

Thematic Dossier

Formulating the Caliphate in the Islamic West: Umayyads, Ḥammūdid, and Almohads

Guest Editors

MARIBEL FIERRO AND PATRICE CRESSIER

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Introduction*

MARIBEL FIERRO

*Instituto de Lenguas y Culturas
del Mediterráneo-CSIC, Madrid*

(maribel.fierro@cchs.csic.es)

PATRICE CRESSIER

*Centre National de la
Recherche Scientifique*

(cressierpatrice@yahoo.es)

The 2014 proclamation of a new caliphate headed by Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī by the so-called Islamic State¹ sparked renewed interest in the history of the caliphal institution. In 2016, two books by renowned scholars appeared, offering a general overview of the subject addressed to both specialists and a larger audience.² Previous recent studies had focused on specific historical aspects, such as the presence of messianic trends in the caliphate's conception and the extent of the caliph's authority.³ The abolition of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 has also been a subject of analysis.⁴ That abolition—not the first one to happen in the history of Islam, as we shall see—caused special commotion among different sectors of the Islamic community, including Egyptian intellectuals who were re-thinking the place of Islam in the modern world, and Indian Muslims under British colonial rule.⁵ The abolition had less of an impact in the former North African Ottoman

* We want to express our deep gratitude to Antoine Borrut and Matthew Gordon for their invaluable help in editing this dossier.

1. M. Al-Rasheed, C. Kersten and M. Shterin (eds.), *Demystifying the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts* (Oxford, 2012); J.-P. Filiu, *From Deep State to Islamic State: The Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihadi Legacy* (London, 2015).

2. H. Kennedy, *Caliphate: the history of an idea* (New York, 2016); N. Mouline, *Le califat. Histoire politique de l'islam* (Paris, 2016).

3. Just two examples: H. Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam: The Abbasid Caliphate in the Early Ninth Century* (Columbia, SC, 2009); E. J. Hanne, *Putting the Caliph in his Place. Power, Authority and the Late Abbasid Caliphate* (Madison, NJ, 2007).

4. M. Naeem Qureshi, *Pan-Islam in British Indian Politics: A Study of the Khilafat Movement, 1918-1924* (Leiden-Boston, 1999); M. Hassan, *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: a Transregional History* (Princeton, 2016).

5. M. Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Rida's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 117(2) (1997), 253-277; John Willis, "Debating the Caliphate:



territories, which were also subjected to colonial rule. Morocco had resisted Ottoman expansion but was not spared colonial rule, and there caliphal symbolism was maintained by the presence of a “Commander of the Faithful” (*amīr al-Mu’minīn*), the ‘Alawī sultan,⁶ which served as a reminder of the long history of locally constructed caliphates. The Islamic West—corresponding to what are now Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, as well as the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus) and Sicily when they were under Muslim rule—in fact had its own peculiar caliphal history that has not received the attention it deserves and has not been fully integrated into the general study of the caliphate. The dossier presented here intends to remedy this situation by contributing to a future comprehensive history of the caliphates of the Islamic West.

The Islamic conquest and the initial formation of the Islamic societies of North Africa and al-Andalus occurred at the time when the Umayyad caliphs ruled from Damascus. The ‘Abbasids, following their rise to power in 132/750, were acknowledged as caliphs in Ifriqiya (modern-day Tunisia) even if the Aghlabids ruled autonomously, while in the extreme Maghreb the ‘Alid prince Idrīs I (r. 172/789-175/791) and his successors established an independent polity that provided the basis for a future foundational myth which supported the use of evidence of descent from the Prophet Muḥammad (Sharifism) to legitimize later Maghrebi polities.⁷

In al-Andalus, the Umayyad prince ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I (r. 138/756-172/788), having escaped Abbasid persecution, also managed to establish an independent emirate with Cordoba as its capital. Local autonomy reached its peak with the proclamation of the Fatimid imam-caliphs in Ifriqiya in the year 296/909⁸ and the subsequent proclamation of the Cordoban Umayyad caliphate in 316/929.⁹ The Fatimid move to Egypt after the foundation of Cairo in 358/969—which involved the transfer of corpses of the deceased imam-caliphs to be buried in the new capital—would eventually result in them loosening their control over North African territories and lead to the abandonment of Fatimid allegiance on the part of

Islam and Nation in the Work of Rashid Rida and Abul Kalam Azad,” *The International History Review* 32(4) (2010), 711-732.

6. J. Waterbury, *The Commander of the Faithful. The Moroccan Political Elite - a Study in Segmented Politics* (New York, 1970); Y. Belal, *Le cheikh et le calife: Sociologie religieuse de l’islam politique au Maroc* (Lyon, 2011).

7. H. L. Beck, *L’image d’Idrīs II, ses descendants de Fās et la politique sharīfienne des sultans marīnides (656-869/1258-1465)* (Leiden, 1989).

8. On the Fatimid caliphate in North Africa see F. Dachraoui, *Le califat fatimide au Maghreb (296-365H/909-975 JC): histoire politique et institutions* (Tunis, 1981); H. Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi. The Rise of the Fatimids*, transl. M. Bonner (Leiden, 1996); M. Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids. The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Tenth Century CE* (Leiden, 2001), and *The Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh, 2017).

9. On the Cordoban Umayyad caliphate see G. Martinez-Gros, *L’idéologie omeyyade: La construction de la légitimité du califat de Cordoue (X^e-XI^e siècles)* (Madrid, 1992); J. Safran *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); M. Fierro, *Abd al-Rahman III: The First Cordoban Caliph* (Oneworld, 2005).

their former representatives, the Zirids, who in 440/1048 proclaimed their obedience to the Abbasid caliph.¹⁰

During this period, the Ibādī communities in North Africa developed their own understanding of the imamate within a Khārijī conceptual framework that stressed election and egalitarianism: the leader of the community had to be chosen not because of his genealogy but because of his piety and knowledge. Internal schisms among the Ibādīs were frequent. In the case of the Ibādī Rustamid imamate of Tāhert, hereditary succession among the descendants of the *imām* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Rustam ibn Bahrām (of Persian origin although born in Qayrawan) ensured continuity until the defeat at the hands of the Fatimids (161/778-296/909).¹¹ On his part, the Ṣufrī Midrarid ruler of Sijilmasa—a Miknāsa Berber—minted coins in which he claimed the caliphate for himself.¹²

Umayyad collapse in al-Andalus after a succession crisis gave way to another caliphate, that of the Ḥammūdids, whose legitimacy was based both on their Idrisid (‘Alid) descent and their claim to the inheritance of the Umayyad caliphate.¹³ In Cordoba, the civil wars that ruined the town led to an unprecedented decision made by the notables of the town: the abolition of the caliphate in the year 422/1031.¹⁴

During the fifth/eleventh century, the Islamic West also confronted the issue of the imamate by paying allegiance to a caliph who was most often referenced as *al-imām ‘abd allāh amīr al-mu’minīn*. This was an ambiguous formula that could refer to the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, but could also be understood as acknowledging the “idea” of the caliphate without expressing much concern about who actually embodied it.¹⁵ The Almoravids—Ṣanhāja camel-drivers from the Sahara who founded the town of Marrakech in 463/1070—found it useful to resort to Abbasid legitimacy to support their rule in the empire they had managed to establish, which extended from the south of what is now Morocco to

10. On the Zirids see H. R. Idris, *La Berbérie Orientale sous les Zirides*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1959); M. Brett, *Ibn Khaldūn and the Medieval Maghrib* (Aldershot, 1999); A. Amara, *Pouvoir, économie et société dans le Maghreb hammadide (395-1004/547-1152)*, Ph.D. Thesis, Université Paris 1, 2003.

11. U. Rebstock, *Die Ibaditen im Magrib (2-8, 4-10 Jh): Die Geschichte einer Berberbewegung im Gewand des Islam* (Berlin, 1983); A. El-Ghali, *Les États kharidjites au Maghreb. II^e-IV^e s./VIII^e-X^e s.* (Tunis, 2003); A. Gaiser, *Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers: The Origin and Elaboration of the Ibadī Imamate Traditions* (New York-Oxford, 2010).

12. H. Kassis, “Coinage of an Enigmatic Caliph: The Midrarid Muhammad b. al-Fath of Sijilmasah,” *Al-Qanṭara* 9 (1988), 489-504.

13. M. D. Rosado Llamas, *La dinastía ḥammūdī y el califato en el s. XI* (Málaga, 2008); A. Ariza Armada, *De Barcelona a Orán. Las emisiones monetales a nombre de los califas ḥammūdīes de al-Andalus* (Grenoble, 2015).

14. D. J. Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West. An Islamic Political Institution in the Iberian Peninsula* (Oxford, 1993).

15. On this see Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West*; M. Fierro, “On Political Legitimacy in al-Andalus. A Review Article,” *Der Islam* 73 (1995), 138-150; F. Clément, *Pouvoir et légitimité en Espagne musulmane à l’époque des Taifas (v^e/xi^e siècle). L’imam fictif* (Paris, 1997); T. Ibrahim, “al-Imām ‘Abd Allāh on the Coinage of al-Andalus and the Maghrib al-Aqsa,” *Congresso Internazionale di Numismatica, Messina/Taormina, September 21-26, 2015*, https://www.academia.edu/16305297/_Al-Imam_Abd_Allah_on_the_coinage_of_al-Andalus_and_the_Maghrib_al-Aqsa.

the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁶ The division between an Almoravid emir who was a political and military leader, and the Maliki jurists who were in charge of the law proved to be a working solution for some time, but with increased taxation and military defeats, the Almoravids were soon challenged by the local judges who became rulers in a number of Andalusí towns—with some of them even claiming caliphal titles.¹⁷ They were also challenged by charismatic figures claiming the imamate according to a model closer to Shi‘ism than to Sunnism.¹⁸

One such charismatic figure was the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart, a Mašmūda Berber from the mountains of southern Morocco who united his and other tribes by preaching his own understanding of God’s unity (*tawḥīd*). The “Unitarians” (*al-muwaḥḥidūn*) under his leadership and that of his successor, ‘Abd al-Mu‘min, constituted a powerful army that brought about for the first time the political unification of the Islamic West (North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula) under a caliphal dynasty, that of the Mu‘minids. Its founder, ‘Abd al-Mu‘min, was a Zanāta Berber who claimed Arab descent for himself.¹⁹ The Almohad caliphate lasted from 524/1130 to 668/1269. Mahdism, violence, and religious coercion characterized its early history, including attempts to convert all those living under Almohad rule to the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart’s doctrines on Divine unity and anti-anthropomorphism.²⁰ The establishment of the Mu‘minid dynasty led to new developments: the construction of a highly centralized and efficient state that symbolized God’s order (*amr Allāh*), the creation of new religious and intellectual elites whose training included philosophy, and many other innovations.²¹ Although increasing attention is being paid to these and other Almohad

16. V. Lagardère, *Les Almoravides jusqu’au règne de Yūsuf b. Tashfin (1039-1106)* (Paris, 1989); A. K. Bennis, *The Almoravid and Almohad Empires* (Edinburgh, 2016).

17. M. Fierro, “The qādī as ruler,” *Saber religioso y poder político. Actas del Simposio Internacional (Granada, 15-18 octubre 1991)* (Madrid, 1994), 71-116.

18. On such figures see M. García-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdis of the Muslim West* (Leiden, 2006).

19. A. Huici Miranda, *Historia política del imperio almohade*. 2 vols. (Tetouan, 1956-7, repr. with preliminary study by E. Molina López and V. Oltra, 2 vols. Granada, 2000); P. Guichard, “Les Almohades,” in J.-C. Garcin (ed.), *Etats, sociétés et cultures du monde musulman médiéval, X^e-XV^e siècle*, Nouvelle Clio, 3 vols. (Paris, 1995-2000), vol. I, 205-232; A. J. Fromherz, *The Almohads: the Rise of an Islamic Empire* (London-New York, 2010); M. Ghourigat, *L’Ordre almohade (1120-1269): une nouvelle lecture anthropologique* (Toulouse, 2014). On the genealogy of the Almohad caliphs see M. Fierro, “Las genealogías de ‘Abd al-Mu‘min, primer califa almohade,” *Al-Qanṭara* XXIV (2003), 77-108.

20. A. Kaddouri, *Mahdisme. Crise et changement dans l’histoire du Maroc. Actes de la table ronde organisée à Marrakech par la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Rabat du 11 au 14 Février 1993* (Rabat, 1994); Y. Benhima, “Du *tamyīz* à l’*i’tirāf*: usages et légitimation du massacre au début de l’époque almohade,” *Annales Islamologiques* 43 (2009), 137-153; M. Fierro, “Conversion, Ancestry and Universal Religion: the Case of the Almohads in the Islamic West (Sixth/Twelfth–Seventh/Thirteenth centuries),” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2/2 (2010), 155-173.

21. ‘I. ‘U. Mūsā, *Al-Muwaḥḥidūn fī l-gharb al-islāmī tanzīmātuhum wa-naẓmuhum* (Beirut, 1411/1991); P. Buresi and H. El Allaoui, *Governing the Empire: Provincial Administration in the Almohad Caliphate (1224-1269)* (Leiden, 2012); É. Fricaud, “Origine de l’utilisation privilégiée du terme *amr* chez les Mu‘minides almohades,” *Al-Qanṭara* XXIII (2002), 93-122; É. Fricaud, “Les *ṭalaba* dans la société almohade (le temps d’Averroés),”

practices and doctrines in a collective effort that will eventually lead to updated syntheses, we will still have to wait years until we have at our disposal the results of the research that is now being carried out, for example, in Igilliz (Ibn Tūmart's birthplace).²² Some Almohad caliphal rituals and ceremonies have also been studied;²³ this field of research will eventually reveal much more to us about the Almohad and the other caliphates.²⁴

With the collapse of the Almohad caliphate, new polities emerged—those of the Marinids in Morocco, the Abd al-Wadids in Algeria, the Hafsids in Tunisia, and the Nasrids in Granada—each of which differently “digested” the caliphal absence after the disappearance of the Muʿminid dynasty.²⁵ Caliphal claims were occasionally made by some of those rulers, but with the exception of the Hafsids for a brief period, these claims were made *sotto voce*, more by suggestion than by explicit and sustained proclamation. The case of the “Nasrid caliphate” is of special interest since it departed from traditional political doctrine (the caliph had to be from Quraysh) and its local adaptation (the Almohad caliphs had claimed a Qays ʿAylān genealogy), by claiming an Anṣārī (Yemeni) genealogy.²⁶

The Ottoman conquest of most of North Africa and the Christian conquest of the Nasrid kingdom stopped possible new developments. Only Morocco maintained both its independence—at least until the 20th century—and its concern for caliphal legitimacy under

Al-Qanṭara XVIII (1997), 331-388; J.-P. van Staëvel, “L’art almohade fut-il révolutionnaire?,” *Perspective. Actualité en histoire de l’art* 2 (2017), 81-102.

22. J.-P. van Staëvel, A. S. Ettahiri and A. Fili, “Nouvelles recherches archéologiques sur les origines de l’empire almohade au Maroc: les fouilles d’Īgīlīz,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 2013, 1109-1142; J.-P. van Staëvel, “La foi peut-elle soulever les montagnes ? Révolution almohade, morphologie sociale et formes de domination dans l’Anti-Atlas et le Haut-Atlas (début XII^e s.),” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 135 (2014), 49-76.

23. A. K. Bennison, “The Almohads and the Qurʾan of ʿUthmān: The Legacy of the Umayyads of Cordoba in Twelfth-century Maghrib,” *Al-Masaq* 19/2 (2007), 131-154; P. Buresi, “Les cultes rendus à la tombe du Mahdī Ibn Tūmart à Tinnāṣ,,” *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. Comptes Rendus des séances de l’année 2008. Janvier-Mars*, Paris, 2008, 391-438; P. Buresi, “Une relique almohade: l’utilisation du Coran (attribué à ʿUṭmān b. ʿAffān) de la Grande Mosquée de Cordoue,” *Oriente Moderno* LXXXVIII-2 (2008): 297-309; T. Zadeh, “From Drops of Blood: Charisma and Political Legitimacy in the Translation of the ʿUthmānic Codex of al-Andalus,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 39/3 (2008): 321-46; M. Ghouirgate, “Comment se comporter avec un roi chrétien: l’ouvrage perdu d’Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibn al-Qaṭṭān et les enjeux du cérémonial almohade,” *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 138 (2015) version online <https://remmm.revues.org/8587>.

24. See some of the studies collected in A. K. Bennison (ed.), *The Articulation of Power in Medieval Iberia and the Maghrib* (Oxford, 2014), Proceedings of the British Academy, 195; M. Fierro, “Rituals and the Ruler in the Medieval Islamic West: The Ismaili-Fatimid Legacy,” in O. Mir-Kasimov (ed.), *Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: the Ismaili Thread*, forthcoming. Of special relevance are the studies of historical anthropology by J. Dakhliā such as *Le Divan des Rois. Le politique et le religieux dans l’Islam* (Paris, 1998).

25. R. Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Ḥafṣides, des origines à la fin du XV^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1940-1947); A. Dhina, *Les états de l’Occident musulman (XIII^e, XIV^e et XV^e siècles)* (Algiers, 1984); A. Khaneboubi, *Les premiers sultans mérinides, 1269-1331. Histoire politique et sociale* (Paris, 1987); M. Shatzmiller, *The Berbers and the Islamic State. The Marīnid Experience in Pre-Protectorate Morocco* (Princeton, 2000).

26. M. J. Rubiera, “El califato nazarī,” *Al-Qanṭara* XXIX (2008), 293-305; M. Fierro, “The Anṣārīs, Nāṣir al-dīn, and the Naṣrids in al-Andalus,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 32 (2006), 232-247; B. Boloix, “The Genealogical Legitimization of the Naṣrid Dynasty: the Alleged Anṣārī Origins of the Banū Naṣr,” in Bennison (ed.), *The Articulation of Power in Medieval Iberia and the Maghrib*.

the umbrella of the political and religious ideology constituted by Sharifism, which was at work both under the Saʿdids and the ʿAlawis and continues today.²⁷

This brief summary reveals that we have at hand some peculiar developments: an early abolition of the caliphate; the foundation of an Ismaili polity—the Fatimid caliphate—led by imam-caliphs; the emergence of a “Berber” caliphate—that of the Almohads—that combined Sunni and Shiʿi models in novel ways²⁸; and the maintenance of a local caliphate in Morocco built upon Sharifism, the latter ideology acting as a form of Shiʿism under the reins of Sunnism. These original peculiarities are little known outside the sphere of North African and Iberian studies, as shown for example by their limited coverage in a recent compilation of studies in English on the caliphate.²⁹ Scholarship in French and Spanish offers a more extensive and inclusive overview; this is also partly the case in Arabic scholarship, although here the pressure from political and religious ‘orthodoxy’ often involves interpretative constraints.³⁰

In 2015-2016 a project entitled *Los califatos del Occidente islámico/Les califats de l’Occident islamique* (The Caliphates of the Islamic West) was carried out under the sponsorship of two European institutions, the French Casa de Velázquez and the Spanish Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), and under the direction of Patrice Cressier and Maribel Fierro. Two seminars and a course were organized,³¹ a number of research papers were written by students in their final year or for their MA Thesis,³² and

27. St. Ch. Cory, *Reviving the Islamic Caliphate in Early Modern Morocco* (Surrey, 2014); St. Cory, “Sharīfian Rule in Morocco (Tenth-Twelfth/Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries),” in M. Fierro (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. II, *The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2011), 451-479; N. Mouline, *Le califat imaginaire d’Ahmad al-Mansūr. Pouvoir et diplomatie au Maroc au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 2015).

28. As explored by ʿA. al-Idrīsī, *al-Imāma ʿinda Ibn Tūmart: dirāsa muqārana maʿa l-imāmiyya al-ithnā ʿashariyya* (Algiers, 1991), and M. Fierro, “The Almohads and the Fatimids,” in B. D. Craig (ed.), *Ismaili and Fatimid Studies in Honor of Paul E. Walker* (Chicago, 2010), 161-175.

29. C. Kersten (ed.), *The Caliphate and Islamic Statehood - Formation, Fragmentation and Modern Interpretations*, 3 vols. (Berlin-London, 2015).

30. To our knowledge no comprehensive monograph on the issue of the Maghribi caliphal experience has been written in Arabic, and extant studies tend to concentrate on political history.

31. The first Seminar took place on November 6 2015 <https://www.casadevelazquez.org/es/investigacion/novedad/los-califatos-del-occidente-islamico-1/>, and the second on June 20 2016 <https://www.casadevelazquez.org/es/investigacion/novedad/los-califatos-del-occidente-islamico-3/>, both at the Casa de Velázquez (Madrid). Members of the project collaborated in a course organized by Prof. Santiago Palacios, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, April 4-15 2016, *Los califatos desde los sucesores de Muhammad al Estado Islámico*: http://www.uam.es/ss/Satellite/es/1242652866332/1242693243668/cursocortaduracion/cursosCortaDuracion/Los_Califatos,_desde_los_sucesores_de_Muhammad_al_Estado_Islamico.htm

32. A. Arroyo Herrero, *Introducción al estudio de la obra del cadí Nuʿmān (s. IV / X), al-Manāqib wa-l-Maʿālib*, Trabajo Fin de Grado, Universidad de Salamanca, September 2015; D. Bercito, *A Paper Caliphate. Understanding the Islamic State through its Documents*, Trabajo Fin de Máster (Máster en Estudios Árabes e Islámicos Contemporáneos-UAM), June 2015 (now published in *Malala* (Brasil) 5 (2017), 68-88); A. Peláez, *El califa ausente. Cuestiones de autoridad en el siglo XI en al-Andalus*, Trabajo Fin de Máster, Máster Universitario

collaboration was established through the organization of a conference on the Fatimids and Umayyads.³³ The present dossier and the five papers it contains are the fruit of an ongoing project that aims to analyze the links of the caliphates of the Islamic West both in relation to one another, and with the caliphates of the rest of the Islamic world in terms of representation and self-representation, political ideology, legal systems, iconography, and architecture.

The five contributions included here treat three of the Western Islamic caliphates: the Umayyad, the Ḥammūdīd and the Almohad,³⁴ with the latter receiving the lion's share of attention (Jan Thiele, Javier Albarrán, and, indirectly, Pascal Buresi). This reflects the fact that in the last two decades—and despite previous neglect—the Almohad state has generated renewed interest that honors the originality and broad implications of Almohad history. The authors of the five contributions have different backgrounds (philology, history, Arabic and Islamic studies) and interests (intellectual history, political history, numismatics) and thus illustrate the variety of perspectives from which the caliphates of the Islamic West are presently being studied. New layers of understanding from different disciplines will lead to more comprehensive and unitary treatments in the future.

The common thread among the contributions is that they deal with the ways in which the Western caliphates were represented or represented themselves. Knowledge, *jihād*, and coins were crucial elements in this representation, and they constitute the axes around which the studies included in this dossier revolve.

As political and religious leaders of their communities, caliphs needed to convince their people of their special mission, and this included the Sunni caliphs who claimed less religious authority than the Shi'ī imam. This made knowledge of paramount importance, and it was not uncommon for caliphs to sponsor scholars in order to promote the writing of works. Although there is no direct evidence that this was the case with the Cordoban Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940) and his *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* (*The Unique Necklace*), Isabel Toral-Niehoff makes a convincing case for firmly placing this composition within the context of the caliphal court. A compilation frequently quoted for its wealth of *adab* materials, but seldom studied *per se*, *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* is here revealed to be yet another example of encyclopaedism. Encyclopaedism is often inextricably linked to imperial aspirations, in the sense that a cultural practice that aims to embrace all human knowledge within a limited work parallels a political construction where diverse territories and their peoples are under the control of a dominating power and culture. What makes *al-ʿIqd al-farīd* even more interesting is that Cordoban Umayyad imperial ambitions had to rely heavily on a culture produced elsewhere, that is, in Abbasid Iraq. Thus, under the renewed Umayyad caliphate whose capital was now in Cordoba, al-Andalus continued its long process of cultural “Orientalization.” This had

en Estudios Medievales Hispánicos, UAM, 27/09/2016, now published: A. Peláez, *El califa ausente: cuestiones de autoridad en al-Andalus durante el siglo XI* (Madrid, 2018).

33. *Fatimids and Umayyads: Competing Caliphates* <http://iis.ac.uk/fatimids-and-umayyads>, September 23-25, 2016 at the Institute of Ismaili Studies (London), organized by M. Ali-de-Unzaga, P. Cressier, F. Daftary and M. Fierro.

34. The studies related to the Fatimid caliphate will appear in the book resulting from the international conference *Fatimids and Umayyads: Competing Caliphates*.

deep implications with regard to the construction of a cultural memory and identity which was not extensively rooted in the local context.³⁵ The Iberian Peninsula thus appears as a periphery eager not only to connect itself to a globalizing religious and literary culture, but to appropriate that culture in an effort to re-center Islamdom.³⁶

The Almohads were bolder in transforming the periphery into a center by turning the Maghrib into a new Hijaz. Of paramount importance in this move—whose roots had been developed under the preceding imperial power, i.e., that of the Almoravids, as highlighted by Pascal Buresi—was the fact that the Almohad movement had been launched by a charismatic, impeccable, and rightly guided figure, the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart. Thus, the knowledge the Almohads possessed was of higher kind than that claimed in the past by the Cordoban Umayyads. Jan Thiele reminds us that the Almohads imposed on their subjects the Mahdī Ibn Tūmart’s creed, which had to be memorized and followed, thus departing from standard Sunni practices that allowed many creeds to co-exist. Theological knowledge that conveyed certitude (because it had been formulated by a Mahdī) was one of the assets that the Almohads offered in their totalizing political and religious project. However, even if they tried to control the belief system, they did not in fact succeed in eliminating previous theological views, and even new creeds were written under their rule. In analyzing the Ash‘ari creed by Abū ‘Amr al-Salālijī (d. 564/1169, 574/1179 or 594/1197–8), Jan Thiele shows its dependence on the thought of al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085). His study also offers new insights that allow for a more precise understanding of both Ibn Tūmart’s creed and its links with Mu‘tazilism and Ash‘arism, and the limits of the Almohad “revolution.” For a scholar who worked for some time in the Almohad court, al-Salālijī does not seem to have suffered any persecution for reminding his readers that infallibility or impeccability was limited to the prophets—thus excluding Ibn Tūmart and his representation as *al-imām al-ma’sūm al-mahdī al-ma’lūm*—and that Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī were the rightly guided caliphs and imams (*fa-hum al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn wa-al-a’imma al-mahdiyyūn*), a characterization that the Almohad caliphs tried hard to associate with themselves in various ways.

Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih wrote a poem celebrating the military campaigns of the Cordoban Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. This speaks to the effort by the Almohad caliphs in sponsoring books that memorialized the Prophet’s military expeditions and conquests that led, in turn, to the Islamic empire under the rule of the four rightly guided caliphs. Javier Albarrán—after offering an overview of the role played by *jihād* in the political legitimization of the caliphs, highlighting in particular the case of the Cordoban Umayyad

35. On this issue the standard studies are M. ‘A. Makkī, *Ensayo sobre las aportaciones orientales en la España musulmana y su influencia en la formación de la cultura hispano-árabe* (Madrid, 1968), and J. Ramírez del Río, *La orientalización de al-Andalus: Los días de los árabes en la península ibérica* (Sevilla, 2002). On the relationship to the pre-Islamic past see J. Gómez de Caso Zuriaga, “La cultura islámica medieval ante los restos del mundo clásico hispano,” in L. A. García Moreno, E. Sánchez Medina and L. Fernández Fonfría (eds.), *Historiografía y representaciones. III Estudios sobre las fuentes de la conquista islámica* (Madrid, 2015), 233–285, and J. Elices Ocón, “El pasado preislámico en al-Andalus: fuentes árabes, recesión de la antigüedad y legitimación en época Omeya (siglos VIII-X),” Ph.D. Thesis Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2017.

36. Of special interest along these lines is the dossier on *Le polycentrisme dans l’Islam médiéval : les dynamiques régionales de l’innovation* published in *Annales islamologiques* 45 (2011),

caliph ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III—explores how caliphal *jihād* and the memory of the first battles of Islam served Almohad needs.

Ibn Tūmart and the first Almohad caliph had fought against the *kuffār*, which they identified largely with the Almoravids and those who acknowledged their rule and religious beliefs. Their successors emphasized the importance of the figure of the “ghāzī-caliph”—he who personally conducts *jihād* against the enemies of God—through magnificently staged parades, epigraphic reminders, and the commission of works on *jihād*. A chapter on this topic—added to the *Kitāb* attributed to Ibn Tūmart—was alleged to have been written by the second caliph, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf, who also ordered Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185) to compose a poem inciting holy war. Albarrán pays special attention to the case of Ibn Ḥubaysh (d. 584/1188), who in his *Kitāb al-ghazawāt* concentrated on the conquests organized by the *rāshidūn* caliphs Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. He points out that “Ibn Ḥubaysh’s work joins a discursive tradition that looks at the past from the present moment and seeks to legitimize itself through the production and reproduction of the memory of early Islamic times and the symbolic capital that this historical period contained,” thereby establishing a direct connection between the origins of Islam and their self-presentation as its restorers. Ibn Tūmart reminds us of the Prophet while the *rāshidūn* resemble the first Almohad caliphs—an equation that was not new, as Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940) had done the same with the Umayyads of Damascus and Cordoba in his *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*. Albarrán explains that the absence of ‘Alī in Ibn Ḥubaysh’s work was motivated by the fact that ‘Alī’s rule was associated with a narrative of *fitna*, of civil war or conflict within the Islamic community, in conjunction with the fact that by the time the work was written, the Almohads were already emphasizing their links with Cordoban Umayyad legitimacy.

Before the Almohads, the Almoravids had also emerged as champions of *jihād*. In fact, their need to legitimize such practice in the eyes of the Andalusis had led the Almoravids, according to one source, to acknowledge the Abbasid caliphate: only on the orders of a legitimate imam, the Andalusis had claimed, could war be considered *jihād*.³⁷ The renunciation to guide the community they ruled over as imams was made explicit by the Almoravid adoption of the title “Commander of the Muslims” (*amīr al-muslimīn*), another indication of the political and religious resourcefulness of the non-Arabs—in this case, Berbers—when they assumed a political power that they had initially been denied. The corrective made by the Andalusis regarding Almoravid *jihād* could be understood as one way in which the Andalusis—who had been acculturated to normative Islam since much earlier than the Berber populations of the extreme Maghreb (*al-maghrib al-aqṣā*) such as the Saharan Ṣanhāja and the Maṣmūda of the Sūs—sought to integrate the new rulers into their own worldview. The portrayal of the Almoravid experience as that of an imperial power that had emerged in a tribal context but had to cope with al-Andalus allows us to better understand how and why the Almohads departed from such experience through a complex combination of change and continuity, as discussed by Pascal Buresi.

37. M. J. Viguera, “Las cartas de al-Gazālī y al-Ṭurṭūṣī al soberano almorávid Yūsuf b. Taṣufīn,” *Al-Andalus* XLII (1977), 341-374.

The number of mints under the Almoravids was proof not of the weakness of the central government but rather, according to Buresi, of its de-centralized method of managing the administration. After the disappearance of the Ḥammūdids in the second half of the fifth/eleventh century, the Almoravids took control of the mines in central and southern Maghreb that had provided silver to previous rulers.

In her discussion of their coinage, Almudena Ariza Armada points out that certain innovative features of the monetary system of the Ḥammūdīd caliph Idrīs II recall specific features of Almoravid currency. She also offers new insights into the amount of power wielded by the Ḥammūdīd caliphs, the extent of their rule, and the steps they took to legitimize it. On the one hand, there was the clever fusion between the Umayyad Sunni tradition and its Shi‘ī counterpart, which favored their acceptance as caliphs both in Sunni al-Andalus and in the Maghreb where Shi‘ī trends were stronger. On the other hand, at a certain point it seemed necessary to emphasize the Sunni aspect, and Idrīs II adopted the title “Emir of the Muslims” and the Qur’anic quotation 3:85 (“Whoso seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him and in the world to come he shall be among the losers”), both of which would be later employed by the Almoravids.³⁸

But what is particularly striking in Ḥammūdīd coinage is its rich iconography: the fish symbol; the proliferation of stars; the octogram symbol; the hexagram or “Seal of Solomon;” isolated letters (*wāw* and *hā’*) that according to Ariza should be taken for their numeral value (six and eight respectively); and the hexagon that demarcates the legends in the area, and was used by the Buyids (Shi‘īs ruling over a Sunni majority). Some of these features appear in the copies (manuscripts) made by the Counts of Barcelona that, thanks to Jewish trade, travelled as far as Kiev. Ariza analyzes the magical and protective qualities that can be assigned to the Ḥammūdīd repertory in a much-needed effort to recover the symbolic meanings that accompanied the caliphal experiences in the Islamic West. In the case of the Almohads, we still do not fully understand the implications of their choice to use squares and circles in the coins they minted,³⁹ in contrast to the Cordoban Umayyads who favored floral motifs.⁴⁰

The five studies offer new approaches to old issues and provide us with new materials that we hope will pique the interest of those who are not familiar with the history of the Islamic West and contribute to existing efforts to better integrate the Maghreb into writings about of the history of Islamic societies, including the domain of material culture. Recent years

38. For the Qur’anic verse see H. Kassis, “Iyāḍ’s doctrinal views and their impact on the Maghreb,” *Maghreb Review* 13/1-2 (1988), 49-56, 52, and “Muslim Revival in Spain in the Fifth/Eleventh century: Causes and Ramifications,” *Der Islam* 67 (1990), 78-110. For the Almoravid title see É. Lévi-Provençal, “Le titre souverain des Almoravides et sa légitimation par le califat ‘abbāsīde,” *Arabica* II (1955), 265-80.

39. C. Bressi, “L’intrigant ‘carré dans le cercle’. Un exemple de diffusion d’un type monétaire dans le monde musulman du XIII^e siècle,” *Annales Islamologiques* 45 (2011), 243-254; S. Peña Martín, “El término de origen coránico *amr Allāh* (Disposición de Dios) y el linguocentrismo trascendente islámico, en torno al siglo XII,” *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* 22 (2011), 197-224

40. A. Canto, “De la ceca de al-Andalus a la de Madinat al-Zahra’,” *Cuadernos de Madinat al-Zahra’* 3 (1991), 111-19, English translation “From the Sikkat al-Andalus to the Mint of Madinat al-Zahra’,” in M. Marín (ed.), *The Formation of al-Andalus. Part 1: History and Society*, Ashgate: Variorum, 1998 (The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, vol. 46), 329-345.

have seen a resurgence of research in this domain, especially in regard to al-Andalus. New findings and, more importantly, the new direction followed by archaeological programs, allow us to access information that is often absent in the literary sources and thus enrich the knowledge we have acquired through previous means, sometimes even contradicting it. The advances made in regard to the issue of the caliphate in the Islamic West have been noteworthy, stretching from its genesis to its urban formulation. The excavations in the *ribāṭ* of Īgilliz in the High Atlas (Morocco) offer us insight into the daily life of the Almohad movement, before the decisive moment when the caliphate was proclaimed.⁴¹ The analysis of the architecture and urbanism of Madīnat al-Zahrā', from the point of view of archaeology, has provided highly precise information regarding the function of different palace areas and the role played by the architectonic forms and their decoration in affirming of the identity of the caliphate as well as the sources of its legitimacy.⁴² In all of these domains, the comparative approach is indispensable for its ability to draw clearer conclusions.⁴³ The two seminars organized in Madrid included contributions dealing with material culture and we hope to publish a dossier devoted to this topic in the near future.

41. A. S. Ettahiri, A. Fili and J.-P. van Staëvel, "Contribution à l'étude de l'habitat des élites en milieu rural dans le Maroc médiéval : quelques réflexions à partir de la *qaṣba* d'Īgilliz, berceau du mouvement almohade," in S. Gutiérrez Lloret and I. Grau Mira (ed.), *De la estructura doméstica al espacio social. Lecturas arqueológicas del uso social del espacio* (Alicante, 2013), 265-278, and see also above note 22.

42. A. Vallejo Triano, *La ciudad califal de Madīnat al-Zahrā'*. *Arqueología de su arquitectura* (Cordoba, 2010).

43. P. Cressier and A. Vallejo Triano, "Madīnat al-Zahrā' et Ṣabra al-Manṣūriyya : deux versions d'un même scénario," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 2 (2) [2015], 139-169, and the Conference *Fatimids and Umayyads: Competing Caliphates* already mentioned (note 32). Transcultural approaches have also been undertaken in the case of the Abbasid caliphate: A. Höfert, *Kaisertum und Kalifat: der imperiale Monotheismus im Früh- und Hochmittelalter* (Frankfurt, 2015); W. Drews, *Die Karolinger und die Abbasiden von Bagdad. Legitimationsstrategien frühmittelalterlicher Herrscherdynastien im transkulturellen Vergleich* (Berlin, 2009).

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