the beginning of the third/ninth centuries. This debate concerned the relationship between the centre at Basra and the periphery, and the adjustments needed when the balance of power shifted in favour of the periphery. Both masters of Basra, Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl and Hārūn b. al-Yamān, submitted the judgments to the Omani imam al-Muhannā b. Jayfar. This debate divided the Ibādī followers in Yemen, Oman and Ḥaḍramawt.<sup>124</sup> Maḥbūb, on the other hand, left Basra for Oman, where the *Mashāriqa* were formed.<sup>125</sup> Thus they succeeded in making a base for the imamate in Oman and North Africa.

<sup>122</sup> On the *shurāt*'s role, see Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 184.

<sup>123</sup> For this case, see the accounts that the Basran masters sent back to Ḥaḍramawt's and Yemen's rebels, Abū Ḥamza al-Mukhtār b. 'Awf and Balj b. 'Uqba, which discuss whether it is true or not that Imam al-Julandā joined the revolution of Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq in the Yemen. The Basran masters also sent to Oman a group of *shurāt* to establish the first imamate of al-Julandā b. Mas'ūd. In the first imamate of *zuhūr* in North Africa, 'Abū 'Ubayda recommended to the imamate Abū al-Khaṭṭāb 'Abd al-'Alā' b. al-Samḥ who was from the Yemen.

<sup>124</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:158.

<sup>125</sup> There are two claims regarding Maḥbūb's immigration to Oman. First, it is said that he joined his father-in-law al-Rabī' when he left Basra (al-Kharāsīnī, Sa'īd b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb Fawākih al-'Ulūm fī tā'at al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm*, 1:242). Second, it is said that he immigrated later, after his debate with Hārūn. The second claim is more widely accepted, since the debate between the Ibādī leaders was in Basra at the time of Imam al-Muhannā (226–37/841–51). Most likely, he went to Oman with al-Rabī', and then returned to Basra, where he lived until the debate with Hārūn.

*The Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt*

The Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt adopted Ibādī doctrine, which perhaps was already flourishing as early as the first/seventh century. There is little or no evidence of this in the *siyar* documents, neither in early works such as the *sīra* of ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq (XXI), nor in the records of early missionaries. The Ibādīs were apparently never able to restore the imamate of *zuhūr* after the great Arabian revolt at the end of the Umayyad period; the imamate must have been destroyed with the revolt. Later, the Ibādīs of the Ḥaḍramawt probably founded the Imamate in the valley (*wādī*) of Da‘wān.<sup>126</sup> After the imamate was transformed from *zuhūr* to *difā’*, Ibādī revolutions occasionally occurred under the first Abbasids, when the Ibādīs were attacked by Ma‘an b. Zā‘ida, the governor of Yemen.<sup>127</sup> There was also an imam, Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd Allāh, who succeeded Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq in the Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt, but the Ibādīs dismissed him and chose instead Khanbash. Thus Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd Allāh’s case was under consideration in Basra, and likewise the affair of the imamate of Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān in Oman. It is probable that both of these men were unacceptable to the Ibādīs in both places, because they may have been replaced by the leaders of Basra, and they were not elected by the people of Oman, the Yemen, and the Ḥaḍramawt.<sup>128</sup> Wilkinson proposes that the Ibādī community of the Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt initially split from the Ibādī centre at Basra during the time of Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq.<sup>129</sup> Wilkinson’s suggestion regarding the schism among the Ibādīs in Basra (i.e. the affair between Hārūn and Maḥbūb) is acceptable. When Abū al-Mu‘arrij retreated from his Sha‘bīya stance, the proto Ibādī leaders were not satisfied with him. He had to go to Yemen and ask the Ibādī people to abandon Sha‘bīya doctrines and readopt Ibādism. Unfortunately, Abū al-Mu‘arrij died before arriving in Qidam.<sup>130</sup> Perhaps the

<sup>126</sup> Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 151.

<sup>127</sup> ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. ‘Abd al-Majīd states that Ma‘an arrived in Yemen in 140/757 (or 142/759?) and killed more than fifteen thousand from the Ḥaḍramawt, since many Ibādīs had remained after the battle of Qudayd (132/749); see ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. ‘Abd al-Majīd, *Bahjat al-zaman fi tārikh al-Yaman*, ed. Muṣṭafā Hijāzī (Beirut 1966), 20.

<sup>128</sup> Al-Shammākhī, *al-Siyar*, 1:83; al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:112. I assume that there were two imams named Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd Allāh, and that both of them were elected as imams of *difā’* in Ḥaḍramawt. The first was killed after defeating Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq’s revolt in Ḥaḍramawt. The second was the one whose case was under discussion by the leaders of Basra.

<sup>129</sup> Wilkinson, *Imamate Tradition*, 151.

<sup>130</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 2:25; Qidam is a place in the Yemen; see ‘Abd Allāh

Ḥaḍramis collaborated with the Omani imamate during the dispute, rather than the Yemenis. This hypothesis is supported by al-Kulandā b. al-Julandā's revolution. It is unknown whether he tried to support the Ibādīs or just occupy Yemen.<sup>131</sup>

Later, the Omani scholar Munīr b. al-Nayyir informed Imam Ghassān b. 'Abd Allāh (192–207/808–23) about the Ibādīs of Khurāsān and the Yemen.<sup>132</sup> This leads us to suppose that the Omani imamate had gradually encouraged the Eastern Ibādīs to submit to their authority. Furthermore, Wilkinson believes it is possible that the Ḥaḍramis opted for *difā'* rather than *shirā'*, and that this policy of the Ḥaḍramis made them more compliant with the Omani imamate.<sup>133</sup> It seems that this alliance appeared when the Ibādīs of Basra were engaged in theological polemics, ultimately splitting the Ibādīs of the Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt at the beginning of the third/ninth century. This was the beginning of a continuing trend of the Ḥaḍramis to follow the Omanis.<sup>134</sup> The imamate of Oman occasionally tried to expand its authority into Southern Arabia ever since the Omanis installed the imamate of al-Julandā b. Mas'ūd, who made a treaty with the inhabitants of the island of Socotra.<sup>135</sup> Additionally, they brought the territory of Mahra<sup>136</sup> under Omani control, and took possession of Socotra (LIII). When Maḥbūb's family moved from Basra to Oman, the Ibādī groups who followed his theological doctrines were drawn in turn to Oman, and they abandoned Basra. Wilkinson's hypothesis, therefore, may well be correct, since it links the concept of the state (*miṣr*) with the Ibādī circumstances in the Ḥaḍramawt, although in Islamic legislation the state should ideally be the *dār al-islām* itself. Since there was no geographical obstacle, such as a sea, between Oman and Ḥaḍramawt, they were regarded as a single, distinct *miṣr*. This is the case also because, as al-Mas'ūdī points out, the majority of people in the Ḥaḍramawt in 332/943 were Ibādīs.<sup>137</sup> Indeed, Ibādīs existed in the

b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam mā ista'jam*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā (Cairo, 1368/1949), 3:1052.

<sup>131</sup> Al-Barrādī, *al-Jawāhir al-muntaqāt*, 170.

<sup>132</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:247.

<sup>133</sup> Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, 157.

<sup>134</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuhfa*, 1:158.

<sup>135</sup> Al-Kindī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh, *al-Muṣannaf* (MNHC, Muscat, 1979–84), 11:145.

<sup>136</sup> *EP*, s.v. 'Mahra'.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Mas'ūdī, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, *Murūj al-dhahab*, edited and translated by C.B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille (Paris 1861–77). 6:67.

Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt until the ninth/fifteenth century.<sup>138</sup> The first *shārī* imam in Ḥaḍramawt, in the fifth/eleventh century, was Abū Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī. He tried to revolt against the Ṣulayhids. This was the last recorded revolt by the Ibādīs of the Ḥaḍramawt.<sup>139</sup> As al-Ḥāmid notes, the Ṣulayhids occupied the Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt; their occupation destroyed Ibādism, and consequently the Ibādīs in the Ḥaḍramawt were dispersed.<sup>140</sup>

Some details are given in the interesting letter sent by the people of the Ḥaḍramawt to Imam al-Ṣalt b. Mālik (237–72/851–86) and Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl, in response to the emergence of a schism with their imam of *difāʿ*, Aḥmad b. Sulaymān. They wanted to depose their imam (*sīra* L), so they submitted their case to the Omani imam and the *ʿulamāʾ*. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb replied, blaming the Ḥaḍramis themselves, and advising them to follow the Omanis' policy regarding the imamate. According to Abū al-Muʿthir's *sīra*, there was an imam of the Ḥaḍramawt named Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who was possibly the father of Aḥmad b. Sulaymān.<sup>141</sup>

In the following period, during the fourth/tenth century, when the Omanis were in an interregnum, the Ibādī leaders of the Ḥaḍramawt sent a message to Abū al-Ḥawārī (LXXXIV) in order to persuade him to approve the killing of Julandā's family during the first imamate.<sup>142</sup> The Julandānīs had brought about a debate not only among the Omanis but also among the Ḥaḍramis. Tribal factionalism may have been a subject of discussion among both Omanis and Ḥaḍramis, since the Julandānīs were originally a Yemeni tribe;<sup>143</sup> the Ḥaḍramīs were still concerned about their destiny. But from the middle of the fourth/tenth century onward, the balance of power changed in the Ḥaḍramawt due to the situation in Oman. This led to the development of a number of issues, three of which were addressed by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī, namely the acceptance of gifts from tyrannical rulers, the impression that most of the Omani leaders of the time were oppressors, and legislation concerning the Ḥaḍramis' inquiries about the issue of pawning property. The

<sup>138</sup> Al-Ḥāmid, *Tārīkh Ḥaḍramawt* (Jeddah, n.d.), 1:272.

<sup>139</sup> See Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Qays al-Ḥaḍramī's works *Mukhtaṣar al-khiṣāl* (Muscat 1984) and *Dīwān Sayf al-Naqqād* (Kuwait, n.d.).

<sup>140</sup> Al-Ḥāmid, *Tārīkh Ḥaḍramawt*, 2:403.

<sup>141</sup> *Al-Siyar wa-al-jawābāt*, 1:50.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:343.

<sup>143</sup> Al-ʿAwtabī, *Ansāb*, 1:246; Wilkinson, 'The Julandā of Oman', *Journal of Oman Studies* 1 (1975), 97–108.

documents reveal interesting aspects of the Ibādīs' position in the Ḥaḍramawt at the end of the fifth/eleventh century; these were given by Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd (d. 472/1079) in response to the need for an up-to-date policy for the people. Abū Zakariyā's epistle (CVIII) reveals the key points as he saw them:

Your message has mentioned: 1) your experience of oppression and tyranny, 2) the dominion of the people of doubt over the people of certainty, and 3) the rulers are tyrants and they demand fees on the property of the orphans.

Abū Zakariyā's response suggests that the Hadramis should practice *taqīya* (dissimulation), and he describes its laws and types: obligatory, permissible, and impermissible. He also recommends the use of metaphorical language (*wa-'alaykum bi-ma-'arīd al-kalām*) for rhetorical purposes. It should be borne in mind that this document is a letter, written during the time of Abū Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī's revolution in the Ḥaḍramawt. Their revolt was suppressed by the Ṣulayhids. The recipients of this letter were al-Nu'mān's brothers Aḥmad and Muḥammad, who were probably Da'ār princes in the city of Shibām.<sup>144</sup> Linking Aḥmad b. al-Nu'mān with the last Da'ār *amīr* Rāshid b. al-Nu'mān, who was killed in 605/1231, it is possible that Aḥmad was the grandfather of Rāshid. Abū Ishāq Aṭfiyash proposes that the Ibādīs in Yemen, after the debate of Maḥbūb and Hārūn, gradually began to follow the Zaydiyya,<sup>145</sup> but the end of the Ibādīs in the Ḥaḍramawt is still obscure. The correlation with the Yemenis seems to be indistinct, since the Omanis had lost contact with the Yemenis. But the Omani imams thus far had used Yemen as a base throughout their conflict, starting from the first half of the second/eighth century when al-Julandā b. al-Kulandā fought against the Abbasids.<sup>146</sup> Ibn al-Athīr further notes that during the second imamate, Hafs b. Rāshid, in his war with the Buyids, fled to the Yemen.<sup>147</sup>

### *North Africa*

From this brief discussion, it appears that the important relationship between North Africa and Oman began after Maḥbūb left

<sup>144</sup> Al-Ḥāmid, *Tārīkh Ḥaḍramawt*, 2:423.

<sup>145</sup> Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfa*, 1:157.

<sup>146</sup> Al-Barrādī, Abū Qāsim Ibrāhīm, *Al-Jawābir al-muntaqā fi mā akhalla bihi kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*, 170.

<sup>147</sup> Ibn al-Athīr 'Izz al-Dīn, *Al-Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, edited by 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najjār (Cairo 1348/1930–1349/1931), 7:58.

Basra and after the establishment of the imamate of *zuhūr* in Oman and North Africa. The essential aspect of this era of Ibādism is the rise of new schools, in both *fiqh* and theology, which have since been known as the *Mashāriqa* (the Eastern school in Oman and the Ḥaḍramawt) and the *Maghāriba* (the Western school in North Africa). Gradually, an altercation between the two new Ibādī factions was initiated by the Rustamid imam Aflaḥ b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (208–58/823–71) regarding the issue of the creation of the Qur’ān. The Ibādī schools probably addressed this matter after the *mihna*. Imam Aflaḥ (LVI) adopted the Mu‘tazilī view, and sent his monograph on the subject to Oman in order to refute the other party’s view. At this time, the debate about the createdness of the Qur’ān was in its early stages in Oman, and no specific doctrine had been agreed upon. The imamates of Oman and North Africa coexisted, but it is interesting to find in this letter that the Rustamid imam did not communicate directly with Imam Muḥannā in Oman; rather, he intended to make his theological position available to all Omanis. This material has not preserved any exchange between those imams before the end of both imamates at the end of the third/ninth century.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, on behalf of Imam al-Ṣalt b. Mālīk, replied to the people of North Africa (LI) regarding their question about imamate policy. This important document reflects the real development of Ibādī political views after the centre at Basra dispersed. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb influenced the legislative policy of the imamate since he had been involved in its foundation. The epistle replies to four issues concerning the imamate: 1) the imam’s authority, 2) the state’s boundaries, 3) the election to the imamate, and 4) the right of the people to elect an imam if they are a minority. Abū ‘Abd Allāh uses the state boundaries to determine the payment of taxes and alms, whereas he had been advised that the *zakāt* should not be collected until the authority holds sway over all the people and is able to protect them from oppression and aggression. If the state does not satisfy these conditions, the people should revolt, because the rulers would be considered tyrants.

Let us now look at this text in the light of the issue of collaboration. At first sight, it may seem that the imamate of the Rustamids still existed, though the sender was perhaps from Jabal Naffūsa or Tripoli rather than Tāhart. It might be asked why those people did not try to contact the Rustamid imams or the scholars. But there were several divisions in Jabal Naffūsa, namely the Nukkārīya, the

Naffāthiyya, and the Khalafīya,<sup>148</sup> who were unsure as to whether or not they should follow the Rustamid imams.

The other relevant text here is the *sīra* to Imam al-Ṣalt and the people of Oman. Its purpose is mainly to call the people of Oman to assemble. Internal evidence shows that it was written approximately at the beginning of the dispute concerning the dismissal of Imam al-Ṣalt from office. The *sīra* reminds them of the deniers (*nukkār*) who rejected the imamate of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. It compares them with the Julandānīs, their competitors over the state. Also, the letter preserves interesting records about the end of the Ibādī schism in Basra that was led by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Shu‘ayb b. al-Ma‘rūf, and ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī.

Both Ibādī imamates collapsed at the end of the third/ninth century, so this naturally led to the reform of the institution of the imamate. In this era, their policies became dissimilar. The Omani policy frequently attempted to restore the Imamate. In contrast, North Africa adopted the policy of concealment (*kitmān*).<sup>149</sup> The inference from this is that the birth of the *Mashāriqa* and the *Maghāribā* was influenced by Maḥbūb b. al-Raḥīl. During the formative period of these Ibādī schools, the *siyar* do not provide the necessary details to elaborate on their respective doctrinal systems, neither in theology nor *fiqh*.<sup>150</sup> The various Islamic schools of law, in which such diversity of doctrine was crystallized, are different yet inseparable aspects of the same unity. In this respect, the Ibādī schools’ endeavour was not to confine themselves to their particular local areas, but rather to expand extensively in legal practice. We may assert that the emergence of different constitutional policies in local Ibādī areas is significant enough to make a distinction between the two groups, since the *Mashāriqa* gave *fatwās* based on *ra’y*<sup>151</sup> (opinion), and their productions were with their own opinions (*āthār*), while the *Maghāribā* controlled *ra’y* in their legal formulations (*fiqh*).

North African lists name the compilations of the *Mashāriqa*, which include Omani *siyar*.<sup>152</sup> It can be seen in these that the influ-

<sup>148</sup> T. Lewicki, ‘Les Subdivisions de l’Ibādīyya’, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9 (1958), 71; Ennami, *Studies in Ibādīsm*, 249.

<sup>149</sup> *EP*, s.v. ‘Ḥalka’.

<sup>150</sup> It is possible to trace the relationship between their scholars in both schools; see *Oman in History* (London 1995), 235–48.

<sup>151</sup> *EP*, s.v. ‘Ra’y’.

<sup>152</sup> Al-Barrādī, *al-Jawāhir al-muntaqāt*, 281; Ennami, ‘A Description of New Ibādī Manuscripts from North Africa’, *JSS* 15 (1970): 63–87; van Ess, ‘Untersuchungen zu einiger Ibādītischen Handschriften’, *ZDMG* 126 (1976), 25–63.

ence of the Rustāq school was greater on the North African school than that of Nizwā. This state of affairs started from the time of Ibn Baraka, al-Bisyāwī, al-ʿAwtabī, Abū Bakr al-Kindī, and Ibn al-Nazar. This listing does not reflect the chain of transmission (*isnād*) of this tradition nor does it demonstrate the authenticity of their compilations in North Africa. It merely illustrates their doctrinal affiliation in theology and legal practice.

From the seventh/thirteenth century onwards, for four centuries during the dark ages of the Nabhānīs, the effect of the relationship on both sides is obscure, and is not reflected in the *siyar* literature. Much more significant in this doctrinal collaboration is the change of outlook of the *siyar* at the beginning of the eleventh/seventeenth century to reveal a direct relationship between both schools. So far, the conflict among the Ibādīs of North Africa, that is, between the people of Naffūsa and the Banū Muṣʿab (the Mazabīs), led them to refer in their problems to the Ibādīs in Oman.<sup>153</sup> At the same time, the Omanis were able to restore the imamate of the Yaʿāriba dynasty, and they advised the North Africans that they ought to follow their example and re-establish their imamate. The Ibādīs of the North African community, being scattered widely in isolated pockets along the northern border of the Sahara desert, submitted to the Omanis, who developed the institution of the imamate and became the centre of the Ibādīs. The birth of the Yaʿāriba drove the foreign Arab dynasties out of Oman, and the Portuguese out of the Omani and East African coasts, and started the modern history of the imamate.

### Summary

The history of the Ibādī schools going back to the early second/eighth century has been considered from the time when the movement started from Basra by Abū Shaʿthāʾ Jābir b. Zayd, through Abū ʿUbayda, until Maḥbūb. With respect to the transmission of knowledge from Basra to Oman, this developed gradually, starting with the Ibādī leaders themselves, then the *shurāt*, and finally the carriers of knowledge (*ḥamalat al-ʿilm*). Al-Kharāsīnī's accounts are correct in that the stages of Ibādī doctrine developed according to the Rāsibīs (ʿAbd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rāsibī), the Ibādīs (ʿAbd Allāh b. Ibād) and the Maḥbūbīs (Maḥbūb b. al-Rahīl).<sup>154</sup> After the decline in the cen-

<sup>153</sup> See al-Salimi, 'Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Siyar*', section 4B. Forthcoming.

<sup>154</sup> Al-Kharāsīnī, *Fawākih*, 3:135.

trality of Basra, the Omanis developed political relations with the Yemenis and the Ḥaḍramis, and tried to expand the role of the imamate and its influence under the concept of *miṣr*, in order to form the ideal state. The doctrines of Ibāḍī teachings developed in Oman and North Africa, and continued through collaboration and doctrinal works which were exchanged between the two sides, thus forming a unique Islamic school.