The Bedouin of the Fatimid Empire: Faith vs. Politics in a Medieval Islamic Empire

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Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ....Adnan Mustafa Husain.. (candidate)

Date 30/09/2023

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed ....Adnan Mustafa Husain... (candidate)

Date 30/09//2023

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for deposit in the University's digital repository.

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Dedication and Gratitude

I dedicate this dissertation to the 53rd Dawoodi Bohra *al- Dāʿī al-Mutlaq* Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin, may Allah grant him a long and healthy life.

بدا وبادية منه كخافية *وذاك ان هيولاه كصورته[1]

I am indebted to Shehzada Dr Jafarussadiq bhaisaheb Imaduddin, a teacher, philosopher, and guide par excellence, without whose benevolence I would not be writing these words. He is also a rector of Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, my alma mater. I owe gratitude to the many wonderful educational institutes which paved my path, but primarily to Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah for enlightening it too.

I owe gratitude to all my teachers and professors, those who have taught me over the years, and toiled for me even when I didn't want to. I owe special gratitude to Professor Gary Bunt whose gentle guidance is apparent throughout this dissertation. Professor Bunt believed in me even when I did not. He will always remain my key to the UWTSD, and what a beautiful door did it open!

My parents, children, immediate and extended family, friends, and colleagues all have played their part in my journey of knowledge. I owe a lot to my late father for my fascination with the Bedouin. Growing up I spent a considerable amount of time in Saudi Arabia with my father who worked there as a doctor. Because of the time spent in Saudi Arabia, I had a chance to observe closely the impact petrodollars had on the lives of the Bedouin. Even though I did not personally get a chance to have lengthy interactions with

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[1] The verse is from a poem by Syedi Abdeali Imaduddin, an eminent Dawoodi Bohra dignitary of the 19th century.

them, the stories I heard from my father and others instilled in me a lifelong passion for the deserts of Arabia and the lifestyle of its inhabitants.

Insiyah, my wife, was a sounding board of ideas and thoughts, sometimes crazy ones, but she listened and offered insights. There are so many people to thank, I cannot name them all, but perhaps a small prayer for all of them: May you always walk in peace.

Note on Transliteration, Spellings and Calendars

To ease reading, the use of diacritics in words transliterated from Arabic has generally been limited to the following Arabic letters:

1. ʾ for ء (*hamzāh*)

2. ʿ for ع (ʿayn)

3. The macron has been used to signify long vowels (ā, ī and ū).

The *tāʾ marbūtah* is written as is pronounced in Arabic, either as an 'h' or a 't'. Sometimes it is omitted where emphasis is not on the last part of the word.

In the interest of not complicating matters, I have not used diacritical marks to distinguish between the letters:

1. ح and ه and both are transliterated as h

2. ص and س and both are transliterated as s

3. ط and ت and both are transliterated as t

4. ض and د and both are transliterated as d

The following Arabic letters are transliterated as shown below:

1. ث = th

2. ق = q

3. غ = gh

4. خ = kh

5. ظ = z

6. ذ =dh

In words, now used commonly in English, the common form rather than the transliterated Arabic one is used (for example 'vizier' instead of '*wazīr*'). Similarly, I have opted to use

the common English spelling of the names of dynasties commonly used in English (For example 'Fatimid' rather than 'Fāṭimid').

Common geographical names are written as generally spelt, as in the spelling of the words 'Kufa' and 'Basra'. Personal names are mostly transliterated. In order to ease comprehension, some plural forms of Arabic words recurring in the text have been anglicised (i.e. *dāʿī*s). Select words and terms, including names of the more recent Tayyibī *dāʿī*s as well as honorific titles are spelt as commonly used in the Dawoodi Bohra community.

All Arabic words, apart from proper nouns, are italicised unless incorporated into the English language as listed in the Oxford Dictionary of English (i.e. imam, sharia).

The Arabic word for son is normally written as '*bin*' if it occurs between two names such as in 'Ibrahim bin Fahd'. If a name starts with the same, it is written as '*ibn*' as in 'Ibn Khaldūn'.

I have tried to give dates according to both the Islamic lunar calendar (Hijrī) and the Gregorian calendar. Usually, when years or centuries are available in both, the Hijrī date precedes the Gregorian one and is written as 369/979. When either the Hijrī or the Gregorian dates are unavailable, I have tried to calculate the closest corresponding year using online converters. Sometimes when only the Hijrī year is provided it is followed by the letters 'AH'. Similarly, the Gregorian year is sometimes followed by the letters 'CE'.

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Introduction

The Fatimids are unique, not only because they are essentially a Shīʿāh dynasty, but because Fatimid sovereigns believed themselves to be the rightful caliphs as well as God-ordained imams.[2] Even more unique is that they are still believed to be the rightful imams by various Nizārī and Tayyibī communities[3] a thousand years after the dissolution of their state.[4] The Dawoodi Bohras believe that their *daʿwah*[5] (lit. call or mission; reference is to the religiopolitical organisation of the Fatimids), headed by their *dāʿī*s, is a continuation of the original Fatimid mission.[6] The study of Fatimid history, therefore, has significant religious importance for the Dawoodi Bohras.

Having studied Fatimid history, faith and philosophy for several decades as part of my professional commitments in addition to my fascination with the Bedouin[7], I wished to write my dissertation on a subject that would let me incorporate both fields. This was the genesis of this study on the Bedouin of the Fatimid Empire, in which the aim was to examine the interplay of faith and politics on Fatimid-Bedouin relations. The study also seeks to analyse why the Fatimid concept of imamate, which called for complete submission to the Fatimid sovereign as a religious head, was difficult for the Bedouin to accept and led to friction and volatility in their relations with the Fatimids.

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[2] In early Sunnī Islam, the term imam was used for the caliphs but in a slightly different context.
[3] Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 261-295.
[4] The Nizārīs and Tayyibīs both have their own distinct beliefs in the continuation of the imamate.
[5] The traditional spelling used by the Community is Dawat and the phrase used is Dawat-e-Hadiyah or *al-daʿwah al-hādīyah* (the rightly-guiding mission). Reference is to the religiopolitical organisation headed by an imam or, during his concealment, his representative *al-dāʿī al-mutlaq*.
[6] See M. Canard, "Daʿwa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. J. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012a).; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2, 116; Aslisho Qurboniev, "Traditions of Learning in Fāṭimid Ifrīqiya (296-362/909-973): Networks, Practices, and Institutions" (PhD, University of Cambridge, 2019), 3.
[7] The word Bedouin is an anglicisation of the Arabic word *badawī* (pl. *badw*) meaning a desert dweller, also known as the *aʿrāb*, or *ahl al-bādiyāh*, the people of the *bādiyah*, the desert, open plain or semi-arid country. It is used also as a plural throughout this study.

The first Chapter examines the ancient pre-Islamic nomads of Arabia[8], through the writings of the ancient Greeks, Romans and others as well as their image in collective Arab memory. The love for freedom and autonomy seems to have been a common thread, from antiquity until the early twentieth century. This Chapter also traces the etymology of the words *ʿarab*, *aʿrāb* and *badw*, to better understand Bedouin identity. Ibn Khaldūn's *badw-hadar* dichotomy as well his concept of *ʿasabīyyah* (bindedness or group solidarity) are examined to review ancient Bedouin identity, society, and politics. These Khaldūnian concepts are subsequently employed to analyse Bedouin history at the time of the Fatimids. This Chapter also investigates the importance of the tribal unit for the ancient Bedouin. This understanding is beneficial when later analysing the transitory nature of allegiances and alliances of the medieval Bedouin.[9]

The second Chapter investigates the relationship of early Islam[10] with the Bedouin. This relationship can be understood *inter alia* on the basis of the Qurʾān and the Prophet's dealings with the Bedouin. This also leads us to Islam's call towards *hijrah* and *jihād* and Bedouin reception of it. This call had an immediate effect on the translocation of Bedouin tribes out of the Arabian Peninsula and their resettling northwards into new domains.[11] This Chapter also examines Bedouin support for religious and social movements within Islam, such as the Khārījite movement, which was heavily reliant on the Bedouin. Anti-authoritarian resentment led the Bedouin to support many Shīʿite rebellions against the Umayyads and the Abbasids.

The third Chapter traces the origins of the Fatimid imams as a Shīʿite dynasty, that traced its roots to the Prophet. It also examines their beliefs, centred on the concept of the imamate,

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[8] The reference here is to pre-Islamic Arab nomads.

[9] The term medieval is used merely to denote this period of time, i.e., the era of the Fatimid Empire. A western-centric definition of the term is not intended.

[10] From its advent until the end of the first Abbasid dynasty.

[11] Bedouin migration can also be traced long before Islam.

and the formation of their empire. A key concept discussed here is the Fatimid *daʿwah* (mission), which in simple terms can be understood to be their religiopolitical organisation. This distinction between the *dawlah* (state) and *daʿwah* is important to understand the intricacies of Bedouin relations with the Fatimids, which is subsequently dealt with. The majority of Bedouin tribes maintained relations only with the *dawlah*, that is they were built upon tribal interests and political considerations, while a few did accept the *daʿwah* as believers in the imamate of the Fatimids.

The fourth Chapter examines the history of Bedouin tribes living within the Fatimid Empire and especially at its fringes, mostly in the Levant. The Chapter divides the Fatimid realms into separate geographical areas and discusses tribes within these areas. The discussions are mostly focussed on the Cairene period[12] as there were relatively fewer Bedouin tribes in North Africa, when the Fatimids were based therein.[13] The Chapter also examines Fatimids' use of *ʿasabīyyah* to check tribal uprisings. Rapoport's understanding[14] of the identity of medieval Bedouin is also discussed in an appendix, leading to the conclusion that a Bedouin in that era would be anyone who identified as Bedouin and undertook nomadic pastoralism, albeit even if it was temporary or seasonal. Purely transhumant Bedouin[15], however, were fewer. The Chapter also examines the political aspirations of the medieval Bedouin, with a few larger medieval Bedouin tribes even managing to form proto states. Studying their political aspirations is important to understand their relations with the

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[12] The Fatimids conquered Egypt in 358/969.

[13] Bedouin Arabs in large numbers moved into North Africa at the time of the 18th Imam, al-Mustansir.

[14] Yossef Rapoport, "Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt," *Msr*, no. VIII.2, 2004 (2004), 1-22.; Yossef Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, Vol. 19 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018).; Yossef Rapoport and Ido Shahar, *The Villages of the Fayyum: A Thirteenth-Century Register of Rural, Islamic Egypt*, Vol. 18 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018).; Yossef Rapoport, "1068 in the Fayyum: A Micro-History of an Environmental Crisis," in *Living with Nature and Things*, 1st ed., Vol. 23 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2020), 181-202.

[15] Those who only lived in temporary dwellings, moving in search of water and pasture.

organised states of the Fatimids, Abbasids and Byzantium. Chapter 4 provides important groundwork for Chapters 6 and 7.

The origins and beliefs of the Carmathian movement are studied separately in Chapter 5. A separate chapter is warranted as the Carmathians were heavily dependent on the Bedouin. For most of their history, even before the advent of the Fatimid State, Carmathian interactions with the Fatimid imams were turbulent and violent. This Chapter also examines why the Carmathian movement was successful in gathering Bedouin support, in contrast to the organised states of the Fatimids and Abbasids. Further Fatimid-Carmathian interactions are discussed in the subsequent Chapter.

The sixth and seventh Chapters examine the interaction of the Fatimid state with the Bedouin. Chapter 6, focusing on the 11th (al-Mahdī) until the 16th (al-Hākim) Imams, mostly covers the Cairene period, as the move to Egypt brought the Fatimids into direct contact with the Bedouin of Egypt, the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula, while there was relatively lesser contact with the Bedouin in the North African period. Chapter 7 focusses on the eras of the 17th (al-Zāhir) and 18th (al-Mustansir) Imams until the Turkoman advance into the Levant.

Important events, involving the Bedouin, during the time of the 14th Imam al-Muʿizz include the Carmathian attack on Egypt. The era of the 15th Imam, al-ʿAzīz, was generally peaceful. The reign of the 16th Imam, al-Hākim, was threatened by two rebellions involving Bedouin tribes, one involving the Banū Qurrah of the Libyan Desert and the other the Jarrāhid's of Palestine. Both rebellions constituted serious threats to the Fatimid Empire. At the time of the 17th Imam, al-Zāhir, the three major Bedouin tribes of the Levant, the Kilāb, Kalb and the Tayyʾ formed an unlikely coalition against the Fatimids to divide the Levant amongst themselves. The Bedouin during this time ravaged the Levant, leaving

large parts annihilated. It was with great difficulty and tact that the rebellion was quelled. The 18th Imam, al-Mustansir's reign was a lengthy one. During his era, his *dāʿī*, al-Muaʾyyad was tasked with supporting al-Basāsīrī's rebellion against the Abbasids and to check the growing power of the Seljuqs.[16] Al-Muaʾyyad's careful handling of the Levantine and Mesopotamian Bedouin enabled the Fatimids to capture Baghdad, albeit only for a year. The other major event was 'the Hilālī invasion' of North Africa, which radically changed the ethnic and social composition of North Africa. This Chapter also debates whether it was the Fatimids who ordered the Banū Hilāl to migrate westwards. Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that the Fatimids employed the Banū Hilāl for their own political advantage. The serious repercussions of Bedouin anarchy during the so-called 'Egyptian civil war' are also discussed in the seventh Chapter. The 18th Imam summoned his governor at Ramla, Badr al-Jamālī, who upon reaching Egypt took drastic measures to stabilise Fatimid domains.

The first part of the Conclusion compares the Bedouin with the Kutāma Berbers. Even though most Bedouin tribes and the Kutāma possessed strong *ʿasabīyyah*, the study found that the Bedouin did not enjoy the same success with the Fatimids as the Kutāma. It is argued that this was due to the faith and conviction of the early Kutāma. On the contrary, Bedouin love for autonomy made it difficult for them to be truly loyal to the Fatimids, which resulted in fragile and oft-changing alliances that led to fluid borders at the fringes of the Fatimid State. The next part of the Conclusion revisits the Khārījite and Carmathian movements and discusses Bedouin resentment for centralised power as being one of the main reasons for Carmathian appeal among the Bedouin. The Levantine and Mesopotamian Bedouin were not very religious in a conventional manner. This is apparent from their support of and subsequent opposition to the states and dynasties of fellow Shīʿah, as well

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[16] Klemm counts three main tasks, which are discussed in Chapter 7.

as their support for Christian 'Crusaders'[17] against other Muslim states. This part of the Conclusion also revisits Fatimid *daʿwah* and submits that most Bedouin were not part of the *daʿwah*, even when they supported the *dawlah*. A hermeneutical study of Fatimid texts finds that the Fatimid State's dealings with the Bedouin were in accordance with Fatimid beliefs.

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[17] Reference here is to the first three 'Crusades'.

Methodology

Orientalists of the 18th, 19th and even the early 20th centuries were fascinated with the Bedouin and the environs they lived in. Their mention evoked a sense of romanticism and adventure. They were seen as the original Arabs, free people who loved autonomy and resented external authority.[18] These character traits are not very different from what sources tell us about the Bedouin, going back two millennia.[19] A love for independence and self-rule among the medieval Bedouin resulted in turbulent relationships with the centrally organised polities and even more so with the Fatimid State, which was founded on the cornerstone of the imamate of a God-ordained imam-caliph and the absolute obedience to him.[20] Even though the two[21] seem diametrical concepts, there were times when Fatimid-Bedouin relations were rather symbiotic, or when the Bedouin were won over by Fatimid *dāʿī*s.

1. **Research objectives**

At the intersection of Fatimid and medieval Bedouin history, there is a lacuna which leaves much scope for comprehensive research, notably on the nature and disposition of this relationship. This study aims to review the effect faith had on Fatimid-Bedouin political relations, which makes it imperative to understand the history of the medieval Bedouin and the Fatimid Empire to comprehend the interplay of faith and politics. The time span covered

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[18] Geoffrey Nash, "Introduction: Arabia," in *Travellers to the Middle East from Burckhardt to Thesiger: An Anthology*, ed. Geoffrey NashAnthem Press, 2009), 43-45.; Reynold A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, Reprint of the 1930 ed. (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 135, 178.

[19] Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 96-97.

[20] al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān bin Muḥammad, *The Pillars of Islam: Daʿaʾm Al-Islam of Al-Qadi Al-Nuʿman (Volume I)*, trans. Asaf A. A. Fyzee and I. Poonawala, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 18-73.; Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, Reiss.2002 ed. (Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 122.

[21] Love for autonomy and obedience.

in this study is nearly two hundred years and the geographical scope is vast, including lands from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.[22]

This study investigates this complex relationship by examining the sociopolitical history of the Bedouin from Antiquity to medieval times. Even though most Bedouin had accepted Islam by the time the Fatimid Empire had emerged, there were still traits and characteristics in the medieval Bedouin similar to their pre-Islamic ancestors.[23] Bedouin love for autonomy seems to be an almost essential characteristic, making their acceptance of any polity, other than their own tribes, difficult. This characteristic was also an agent for transient alliances and noncommittal loyalties of the medieval Bedouin.

The objective is to demonstrate that the Fatimids were not only aware of these Bedouin characteristics, but also used them consciously to their own advantage by engaging tactfully with the Bedouin, attempting to harness this raw tribal power to their advantage.

By comparing the sociopolitical environments of the Arab Bedouin and the Kutāmā Berbers, we can analyse why the Bedouin did not receive the same preferred status from the Fatimids.[24] On the question of Bedouin identity, answers are found in hermeneutical readings of Fatimid esoteric works. These interpretations can be traced back to the Qurʾānic treatment of the Bedouin[25] at the time of Prophet Muhammad, in order to identify whether Bedouin identity as portrayed in such works had a corelation to actual Fatimid-Bedouin relations.[26] With this understanding I hope to find results which will further our knowledge

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[22] Also known as the Arabian Gulf.
[23] The Late Antique period also covers the early Islamic period.
[24] Yaacov Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 3 (1987), 344-345.
[25] Bedouin are referred to as the *āʿrāb* in the Qurʾān.
[26] al-Tamīmī, al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān bin Muhammad, *Taʾwīl Al-Daʿāim*, 1st ed., Vol. 1&2 (Beirut: Muassasat al-Aʿlami, 2006), 291 V1.

of how the Fatimids balanced between maintaining a vast empire and ruling within the precepts of their beliefs.

In essence, this study seeks to answer the following three questions:

1. Did belief in the Fatimid faith[27] have an influence on Bedouin tribal politics?

2. How did Bedouin tribal politics within the Fatimid Empire and especially at its fringes create fluid borders?

3. Did the Fatimids deal with the Bedouin on a purely political basis or were there ideological considerations as well?

2. Methodological approach and research design

This study, based on a vast range of primary sources, uses qualitative research methods of interpretation, analysis and deduction. Qualitative research methods suit the scope of this research and my own background in the Humanities. Speculative research is also carried out, for example when analysing the reasons for the Bedouin not having the same success as the Berber Kutāma had with the Fatimids.

The core subject area of this study is a historical, political, religious and social survey of the Bedouin living within the realms and on the fringes of the Fatimid State. To understand an era and its people, it is imperative to study it in its larger historical context. Therefore, to study the medieval Bedouin, it is important to trace their sociopolitical origins in pre-Islamic Antiquity and examine Bedouin relations with other organised states. This is reflected in Chapters 1 and 2 on the Ancient Bedouin and the Bedouin in early Islam. Similarly, there is a Chapter on the Fatimids, which provides the essential background to

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[27] Reference is to the Ismāʿīlī faith as professed by the Fatimids, to distinguish it mainly from Carmathian beliefs. The main distinction lies in the doctrine of the imamate. I prefer to use the term 'Fatimid faith' instead of 'Fatimid beliefs' since their faith is very distinct and still followed today by a large number of people.

understand the history and ideologies of this dynasty. Linguistic research is utilised to examine the etymology of the words *ʿarab*, *aʿrāb* and *badw* to further understand Bedouin identity.

The study also examines Bedouin pre-Islamic faith and religious practices in order to understand their reception of Islam. With the formation of an Islamic state, faith became politicised triggering profound changes to Bedouin society. It is important to understand these changes to comprehend Bedouin relations with the early Islamic state, followed by the Umayyads, the Abbasids leading up to the Fatimids and also Bedouin support for various social, political and religious movements.

As a result, this study takes an interdisciplinary approach, examining aspects of history, human geography, political science, ethnography, linguistics, philosophy and most importantly religious studies. The study of the evolvement of Bedouin society from Antiquity to late Antiquity to the medieval times, as well as the study of the Fatimids in their proper Shīʿī historical context is undertaken to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the politics of the Fatimid State and their relations with the Bedouin. Thus, to understand proper context and narrative, an inductive[28] textual analysis of historical[29] sources is carried out.[30] It is beyond the scope of this study to examine how other Islamic empires dealt with Bedouin tribes.

As part of discussions on the medieval Bedouin, some social phenomena such as Bedouin migrations and Bedouin support for violent religious, social and political movements and concepts such as egalitarianism among the Bedouin are also examined.

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[28] The method of drawing general inferences from observations.
[29] This includes social, cultural, religious, and political histories.
[30] An example in point is to analyse the 18th Imam al-Mustansir's official letter written to Yemen where he mentions the Hilālī invasion of North Africa.

The study includes maps for convenience. All maps have been developed by me with the help of a talented graphic designer, who was kind enough to digitally design them for this study.[31] Basic information for the maps was primarily taken from Jiwa,[32] Halm,[33] Brett,[34] and from *An Historical Atlas of Islam*.[35]

3. Methods of data collection

This dissertation essentially deals with a medieval Islamic Empire and its society, for which a historiographical survey of primary Arabic sources and modern academic research[36] is required. During the last four decades, western academia has produced a multitude of books and papers, including translations of original Arabic texts written by Fatimid *dāʿī*s.[37] Even so, a wealth of information is available in untranslated volumes of primary Arabic sources. Medieval Arabic chronicles are known to be voluminous. For example, *Taʾrīkh Madīnat Damishq* by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176) has eighty volumes.[38] Because of the many volumes, information is widely dispersed. I, therefore scanned many such sources, especially those on the history of the Levant, by using important keywords to avoid overlooking important information. Additionally, where available, I used secondary sources, which deal with material relevant to this study. In the rare cases, where translations are required, the study relies on published works where available. At times I have referred to the original Arabic

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[31] I wish to thank Tasneem Y. Ziauddin for being kind enough to help me give shape to these maps.

[32] Shainool Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, Vol. 1 (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2018).; Shainool Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rule from Egypt*, Vol. 2 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2023).

[33] Heinz Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, trans. Michael Bonner (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[34] Michael Brett, *The Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

[35] Marc Bel, Peter van der Donck and Hugh Kennedy, *An Historical Atlas of Islam = Atlas Historique De L'Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[36] I have primarily used sources written in English followed by Arabic; however, research has also been produced in other European languages, mainly in French and the German.

[37] Paul E. Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 186-202.

[38] Six volumes of which are indices. See Nancy Khaleq, "Prologue: The Publication of the Dār Al-Fikr Edition of Ibn ʿAsākir's Taʾrīkh Madīnat Dimashq," in *New Perspectives on Ibn ʿAsākir in Islamic Historiography*, eds. Steven Judd and Jens Scheiner, Vol. 145 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 4-8.

texts, even if translations were available to better understand the original texts.[39] Qurʾānic verses have been translated by me (unless specified) using the translations of Yusuf Ali and *Saheeh International* as a base.

Most modern Arabic academic works are not translated. For this reference has been made to the originals without translating them.

4. Ethical considerations

I wish to affirm that no interviews have been conducted for the study. Similarly, it does not contain any personal information or other sensitive data. Hence there will not be any issues regarding the storage and retrieval of data or any other ethical concerns.

5. Influences

This study stands on the shoulders of academic giants. It is only because of the accumulative years of research of many accomplished scholars and academics that this study could be undertaken. Likewise, modern academics have built upon the works of Fatimid *dāʿī*s such as al-Qādī al-Numʿān (d. 363/974), medieval historians such as Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262) and al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) and Orientalists such as Wustenfeld (d.1899) and Doughty (d. 1926).

Being part of the Fatimid-Tayyibī Dawoodi Bohra Community[40] that believes in the Fatimid caliphs as imams, has had a major impact on my life. I consider this to be an

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[39] For example, I have referred to the original Arabic texts of Ibn Khaldūn's Prolegomena and al-Nābulusī's *Taʾrīkh al-Fayyūm*.

[40] This is the common spelling used by the Community for themselves. The Dawoodi Bohras are a small Fatimid-Tayyibī community. For more on this community see Tahera Qutbuddin, "Bohras," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. Kate Fleet and et al., Three ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2013).; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 261-295; Jonah Blank, *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among the Daudi Bohras* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1-408.; Jonah Blank, "The Dāʾūdī Bohras (Mustaʿlī Ismāʿīlī Shīʿa): Using Modernity to Institutionalise a Fāṭimid Tradition," in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, eds. Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 255-278.

advantage as it helps me to have an insider's perspective on the issues related to Fatimid history, providing a better understanding of Fatimid ethos. Additionally, I have studied the lives of the Fatimid imams, not only as a requirement of my faith but also because of my years teaching at Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah.[41]

6. Challenges and limitations

Being from the Dawoodi Bohra Community, I am aware that the study needs to avoid a confirmation bias. Nonetheless, time spent during this programme at the UWTSD[42] has furthered the development of critical thinking and analytical skills and a move beyond traditional hagiography.

Information regarding Fatimid relations with the Bedouin is spread across many medieval Arabic works of *turāth* (heritage) and is not limited to historical works but encompasses a wide variety of texts, making research difficult. There is also a paucity of devoted modern academic studies.[43] Another issue is the scarcity of information regarding some geographical areas and periods, while for others there is so much information that it became cumbersome to process. That is why it is possible that some relevant information may not have been examined and dealt with in detail.

The study is limited in the sense that it does not cover the full breadth of Fatimid history but terminates with the entry of the Turkoman advance into Mesopotamia and the Levant, before the beginning of the 'First Crusade' (1096-1099). This was an intense period, that saw an increase in the number of actors and the fragility of circumstances. Additionally, interest in the 'First Crusade' has generated much original and ancillary research and

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[41] This more than 200-year-old seminary has currently four campuses: Surat, Karachi, Nairobi and Mumbai. It is the premier Dawoodi Bohra institute for learning. See "Home Page," Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah Institute, , accessed Sep 18, 2023, https://jameasaifiyah.edu/.; Farhad Daftar*y, "The Ismāʿīlīs and their Traditions,"* in Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements, eds. Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 286.

[42] Special thanks are warranted for my supervisor Professor Gary Bunt.

[43] Relatively more research has been conducted on the Berber tribe of the Kutāma.

therefore warrants many studies from different perspectives. This study also does not deal with the entire religiopolitical history, or the social and ethnological backgrounds of the Fatimids and the Bedouin, which would be beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Literature Review

1. Types of sources

Sources chosen for this dissertation fall into three broad categories:

1. Books authored by *dāʿī*s written during the Fatimid era, and those written by Tayyibī *dāʿī*s.

2. Other primary sources, mostly in Arabic, including medieval chronicles.

3. Academic scholarship, mostly in English and Arabic.

2. Fatimid sources

The Fatimids[44] have garnered much academic interest, especially since the early 20th century, with the rediscovery and study of many Ismāʿīlī works by western academics. Previously, Sunnī authors and accounts transmitted by 'Crusader' circles were the primary reasons for anti-Fatimid bias.[45] By comparing Sunnī and Shīʿite sources, modern scholarship has taken a more neutral stance on the Fatimids than earlier European scholarship.[46] While Walker's book '*Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources*', represents a literature review on works regarding the Fatimid Empire and discusses anti-Fatimid bias in medieval Arabic sources, premodern scholarship and modern academic sources, it is important to review some sources, notably regarding topics prone to anti-Fatimid bias, such as Fatimid relations with the Carmathians.[47]

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[44] The Tayyibīs believe that the 21st Imam went into seclusion, even though four claimants (who the Tayyibīs do not believe to be imams) did rule as Fatimid imam-caliphs till the Empire's dissolution at the hands of the Ayyubids.

[45] Farhad Daftary, "The "Order of the Assassins:" J. Von Hammer and the Orientalist Misrepresentations of the Nizari Ismailis (Review Article)," *Iranian Studies* 39, no. 1 (2006), 71-82.

[46] Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources*, 186-202; Farhad Daftary, "Ismaili History and Historiography: Phases, Sources and Studies," in *A Short History of the Ismailis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998b), 9-13.; Michael Brett, "The Realm of the Imām: The Faṭīmids in the Tenth Century," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 59, no. 3 (1996), 431-449.

[47] Walker, *Exploring an Islamic Empire: Fatimid History and its Sources*, 186-202

The study relies heavily on the works of Sayiddunā al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān (d. 363/974) who was a contemporary of the 11ᵗʰ to 14ᵗʰ Imams. He was a jurist, chief justice and *daʿī al-duʿāt* (lit. *daʿī* of all *daʿī*s; or the chief *daʿī*), mainly active during the time of the 13ᵗʰ and 14ᵗʰ Fatimid Imams. His works, covering a multitude of subjects, are held in high regard by the Tayyibīs. His position made him privy to important historical information. His book *Iftitāh al-Daʿwah*[48], recording the advent of the Fatimid state, forms the basis for all later works containing information on this period.[49] Another essential primary source for this study is the first volume of his canonical work, the *Daʿāim al-Islām* (which acted like the constitution of the Fatimid State) to examine officially sanctioned Fatimid doctrines regarding the imamate.[50] His book, *Taʾwīl al-Daʿāim* esoterically interprets the laws mentioned in the *Daʿāim al-Islām.* By examining the *Taʾwīl al-Daʿāim*, this study aims to establish how the Fatimids viewed the Bedouin in order to better understand Fatimid relations with them.[51]

Another contemporary Fatimid *daʿī* was Sayiddunā Ahmad al-Naysāburī (d. early 5ᵗʰ/11ᵗʰ century) whose work *Istitār al-Imām* deals with the seclusion of the pre-Fatimid imams and the emergence of the 11ᵗʰ Imam al-Mahdī bi-Allāh (d. 322/934).[52] Ivanow, Madelung and Halm, among others, have used the *Istitār* to examine Carmathian relations with the Fatimids.[53]

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[48] For more on this work see James E. Lindsay, "Prophetic Parallels in Abu ʿAbd Allah Al-Shiʿi's Mission among the Kutama Berbers, 893–91," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 1 (1992), 39-56. Lindsay says that the work is an 'official account of the Fatimid rise to power'.

[49] Hamid Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire: An Annotated English Translation of Al-Qādī Al-Nuʿmān's Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

[50] al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān bin Muḥammad, *The Pillars of Islam: Daʿaiʾm Al-Islam of Al-Qadi Al-Nuʿman (Volume I)*, xxxvi-xxxiii

[51] For esoteric knowledge in Islam see I. Poonawala, "Taʾwīl," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al, Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).; Paul Walker, "The Doctrine of Taʾwīl in Fatimid Ismaili Texts," in *Reason, Esotericism, and Authority in Shiʿi Islam*, eds. Adem Rodrigo and Edmund Hayes (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 137-150.; Jamel A. Velji, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 14-21.

[52] Portions of this book were translated by Ivanow (d. 1970). I have not quoted directly from the book, but instead have used Ivanow's translations of key passages from the book.

[53] Wladimir Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, Vol. 10 (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1942), 74-76.

Sayiddunā al-Muʾayyad al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1078) was a *dāʿī* who attained the position of *bāb al-abwāb* (the door of all doors; highest rank in the imam's *daʿwah*) at the time of the 18th Imam al-Mustansir (d. 487/1094). He was a scholar and poet whose works are highly revered by the Tayyibīs. One of his deputations was to oversee the conquest of Baghdad. As a master statesman, he utilised Bedouin tribes of the Levant and the *Jazīrāh*[54] in the service of the Fatimids. His autobiography contains valuable information on how he engaged Bedouin chieftains and gives an informed view of the events which led to the fall of Baghdad.[55]

The most important Tayyibī historical source for this study is the seven-volume *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār*[56] of the 19th Tayyibī *dāʿī*, Sayiddunā Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468), which deals with the history of Islam from its advent until the 21st Imam of the Tayyibīs.[57] The *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār* acts as a reference point for official Fatimid history. Even though the study does not cite the *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār* often, it serves as a reference point to verify Tayyibī perspectives as it may be understood to represent the Tayyibī reception to Fatimid history.

3. Sources on the Bedouin

The Bedouin were sons, and daughters, of the desert, being able to survive, and even thrive, in the harshest of conditions. Arab and Western sources both have portrayed them as free spirited, unaccepting of authority and unwilling to yield to it.[58] A considerable amount of anthropological and historical scholarship has examined the identity of the Bedouin, their livelihood and their internal social structures. The study briefly examines the origins,

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[54] The land between the Euphrates and the Tigris. The area corresponds roughly to the lands known as Mesopotamia, which means 'land between rivers' in Ancient Greek.
[55] Verena Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, Al-Mu-Ayyad Fi'L-Din Al-Shirazi*, Vol. 9 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).
[56] A lengthier title of the work is *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār wa Funūn al-Āthār.*
[57] Shainool Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*, Vol. 21 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).
[58] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*

identity, society, religions, migrational patterns, geographical locations, and subsequent migrations of the ancient Bedouin with the goal of better understanding Bedouin relationship with organised states. The aim is to understand comparable patterns among the Bedouin tribes living within the realms of the Fatimid State and at its fringes.

Although there are many books available in Arabic on the Bedouin, few deal with medieval[59] Bedouin history, and even fewer deal with their relations with the Fatimid Caliphate. Western sources tend to deal more with Levantine history and are therefore more focused on the Bedouin of the Syrian desert. Recent academic studies deal more with the modern Bedouin and especially those of the Negev and Syrian deserts and the research is inclined more towards anthropological, medical, and social studies.

Current academics, such as Hoyland[60], Jallad[61], Fisher[62], Webb[63] and Macdonald[64] have studied the ancient Bedouin. Mackinstosh-Smith's 2019 work on the Arabs also examines the Bedouin through the ages.[65] While Hodgson and al-Azmeh trace the Bedouin during the advent of Islam back to their ancient ancestors.[66] The etymology of the words ʿarab, badw and aʿrāb, attested on ancient Semitic inscriptions as well as Greek and Aramaic

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[59] Robinson has written a comprehensive introductory article on the 'Medieval Ages'. See Fred C. Robinson, "Medieval, the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 59, no. 4 (1984), 745-756.

[60] Dr Robert G. Hoyland, currently Professor of Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle Eastern History at New York University.

[61] Ahmad Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 1.

[62] Greg Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[63] Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

[64] M. C. A. Macdonald, "Arabians, Arabias and the Greeks: Contact and Perceptions," in *Literacy and Identity in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, ed. M. C. A. Macdonald (London: Ashgate, 2009b), 1-33.; M. C. A. Macdonald, "Arabs, Arabias and Arabic before Late Antiquity," *Topoi Orient-Occident* (2009a), 277-332.; M. C. A. Macdonald, "Was there a "Bedouinization of Arabia"?" *Der Islam (Berlin)* 92, no. 1 (2015), 42-84.

[65] Tim Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

[66] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).; Aziz Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

texts, and Arabic lexicons has been dealt with by Fisher[67], Hoyland[68], Macdonald[69] and Leder.[70]

Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) gained fame for his prolegomena[71] to his history, where he outlined the social and economic aspects of history. A critical scrutiny is required of his view on the *badw-hadar*[72] dichotomy and his use of the term *ʿasabīyyah* to see how tribal solidarity helps in the formation and dissolution of empires, notably Fatimid use of *ʿasabīyyah* to manage Bedouin tribes.[73] This study has also taken into account the views of al-Nabulūsī (660/1262), and Ibn Khaldūn to examine who qualified as a Bedouin. Rapoport has translated and produced studies on al-Nabulūsī's book on the Fayyūm province.[74] His critiques of al-Nabulūsī, and Ibn Khaldūn's views on Bedouin identity are analysed in appendix 14.[75]

Academics such as Hoyland, Macdonald, Franz, Fisher and Webb give a modern understanding of Bedouin identity. Because of access to ancient resources from other languages, including Semitic inscriptions, they may be better placed to investigate Arab and Bedouin identity than medieval Arab historians.

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[67] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*

[68] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*

[69] Macdonald, "Arabians, Arabias and the Greeks: Contact and Perceptions," in , 1-33; Macdonald, "Arabs, Arabias and Arabic before Late Antiquity," , 277-332

[70] Stefan Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," *Der Islam* 92, no. 1 (2015), 85-123.

[71] ʿAbd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, ed. N. J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal and Bruce B. Lawrence, First Princeton Classics edition, 2015 ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

[72] The word *badw* means desert or open plain and may also refer to people living in such environments. The word *hadar* means land with a long-term settlement and may also refer to the people living in such a settlement. See Chapter 1 for further discussion.

[73] See, in particular, Chapters 6 and 7.

[74] Dr Yossef Rapoport, Professor in Islamic History at Queen Mary University of London.

[75] Rapoport, "Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt," , 1-22; Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*; Rapoport and Shahar, *The Villages of the Fayyum: A Thirteenth-Century Register of Rural, Islamic Egypt*; Rapoport, "1068 in the Fayyum: A Micro-History of an Environmental Crisis," in , 181-202

Ibn al-Kalbī's *Book of Idols* is one of the most famous works on pre-Islamic polytheism,[76] although al-Jallad sees this work and other similar works as not completely reliable because, according to him, they see pre-Islamic polytheism through an Islamic lens.[77] Webb, having analysed pre-Islamic Arab religious practices, argues that 3rd/9th century Muslim authors tampered with these memories to form new narratives.[78] After examining the pre-Islamic Bedouin, this study investigates Bedouin reception of Islam and, in particular, the often tense relations between the Bedouin and Islamic power centres, to better understand Bedouin-Fatimid relations. The Prophet's relations with the Bedouin are dealt by al-Harithi.[79] Bedouin Companions of the Prophet have been examined and many have been named by Jabali[80] and al-Wadʿan[81], although both cannot pinpoint how many of the Companions were Bedouin as they tend to count only those who were completely nomadic as Bedouin. Webb and Azmeh provide important inputs regarding the Bedouin in early Islam.[82]

The north-south divide in the tribes which settled in Basra and Kufa and their subsequent support of either ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib or Muʿāwiyyah have been discussed by Petersen, Bulliet and Daftary.[83]

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[76] Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols: Being a Translation from the Arabic of the Kitāb Al-Asnām*, Vol. 14 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

[77] Ibid.; Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia*, 3-4

[78] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*. 263-265

[79] Hammud bin Jabir al-Harithi, "Daʿwat Al-Nabī Ilā Al-Aʿrāb" (MA, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, 1996), .

[80] Fuad Jabali, *Companions of the Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[81] Ibrahim bin Fahd Al-Wadʿan, *Al-Isābah Fi Dhikr Al-ʿArāb Min Al-Sahābah* (Riyadh: Self Published, 2012).

[82] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 244-246; Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People*, 662.

[83] E. Ladewig Petersen, *Ali and Muawiya in Early Arabic Tradition* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1974), 203.; Richard Bulliet, "Sedentarization of Nomads in the Seventh Century: The Arabs in Basra and Kufa," in *When Nomads Settle*, ed. Philip Salzman (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), 35-47.; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*

Crone's works regarding the emergence of Islam are highly controversial. Even so, her work has generated much interest, not all of them positive. This study uses her works to understand Bedouin identity and the structure of a tribe,[84] scrutinising her views regarding the formation of sects in the first three centuries of Islam.[85] Crone's views regarding the marginalisation of tribes in the early caliphal rule is discussed in the study, arguing that states did not replace the tribes as they persisted for hundreds of years after the advent of Islam.[86]

4. Other works on the Fatimids

Though there are some Arabic and English language works on medieval Bedouin tribes, they rarely discuss Fatimid-Bedouin relations. Comparatively more research is available on the relationship of the Berber tribe of Kutāma with the Fatimid Empire.[87]

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[84] Patricia Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3, no. 3 (1993), 353-376.; Patricia Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law: The Origins of the Islamic Patronate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[85] Patricia Crone, "The First Civil War and Sect Formation," in *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Patricia Crone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005a), 17-32.; Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).; Patricia Crone, "The Ismailis," in *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Patricia Crone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005b), 197-218.

[86] Patricia Crone, "The 'Abbāsid Abnā' and Sāsānid Cavalrymen," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 8, no. 1 (1998), 1-19.; Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," , 353-376. See for example Appendix 9.

[87] This study will not consider non-Arab nomadic tribes as Bedouin, therefore Fatimid interaction with Berber tribes is not in its main scope of research. The Berbers were considered by some Arab genealogists to be Himyarites, therefore of southern Arabian stock. See Musa Laqbal, *Dawr Kutāma Fī Ta'rīkh Al-Khilāfah Al-Fātimīyyah: Mundh Ta'sīsiha Ilā Muntasaf Al-Qarn Al-Khāmis Al-Hijrī* (Algiers: Al-Sharikah al-Watanīyyah lil-Nashr wal-Tawzīʿ, 1979).; Lindsay, "Prophetic Parallels in Abu ʿAbd Allah Al-Shiʿi's Mission among the Kutama Berbers, 893–91," , 39-56

Among current scholarship, this study engages with the research conducted by *inter alia* Daftary[88], Walker[89], Halm[90], Lev[91], Sayyid[92], Brett[93] and Jiwa.[94]

Jiwa's *The Fatimids*[95] serves as a good introduction to Fatimid history. Brett's[96] monograph on the Fatimids and Daftary's[97] work on the Ismāʿilīs provide more comprehensive research on the historical, social, religious, and political aspects of the Fatimids for this study. Lev et al. [98] have studied the ethnicities and demographics of the Fatimid Empire. There is a similar paper in Arabic.[99] Both papers are useful, however they do not provide Bedouin numbers, as probably giving estimates of the number of tribesmen is very difficult, as medieval sources do not tend to be accurate and numbers are mostly given for the number of fighting men a tribe contained, and hence there are no estimates on Bedouin numbers within the Fatimid realms. Lev's scholarship on the Fatimid State not only contains much original research on its society and the different ethnicities living in it, but on the ethnic composition of the Fatimid army as well. Further east he has written a paper on the militia of Damascus.[100]

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[88] Dr Farhad Daftary, former director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

[89] Dr Paul E. Walker was previously associated with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago.

[90] Dr Heinz Halm, Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Tübingen.

[91] Dr Yaacov Lev, Professor (Emeritus) in Middle Eastern Studies at Bar Ilan University.

[92] Dr Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid, Egyptian Professor of Islamic Studies.

[93] Dr Michael Brett, Emeritus Reader at SOAS.

[94] Dr Shainool Jiwa is a specialist in Fatimid studies and an Associate Professor at The Institute of Ismaili Studies.

[95] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rule from Egypt*

[96] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*

[97] Daftary, *The Ismāʿilīs: Their History and Doctrines*

[98] Johannes den Heijer, Yaacov Lev and Mark N. Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," *Medieval Encounters* 21, no. 4-5 (2015), 332.

[99] Alaa Kamil Salih al-Eesawi and Ammar Abd al-Amir Al-Salami, "Al-Tarkībah Al-Sukkānīyyah Lil-Mujtamaʿ Al-Misrī Fī ʿahd Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah," *Al-Dirāsāt Al-Jughrāfiyyah*, no. 7 (2016), 72-75.

[100] Yaacov Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1991).; Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," , 337-365; Yaacov Lev, "The Fāṭimids and the Aḥdāth of Damascus 386/996–411/1021," *Die Welt Des Orients* 13 (1982), 97-106.; Yaacov Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" (PhD, The University of Manchester (United Kingdom), 1978), .

5. Scholarship on the Bedouin of the Fatimid era

5.1 After the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, the Levant was for most part of their history, the eastern limit of the Fatimid State. The Syrian desert extends and connects to the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq. By the time that it was controlled by the Fatimids, Bedouin tribes had lived there for over a millennium and many more moved there after the rise of Islam.[101] Daftary states that during the 11th century, the Bedouin tribes of the Syrian desert played a crucial role between the Fatimids, the Abbasids and the Hamdānids[102] and Shīʿism became a tool to mobilise tribes.[103]

Similarly, the Carmathian movement drew its main support from Bedouin tribes, making it essential to investigate the movement.[104] The Carmathians were Ismāʿīlīs but refused to recognise the Fatimids as imams, which ultimately led to an open confrontation and war.[105] Madelung was one of the first academics to distinguish between the beliefs of the Fatimids and the Carmathians, with his later works uncovering further insights.[106] Halm, making use of a wide range of primary sources, presents a comprehensive account of the

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[101] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*

[102] A Taghlibī family which, in the 4th/10th century, provided two minor dynasties in Mesopotamia or *Jazīra* (Mosul) and in Syria (Aleppo), and whose most distinguished representative was the *amīr* of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla. See M. Canard, "Ḥamdānids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012c).

[103] The other large Shīʿite dynasty, apart from the Fatimids, was the Būyid dynasty, an Iranian Shīʿite dynasty named after Abū Shujāʿ Būya (Buwayh), whose descendants ruled the greater part of Iran, Iraq and the Jazīra up to the northern borders of Syria. For further reference see Sadeq Sajjadi, "Būyids," in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, trans. Matthew Melvin-Koushki and Musegh Asatryan (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 185, 192.; Tilman Nagel, "Buyids," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 578-586.

[104] One of the most important early works that dealt with this movement is *Memoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides* by the Dutch orientalist Goeje (d. 1909). [104] It was Ivanow who, having discovered Fatimid works such as the *Istitār al-Imām* of al-Naysāburī, a Fatimid *dāʿī*, produced interesting details about this movement. Madelung, starting from the 1950s, has written extensively on the advent of the Carmathian movement and the foundation of its state in the hinterlands of Iraq and in the eastern regions of the Arabian Peninsula.

[105] Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*, 234, 264

[106] Wilferd Madelung, "Fatimiden Und Baḥrainqarmaṭen," *Der Islam* 34, no. 1 (1959), 34-88.; Wilferd Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, Second Edition ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).; Wilferd Madelung, "Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, ed. Elton Daniel, Vol. XI (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 634-635.

Carmathians.[107] The views of Madelung, Halm and Daftary regarding Carmathian origins

and their relations with the Fatimids are discussed in Chapter 5. Daftary's views are closest

to those of the official Fatimid versions.[108] Fatimid sources always distanced themselves

from the Carmathians.[109] However, Fatimid sources record that the movement started at the

hands of a few *dāʿī*s or their children who reneged against the imams.[110] Brett, Jiwa and

Kennedy's paper also deal with the Carmathian-Bedouin nexus.[111]

Almost no Fatimid-Bedouin interactions are recorded for the periods of the 11th to the 13th

Imams until the conquest of Egypt by the 14th Imam, except the attacks on the 11th Imam

by Bedouin hordes, along with Carmathian leaders before the formation of the Fatimid

State, as discussed by Halm.[112]

While a number of studies are available on the medieval Levantine Bedouin, there are fewer

on the Iraqi Bedouin. Tikrity's paper in Arabic on three major tribes of the Levant and

Mesopotamia is a very important work for this study, though it does not cover the Kalb

Bedouin of northern Syria.[113] This void is filled by Zakkar's[114] dissertation on the Kalbid

Mirdāsids, who virtually controlled the Kalb during the 5th/11th century.[115] Abd al-Mawla

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[107] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*

[108] Madelung, "Fatimiden Und Baḥrainqarmaṭen," , 34-88; Madelung, "Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ," in , 634-635; Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in ; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 87; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 123; Daftary, "The Ismāʿīlīs and their Traditions," in , 239-240

[109] Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*, ed. Mustafa Ghalib, 1st ed., Vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1984a).

[110] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 180

[111] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rule from Egypt*; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Michael Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids:The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).; Hugh Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries" History of Bilad al-Shām Committee, 1992).

[112] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 88-95

[113] Mahmood Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," *Aadaab Al-Rafidayn* 6, no. 7 (1976), 166-167.

[114] Suhayl Zakkar later wrote many books in Arabic on Islamic history and specifically on Syria.

[115] Suhayl Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" (PhD, University of London, 1969), .

has published a book dedicated to the Mirdāsids.[116] This study also uses Mahasinah's work on Fatimid Damascus,[117] which cites many sources from a wide range of scholarship and seems to be unbiased. Although not free from anti-Fatimid bias, Muhammad Jamal al-Din Suroor has written several books on Fatimid external policies and their relations with their neighbours, notably his research on Fatimid relations in the Levant and Iraq is useful for this study.[118]

One of the most comprehensive works on Palestinian history from the advent of Islam to the 11th century is Gil's monumental book, which helps us to examine Fatimid relations with the Bedouin tribe of Tayyʾ. The Cairo Geniza archive also provides important evidence to understand the common populace's reception of Bedouin atrocities. Similarly, letters from the Geniza have been utilised from Goitein's edition.[119] Other works on Fatimid and Ayyubid Palestine containing information regarding the Tayyʾ include works by Shakir and Eddé. [120]

5.2   Not many works have so far been published specifically on the medieval Egyptian Bedouin. Two important authors referred to by the study are al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) and al-Reeti. Al-Maqrīzī, the famed Mamluk historian, who has written extensively on the Fatimids has also written a book on the Arab tribes of Egypt, in which he identifies names

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[116] Mahmood Ahmad Abd al-Mawla, *Banū Mirdās Al-Kilābīyyūn Fi Halab Wa Shimāl Al-Shām* (Alexandria: Dar al-Marifah al-Jami'iyyah, 1985).

[117] Muhammad Husayn Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 1st ed. (Damascus: Dar al-Awail, 2001).

[118] Mohammed Jamal al-Din Suroor, *Al-Nufūdh Al-Fātimi Fī Bilād Al-Shām Wal-ʿIrāq Fil-Qarnayn Al Rabiʿ Wal-Khāmis Baʿd Al-Hijrah* (Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1957).

[119] Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, trans. Ethel Broido, Revised ed. Originally published. in Hebrew in 1983 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).; Moshe Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part I)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67, no. 2 (2004a), 151-167.; Shelomo Dov Goitein and Paula Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. I, Economic Foundations: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[120] Mustafa Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in *Encyclopaedia Palestina*, ed. Ahmad al-Murishli, Vol. Special Volume 2 (Damascus: Palestinian Encyclopedic Authority, 1990).; Anne-Marie Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 159-200.

of the tribes and where and when they settled in Egypt. Many of the tribes mentioned by him seem to have been nomadic when they first moved to Egypt. Although al-Maqrīzī wrote extensively on the Fatimids, he only mentions a few incidents regarding Bedouin interactions with the Fatimid state. This suggests that by the time of the Fatimids, only a few truly nomadic tribes remained that were powerful enough to warrant writing about.[121] Similarly, al-Reeti writes on Arab tribes, most of them nomadic, from the time of the Islamic conquest until the Fatimid era.[122] Al-Namki's work on the socio-politics of the Eastern Desert is a valuable source as it focusses on the Fatimids.[123] Although Murray's (d. 1941) book focusses on the Egyptian Bedouin of his times, it also contains references to earlier Bedouin tribes of Egypt, which have been examined in this study.[124]

The Carmathian attack on Fatimid Egypt has received a lot of attention for its intensity and threat to the Fatimid Empire. This study uses *inter alia Dāʿī ʿImād al-Dīn's* and al-Maqrīzī's 15th century accounts of the invasion, and the analyses by modern academics.[125] Lev's dissertation, though written in 1978, is still relevant, covering the major events involving the Bedouin in Egypt and Syria, at the time of the 14th and 15th Imams.[126] The era of the 16th Imam al-Hākim (d. 411/1021) has generated a lot of scholarly interest.[127] Studies by

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[121] Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad bin 'Alī, *Al-Bayān Wal-Iʿrāb ʿamma Bi-Ardh Misr Min Al-Āʿrāb*, ed. Abd al-Majid Aabidin (Cairo: Alam al-Kotob, 1961).

[122] Mamduh Abd al-Rahman Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Madbouli, 1996), 101.

[123] Ahmad Husayn Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbouli, 2017).

[124] G. W. Murray, *Sons of Ishmael: A Study of the Egyptian Bedouin* (London: Routledge, 1935).

[125] Shainool Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).; Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rule from Egypt*

[126] Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996"

[127] See for example Paul E. Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000).

Kennedy[128], Zakkar, Assaad, Forsyth and Richards[129] contain useful insights into this era, which witnessed the rebellion of Abū Rakwah (d. 397/1007) with the Banū Qurrah Bedouin, which was one of the most serious threats to the Fatimid Empire. Van Nieuwenhuyse has demonstrated that the Fatimids also employed Bedouin to counter the Banū Qurrah.[130] Bramoullé's paper also provides information on the powerful Banū Qurrah.[131] The invasion of North Africa by the Banū Hilāl at the time of Imam al-Mustansir has generated much scholarly interest, for example by Thomson, Brett and Mukhlis.[132] Brett's view on whether the Fatimids mobilised the Banū Hilāl, are debated in Chapter 7 of the study.[133]

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[128] Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"

[129] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" ; Sadek Ismail Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" (PhD, University of London, 1971), .; John Harper Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" (PhD, University of Michigan, 1977), .; Edlyn Suzanne Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance
of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" (MA, San Jose State University, 2002), .

[130] Stijn Van Nieuwenhuyse, "The Uprising of Abū Rakwa and the Bedouins Against the Fāṭimids," *Acta Orientalia Belgica* 17 (2003), 245-264.

[131] David Bramoullé, "L'émirat De Barqa Et Les Fatimides : Les enjeux De La Navigation en Méditerranée Centrale Au Xie Siècle," *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans Et De La Méditerranée*, no. 139 (2016), 73-92.

[132] Kirsten Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir* (London: I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited, 2015).; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Faiq Amin Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" (PhD, University of London, 1964), .

[133] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 188-190; Michael Brett, "The Way of the Nomad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 58, no. 2 (1995), 251-269.

Chapter 1: Bedouin Origins

This chapter investigates the origins and sociopolitical backgrounds of the pre-Islamic Bedouin. This will provide, not only a better comprehension of their relations with Islam in its formative years[134], but also help in understanding their later political stance and relations with the Fatimid imams.

1. The Arabs

Arabs are commonly seen as a compound ethnic group. However, modern scholarship does not view them as one demographic group and according to Webb it now seems incorrect to view all inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula as Arabs.[135] The earliest mention of Arabs in the sources extant with us begins in the ninth century BCE. Along with Arabia, Arab presence is attested to in the Levant and Iraq. While predominantly nomadic, many Arabs took up life in rural villages.[136] Arab tribes have also been attested to in the Sinai Peninsula and Egypt.[137]

Medieval Islamic literature mostly views people living in the south of the Arabian Peninsula as the true original Arabs (*ʿarab ʿāribah*) and people of the northern part of the Peninsula as the Arabicised Arabs (*ʿarab mustaʿribah* or *mutʿarribah*) who adopted the Arabic language and Arab customs.[138] This contradicts most modern historians who view people from the northern parts of the Arabian Peninsula and in the deserts of what we know as the Levant and the Fertile Crescent as the original Arabs. Interestingly, in the 10th

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[134] First three centuries from the advent of Islam.

[135] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 240-293

[136] Lawrence Conrad, "The Arabs," in *The Cambridge Ancient History: Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, AD 425–600*, eds. Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins and Michael Whitby, Vol. 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 678-700.

[137] Murray, *Sons of Ishmael: A Study of the Egyptian Bedouin*

[138] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 234-236

century, al-Qādī al-Nuʿman stated that Ishmael's progeny (Abraham is considered to be from Mesopotamia) are the *ʿarab ʿāribah.*[139]

Some historians have argued that those of the south, mainly Yemen (which the Greeks and Romans called *Arabia Eudaimōn/Felix*), did not identify themselves as Arabs, until much later, when it became politically advantageous to identify as Arabs.[140] Some modern scholars have also suggested that both the northern and southern groups may have their roots in prehistoric times in the Fertile Crescent. Their languages started out from the same Semitic group, before branching out, which was true for their lifestyles as well. The northern group was more nomadic and pursued transhumance, while the southern group settled down, and innovated methods of irrigation and agriculture. The two groups started to converge once more in the centuries before the advent of Islam and subsequently amalgamated after its advent.[141] It is pertinent to note that the first Arabian use of the word 'Arab' in inscriptions comes from the south and not from the north and is a reference to nomads.[142]

Islamic authors always thought the Arabian Peninsula to be the origin of the Arabs. Al-Jāhidh, for example, in reference to pure Arabic, limits the boundaries of Arabia just before Basra, and says in his book *al-Bayān* that the Arabs have one home, and that is the Peninsula.[143]

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[139] al-Tamīmī, al-Qādī al-Nu'mān bin Muhammad, *Ta'wīl Al-Da'āim* Also see the second part of the conclusion of this dissertation where his views regarding the *aʿrāb* are discussed.

[140] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*

[141] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*

[142] Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 4

[143] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 251-253

2. Origins of the words ʿarab, badw and aʿrāb

When most people think of Arabs, they picture Arabic-speaking Muslims from Arabia, and the wider Middle Eastern and North African countries. On the other hand, in some parts of the Arab world, 'Arab' is still used colloquially to refer to the Bedouin.[144] For ancient authors, the name 'Arab' conjured up different images and meanings, depending upon each author's background. Apart from a nomadic lifestyle, for the Graeco-Romans, the word also had the connotation of barbarous plunderers. Secondly, the word could also refer to the people living in Arab principalities such as in the Nabataean Kingdom or those originating from what was known to the Graeco-Romans as 'Arabia'. The word 'Arab' as a reference to the people was later even replaced with 'Saracens' and 'tayyāyē'.[145]

The word ʿarab has been used for people living in Arabia and its adjacent areas since at least the middle of the ninth century BCE.[146] Some modern authors, citing examples from Assyrian and southern Arabian early inscriptions, view that ʿarab originally meant 'desert people, nomads'. In other words, badw and ʿarab essentially meant the same thing. This usage continued until recent times and is still sparingly used.[147] The word used for nomads in the Qurʾān is aʿrāb, its singular being aʿrābī which was how it was adopted by Arab lexicons, while the word aʿrab was used in its wider sense to mean those who spoke Arabic and claimed Arab descent. The word Bedouin is derived from the Arabic word badawī (belonging to the badw; person of the desert or open plains).[148]

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[144] Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 1
[145] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*
[146] Ruqayya Y. Khan, *Bedouin and ʿAbbāsid Cultural Identities: The Arabic Majnūn Laylā Story* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 4.
[147] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*, 39
[148] For more on etymology see Appendix 2. The word Bedouin entered English from French and may have its origin in *badawīyyīn*; the plural of *badawī.*

3. The *badw-hadar* dichotomy

The word *badw*[149] means desert or open plain and may also refer to people living in such environments. The word *hadar means* land with a long-term settlement and may also refer to the people living in such a settlement.[150] The fifteenth-century Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) in his *al-Muqaddimah* (prolegomena) analysed how Bedouin dynasties came to power and became sedentary. This is a central theme in his book.[151] His dichotomic system, although not absolute, of *hadārah* (civilisation of the settled peoples or dwelling in a sedentary manner) and *badāwah* (nomadism or primitivism or simply dwelling in the desert) still holds some value today.[152]

Ibn Khaldūn defines the people of the *badw* as those who dwell outside the cities, making their living as peasants or shepherds. The harder the living conditions, the stronger the sense of blood ties. He considers these ties to be the strongest among the ʿ*arab* who live under the most extreme conditions of all and to whom tribal solidarity built on blood ties (ʿ*asabīyyah*) is the defining feature of identity. The ʿ*arab* are thus a section of the *badw*, the people of the *bādiyah*, characterised by the importance of genealogical relations. From his usage of the word *badw* it is evident that Ibn Khaldūn used it for nomadic primitive peoples in general and not only for those of Arab origins.[153]

Arabic terminology supports the proposition that there is no sharp dichotomy between Bedouin and non-Bedouin Arabs. On the contrary, it shows the close contact between the two and their economic interdependency.[154] Abū Mansūr al-Azharī (d. 379 /980), the

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[149] It is usually pronounced *badu* today.
[150] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," 86, 92
[151] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 166
[152] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*
[153] See the chapter on Bedouin tribes of the Fatimid Empire (Chapter 4) and Appendix 14 for a continuation of this discussion.
[154] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 98

famous lexicographer, states that whoever lives permanently near water, be it in the summer or the winter is settled (*hādir*). This means that people who moved in search of water or for other reasons, if even for a limited period, were to be called *ahl al-bādiyah*.[155] This seems to be a fair assessment of who is to be viewed as a nomad and who is to be viewed as settled.[156] This view is echoed by Ibn Khaldūn who even observed that the Bedouin grew crops. Therefore, Ibn Khaldūn's opinion that Bedouin civilisation should be seen as an extension of the rural way of life is quite a modern opinion.[157]

Modern scholarship has proven that this discussion is applicable even to the earliest pre-Islamic Arab nomads. Historians, like Hoyland, have demonstrated the intermingling of the sedentary and nomadic populations as well as their dependence upon each other. On the other hand, one cannot dismiss the cultural and political differences between the two groups, but they cannot be generalised for all eras and all geographical locations. For example, modern-day Bedouin, who have settled permanently, may preserve their Bedouin identity, including dialects and customs.[158] Some modern authors have even suggested that 'Arabness' is the key to understanding the dichotomy between nomadic and settled peoples, the more settled that a group became the further they went from their *ʿarab* identity.[159]

4. Bedouin identity, society and politics

Ibn Khaldūn developed a model for the rise and fall of dynasties centred around the Bedouin. A Bedouin tribe is united by its *ʿasabīyyah* (bindedness or group solidarity) which

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[155] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," 96.
[156] See Peter A. Webb, "Creating Arab Origins: Muslim Constructions of Al-Jāhiliyya and Arab History" (Doctorate, University of London, 2014), 70-84. According to Webb, al-Azharī also downplays the role of the Arabic language in defining Arabness, rather he restricts it to spatial and lineage requirements. This is in contrast to the definition of Arabness in Khalīl's *al-ʿAyn*. Al-Azharī in another departure from Khalīl, includes non-Arab slaves as Bedouin.
[157] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," 99.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*

over time gains military strength to eventually becoming a settled state. Their leaders rule for about three generations after which decadence sets in and the dynasty falls, only to be replaced by another tribe with ʿasabīyyah.[160]

The Bedouin community was grouped at various levels. The largest grouping was a tribal confederation, which was a grouping of tribes, while the smaller groups consisted of clans or families. These socio-political communities, at their various levels, shared a common ancestry, which could be fictitious or imaginary. Members of these clans and tribes were headed by chieftains. Chiefs of large tribal confederations were sometimes recognised as sovereigns by many sub-tribes thereby holding substantial power.[161] However, the Bedouin prided themselves on their autonomy.[162] The main premise of this tribal lifestyle was equality and liberty combined with a rejection of outside control. This has been the cornerstone of nomadic Bedouin identity since at least two millennia.[163] The Greeks, Romans and Mesopotamians resented the Arab Bedouin, terming them as uncouth, untrustworthy, unreliable, ignorant, and warlike. The resentment, it seems, stemmed from a lack of being able to control them.[164]

The Bedouin developed their own form of social organisation, which was adapted to transhumance but could be applicable to other situations as well. Tribes possessed their own recognised grazing areas. Their predominance over the deserts of Arabia allowed them to trade with other tribes in Arabia and also with peripheral empires. Because of their mobility they were employed as soldiers by the Romans and the Persian Empires.

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[160] Ibid.

[161] Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," 354-359; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*, 148-150

[162] Tribal chiefs in pre-modern times similarly did not have absolute control over other tribe members. All members prided themselves on their freedom and liberty. See John Lewis Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys: Collected during His Travels in the East*, ed. William Ouseley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 115-119, 285.

[163] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 96-97

[164] Ibid.

By the sixth century CE, Bedouin lifestyle had spread even to parts of western Arabia. Hodgson reports that even people who had settled in oases and towns started rearing camels and started to think of themselves as pastoralists. Even so, there was little social stratification among the Bedouin and as a result, there was a lack of high learned culture within Bedouin communities.[165] Even as late as the 10th century, Bedouin tribes like the Banū Kalb displayed ancient Bedouin behavioural patterns like raiding and pastoral mobility, which were only slightly modified when these tribes extended their outreach and interacted with their neighbouring states.[166]

5. The Role of the Bedouin tribe

For the Bedouin, the tribe was the basic and most important unit of society and not the individual, whose rights were connected to his/her tribe.[167] In the northern and central parts of the Peninsula, political organisation in smaller tribes was elementary. Poor tribes of the inner deserts were little more than loose assemblages of small autonomous groups. Almost all members belonged to some tribal unit, which was united by a shared patrilineal descent. Usually, the tribes did not admit individual land ownership but rather shared rights over water and pastures, which extended, at times, to even the flocks being shared by the tribe. Members of the tribe protected the honour, goods and lives of its individuals.[168]

The smaller, poorer tribes were headed by a *sayyid* or *shaykh*, who was generally an elected leader from a single family and not more than the first among equals.[169] The wealthier tribes could attain a superstructure, whose paramount chief controlled a network of clan chiefs.

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[165] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*, 108-109, 148

[166] Kurt Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," *Nomadic Peoples* 15, no. 1 (2011), 2.

[167] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*; Ali H. Hutaym, "Al-Tandhīm Al-Ijtimāʿīyyah Li-Nidham Al-Qabīlah Al-Badawīyyah," *Al-Adab Journal* 2, no. 111 (2015), 529.

[168] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 111; Lewis, *The Arabs in History*

[169] Ibid.

These tribal confederations could negotiate with the states that they bordered. Ulrich argues that pre-Islamic Arabia was hierarchical, although these *shaykh*s had far less control over their tribes than did those, for example, in Central Asia.[170] On the other hand, southern Arabia saw the emergence of kingship, though there were kings attested to in the northern tribes as well.[171]

After the emergence of Islam, Bedouin tribes failed to form strong states or empires, only being able to maintain rudimentary regimes. Some tribes that did strive to establish state-like dominion, like the Banū Jarrāh, failed to form long-lasting states because of many reasons, including tribal egocentrism.[172] Nevertheless, Franz suggests that almost no other social group stood out for their relative isolation from the governments that bordered or encircled them like the nomadic Bedouin did with their military capacity, which helped them develop a distinct type of political agency. Therefore, a tribe, according to Franz could be considered a nation or even in a primitive sense a state, i.e. a self-sufficient political entity.[173]

6. Ancient Bedouin religious beliefs

Polytheism was the dominant belief-system in the Arabian Peninsula. According to Hoyland, until the fourth century CE most of its inhabitants were polytheists,[174] although monotheistic religion was not unknown in Arabia from an early date.[175] Accurate details are not found on how widespread these monotheistic religions, like Christianity and

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[170] Brian Ulrich, *Arabs in the Early Islamic Empire: Exploring Al-Azd Tribal Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 7-8.
[171] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 119-120. Also see Robert G. Hoyland, "Arab Kings, Arab Tribes and the Beginnings of Arab Historical Memory in Late Roman Epigraphy," in *From Hellenism to Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 374-400.
[172] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 2-3.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 139
[175] Ibid.; Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700

Judaism, spread among the Bedouin, although it is probable that the further the tribes lived from population centres or from the frontier, the further they remained from monotheistic influences.[176]

How Islam saw the Bedouin and how the Bedouin dealt with Islam is discussed in Chapter 2.[177] There are no comprehensive works that deal with Bedouin faith, although one can find them scattered along different books and papers.[178] Accounts by European travellers record valuable details of the more recent post-Islamic Bedouin religious practices. Some accounts are unique as they record Bedouin religious practices before and after the rise of the *wahhābī*s.[179]

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[176] For more on ancient Bedouin religions see Appendix 4.

[177] See Appendix 12 for a further examination of the Ancient Bedouin.

[178] Emanuel Marx, *Bedouin of Mount Sinai; an Anthropological Study of their Political Economy*, 1st ed.Berghahn Books, 2013), 134-169.; Clinton Bailey, *Bedouin Culture in the Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).; Clinton Bailey, "Bedouin Religious Practices in Sinai and the Negev," *Anthropos* 77, no. 1 (1982), 65-88.; Heikki Palva, "North Arabian Bedouin's Conception of the Beyond," *Studia Orientalia (Helsinki, Finland)* 70 (1993), 75-80.; Murray, *Sons of Ishmael: A Study of the Egyptian Bedouin*, 149-200

[179] Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys: Collected during His Travels in the East*, 99-105, 280-283; William Palgrave, *Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia (1862-1863)*, 3rd ed., Vol. 2 (London: MacMillan and Co, 1866).; Giovanni Bonacina, *The Wahhabis seen through European Eyes (1772-1830) Deists and Puritans of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

Map 1. Pre-Islamic Bedouin Tribes
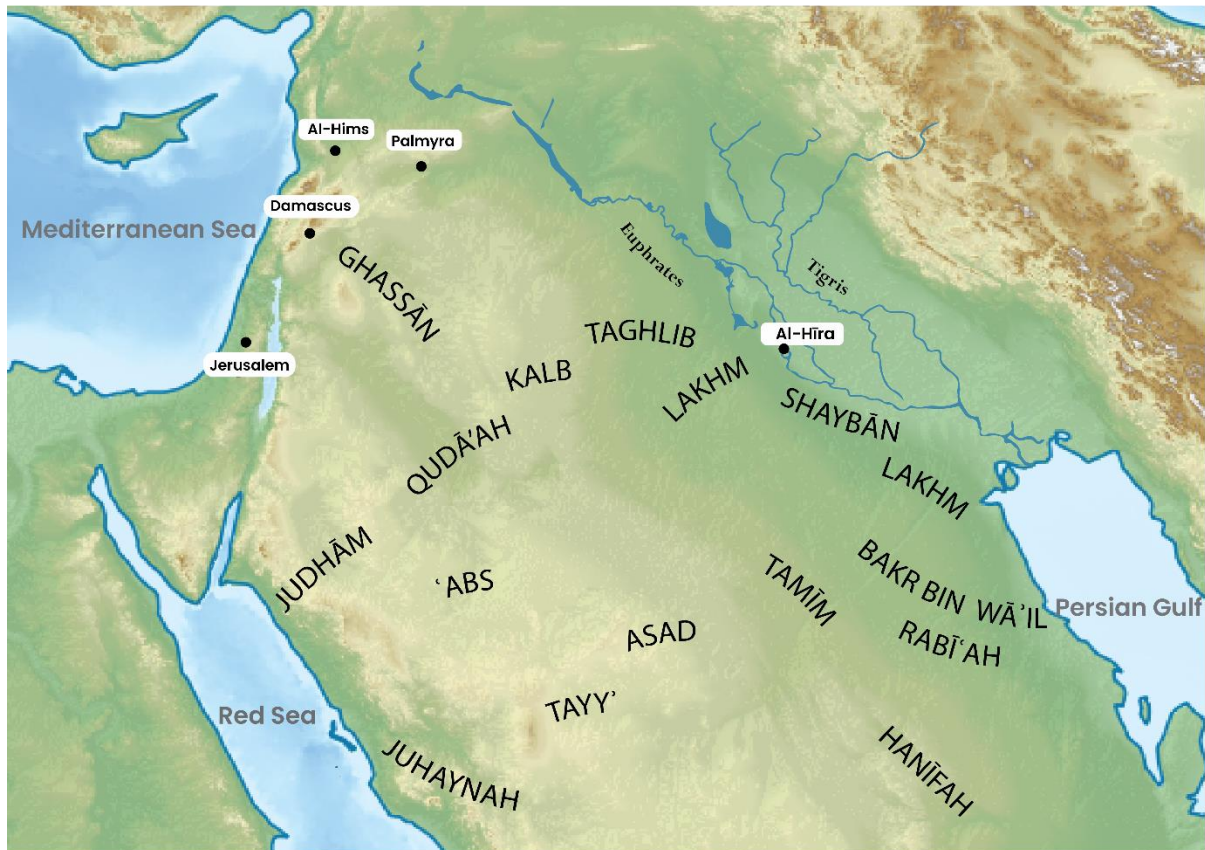
Chapter 2: Early Islam and the Bedouin

This chapter attempts to investigate the impact of Islam on the Bedouin and vice versa, including the various movements within early Islam supported by them. It also briefly studies Bedouin support for the family of the Prophet and their belief in Shīʿī Islam. This will be important in order to understand Bedouin relations with the Fatimids, which will be analysed in subsequent chapters of this study.

1. Bedouin at the advent of Islam

In the nascent stages of Islam, Bedouin tribal groups who were not allied with the emerging Muslim state at Medina, were regarded with contempt.[180] The Qurʾān describes the *aʿrāb* as outsiders, living around Medina and therefore outside the Muslim settlement. It also reproaches them for lax religious belief (9:97-98, 101, 120; 49:14)[181], stating that they had not adopted *īmān* (submission with belief and conviction) but merely *islām* (submission).[182] The former is explained by al-Azmeh to mean a durable alliance, among other things, and the latter to mean a temporary alliance.[183] Certainly, all *aʿrāb* were not chastised by the Qurʾān, as it explicitly states that there were also believers from among the Bedouin and recognises their sincere faith (9:99)[184], which insinuates that the condemning verses were probably directed at specific Bedouin tribes.[185]

Mackintosh-Smith argues that it was the very raiding ethos of these nomads upon which the military success of the early Islamic community depended.[186] Islam, did in fact, unite

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[180] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 109

[181] Peter Webb, "Bedouin," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). See Appendix 5 for these verses.

[182] (49:14)

[183] Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People*, 362-363 According to the Fatimids there was a major difference between the two terms, which will be discussed later in the second part of the Conclusion.

[184] See Appendix 5 for this verse.

[185] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 107-109.

[186] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*, 166

multitudes of Bedouin tribes who were as diverse in their social outlooks as their dialects, and the Bedouin in turn bolstered Muslim forces.[187]

2.1   The Prophet and the *aʿrāb*

Islamic sources name the tribes that accepted Islam, showing that the origins of many of these 'Companions' were nomadic.[188] This contrasts Islamic historiography which sometimes restricts the Bedouin Companions to only the pure Bedouin who continued to live in the deserts or only later moved to towns or the newly formed garrison cities.[189] The Prophet introduced himself to the tribes coming to Mecca for Hajj, as well as those gathering at the various annual markets and called them towards Islam.[190] A few surrounding tribes started to send delegations to the Prophet at Mecca to see what he stood for, while the majority of these delegations from all over the Arabian Peninsula started to visit the Prophet after the conquest of Mecca (8/629 or 630).[191] Many tribal leaders were reinstated as chiefs of their tribes and given permission to lead prayers and call towards Islam.[192] Islamic sources relate that the Prophet was very patient with the Bedouin in spite of some of them not showing him the respect his other Companions showed him, with some even mistreating him.[193] The Prophet is reported to have said that 'one who becomes a Bedouin becomes rude and rough'.[194] Notwithstanding, Islamic sources are full of anecdotes which illustrate how the Prophet taught the Bedouin the fundamentals of Islam, teaching them even the basics of ablution and ritual purity along with good morals and character.[195]

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[187] al-Harithi, "Daʿwat Al-Nabī Ilā Al-Aʿrāb" 369-372
[188] Ibid.
[189] Al-Wadʿan, *Al-Isābah Fi Dhikr Al-ʿArāb Min Al-Sahābah*, 6-10
[190] al-Harithi, "Daʿwat Al-Nabī Ilā Al-Aʿrāb" , 147-159
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Al-Wadʿan, *Al-Isābah Fi Dhikr Al-ʿArāb Min Al-Sahābah*, 10
[194] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 113
[195] al-Harithi, "Daʿwat Al-Nabī Ilā Al-Aʿrāb" , 102-135.

Many Gulf Arabs today approach the subject of the *aʿrāb* of the Qurʾān cautiously, even justifying why many of them were sceptical of the Prophet or antagonistic to him, and many view themselves as inheritors of that legacy, morals and ideals.[196] This is probably because of their strong sociopolitical bonds with the Bedouin.[197] Scholars have also tried to analyse and evaluate Bedouin morals and character which affected their dealings with early Islam.[198] Webb, for example, proposes that the Arabs of early Islam would have considered the Bedouin as outsiders and he attempts to show the prejudice against them in early Islam.[199]

The Prophet migrated (did *hijrah*) to Medina from Mecca in 1/622. He called Muslims to make the *hijrah* themselves. New converts to Islam were urged to settle in Medina, which was adopted by Prophet Muhammad as a *dār al-hijrah* (abode of emigration). Many converts, initially from Mecca and then from the other surrounding Arab tribes including nomadic ones, migrated to Medina. The early Muslims were divided into the *muhājirīn* (those who had undertaken the *hijrah*, i.e. migrants; pl. of *muhājir*) and *ansār* (lit. the helpers; reference to the residents of Medina at the time of the Prophet's arrival). It is reported that those who did not wish to migrate were considered by the Prophet as *aʿrāb al-muslimīn* (Bedouin of the Muslims).[200]

The Prophet also sent units to various Bedouin tribes, some of whom were instructed to fight, others to teach the Bedouin the basics of Islam.[201] Many of the desert-dwelling

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[196] Ghazi A. Algosaibi, *The Gulf Crisis: An Attempt to Understand*, 1st ed. (London: Taylor and Francis, 1993), 96-113.
[197] J. E. Peterson, "Tribe and State in the Arabian Peninsula," *The Middle East Journal* 74, no. 4 (2020), 501-520.
[198] al-Harithi, "Daʿwat Al-Nabī Ilā Al-Aʿrāb" , 302-339
[199] Webb, "Bedouin," in
[200] Jabali, *Companions of the Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments*, 95-104; Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People*, 362-363
[201] al-Harithi, "Daʿwat Al-Nabī Ilā Al-Aʿrāb" , 168-185.

Bedouin tribes of Arabia pledged their allegiance to the Prophet in the ten-year period after

he migrated to Medina till his passing away in 11/632.[202]

2.2   The early Islamic State and the Bedouin after the Prophet

The Prophet had advised that the main bonding force be faith rather than tribal bonds of

kinship. After the Prophet's death, preference was given by Abu Bakr (d. 13/634) and

ʿUmar (d. 23/644) to early converts, while ʿUmar relegated the nomadic Arabs to a position

that was below the traditional supporters of the Prophet.[203] There was increasing

disaffection in the tribes at the time of ʿUthmān (d. 36/665) because of the growing power

of the aristocracy promoted by him.[204]

At the time of the *fitnah* (lit. trial; reference to the period that began after the murder of

ʿUthmān, culminating in the battle of Siffīn in 37/657) there were tribes whose members

fought on both sides, i.e. with Imam ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib (d. 40/661) and with Muʿāwiyyah

(d. 60/680).[205] ʿAlī had already previously moved to Kufa, after the battle of the Camel (*al-*

Jamal), where he had much support from the Arab tribes. Before the battle of Siffīn, ʿAlī

reorganised the tribal groups and tilted the composition of the then-existing seven tribal

groups towards the Yamanīs who were more predisposed to him. At the same time, he also

curtailed the powers of the tribal leadership[206], and gave them instead to Islamic leaders,

who now became the new leaders of the Shīʿah.[207]

Petersen states that opponents of the Umayyads identified their rule with the tribal

community, though this depended upon the viewpoint of the narrator. For example, Sayf

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[202] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 36
[203] Jabali, *Companions of the Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments*, 101-102.
[204] Petersen, *Ali and Muawiya in Early Arabic Tradition*, 9
[205] Jabali, *Companions of the Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments*, 144
[206] However, tribal chieftains still wielded influence.
[207] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 45-46.

bin ʿUmar (d. around 809 CE) viewed the followers of ʿAlī as being primarily from the Bedouin.[208] Leder infers that this is because the Bedouin were beyond the control of the urban state, therefore viewed as inferior to the sedentary population.[209]Al-Sarakhsī (d. 483/1090) was of the opinion that the state of being an *aʿrābī* was because of religious ignorance,[210] which is close to the Fatimid view as espoused in their texts.[211]

2.3 *Hijrah*, *jihād* and the Bedouin

This part of the study analyses the role of Islam in early Bedouin migration. The earliest Muslims were known as *magaritai* (or *mōagaritai*) in the Egyptian papyri written in Greek. After the 640s CE onwards the term *mhaggrē* (or *mhaggrāē*) is used in Syriac literary texts to refer to them. It is possible that the word being conveyed is *muhājir* (the one who undertakes *hijrah*). In Arabic literary texts it is opposed to *taʿarrub*[212] (the return to desert life) alluding to the one who continues to lead a nomadic carefree existence, thereby not participating in *jihād* (lit. to strive; also a reference to an Islamic holy war).[213] There was no need for *hijrah* after the strengthening of the Islamic state at Medina and it is reported that the Prophet said that there was no *hijrah* after the conquest of Mecca and that tribal members were permitted to stay in their traditional tribal areas. Nevertheless, Muʿāwiyyah, who was not a Bedouin, was referred to as an *aʿrābī* by ʿAlī because he had not undertaken the *hijrah*, which shows their secondary status.[214]

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[208] Petersen, *Ali and Muawiya in Early Arabic Tradition*, 53, 79, 80, 81
[209] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 114
[210] Ibid.
[211] Will be discussed in part two of the Conclusion.
[212] Or *aʿrābīyyah* (way of the nomad).
[213] Robert G. Hoyland, "Reflections on the Identity of the Arabian Conquerors of the Seventh-Century Middle East," *Al-ʿUṣūr Al-Wusṭā* 25, no. 1 (Nov 1, 2017), 123.
[214] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 108-109.

Subsequently, *hijrah* was associated with *jihād* and the willingness to do *jihād* became the criterion for not referring to people as Bedouin as has been reported from ʿUmar. [215]

2.4 Bedouin migration across new frontiers

The call towards *jihād* led to waves of new tribal migrations, from the deserts of Arabia, northwards to the new garrison towns of Basra and Kufa[216] and into Egypt and beyond.[217] Those who did not migrate and chose to remain nomadic within their traditional territory were not considered equal to those who had. Some nomadic 'Companions' could not let go of their nomadic lifestyle and chose, especially in the city of Basra, to live outside the city limits as Bedouins.[218]

Leder says ʿUmar realised the importance of Bedouin tribes who could provide military service.[219] Many of the tribal Bedouin who had until recently fought against the Muslim armies were utilised, after having converted, in the new expeditions. According to Franz the deepest and most sudden change the Bedouin encountered was the 'expansionist policy' either started by Prophet Muhammad in his last years or by Abū Bakr, which resulted in many tribes being dispersed from Arabia over a vast area, a change which was irreversible.[220] Conrad writes that these tribal warriors were motivated more by tribal ambitions and goals than the Islamic message, for it is implausible that they would abandon their worldly attitude towards religion so quickly.[221]

With the expansion of the Islamic state, tribal Bedouin from the Peninsula spread rapidly to Syria, Iraq, western Persia and Egypt. Further, with the expansion of the Umayyad

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[215] Ibid.
[216] See Appendix 7 for more on sedentarisation in the garrison towns of Basra and Kufa.
[217] Jabali, *Companions of the Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments*, 95-104
[218] Ibid.
[219] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 109
[220] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 25-26
[221] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700

Empire (661-750), these tribes penetrated even further away from the Arabian Peninsula, as far away as Spain in the west and Khurāsān in the east.[222] Even in the Abbasid Empire, the majority of its soldiery originated from the Bedouin[223], even though its 'intelligentsia' was from the urban population.[224]

3. Bedouin religious and political movements

3.1 The early Islamic State and the Umayyads

After the passing away of the Prophet, at the time of the early Islamic state, the Bedouin were not welcomed into the political circles of the early Islamic state, while their political autonomy and military strength were seen as a threat. They were generally looked down upon and their culture was considered inferior, probably to disqualify or dissuade them from political life and to maintain dominance over them.[225]

After the Prophet's death, many tribes revolted against the central authority of Abū Bakr and refused to acknowledge his authority. This was seen by later Islamic writers as a war against Islam itself, although their intention may have been to justify and glorify Abū Bakr's actions. However, many modern historians do not agree with this notion, giving several reasons for the tribal rejection of Medinese authority, including the view that the revolts may have been a break with the leadership at Medina and not with Islam.[226] It is interesting that the 19th Tayyibī *dāʿī*, Sayyidunā Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn states, with regard to the Banū Hanīfah tribe, that they refused Abū Bakr's authority because they did not

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[222] Marshall W. Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in *A History of the Crusades, Volume 1: The First Hundred Years* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2016), 81-84.; Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 26

[223] The Bedouin were mostly commanded by fellow tribesmen.

[224] Ralph W. Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography*, Vol. 85 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995), 42.; Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 25

[225] Leder 114

[226] Elias Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 72-74.

consider him the true successor of the Prophet.[227] Nevertheless, Abū Bakr swiftly sent armies to crush the uprisings, drawing heavily on the Bedouin tribes from the Hijaz. The wars were known as *hurūb al-riddah* (wars against apostasy) and were concentrated in the central, eastern and southern parts of the Peninsula.[228] Franz suggests that the *hurūb al-riddah* were for territorial expansion and that they had already started a few years earlier at the time of Prophet Muhammad.[229] Shoufani presumes that the Prophet, during his very last days, had sent a campaign towards northern Arabia against the Arab tribes in Syria who had apostatised.[230]

A religious movement that was predominantly supported by the Bedouin was the Khārījte movement, which arose after the battle of Siffīn.[231] It took an egalitarian doctrine, thus becoming popular among the Bedouin tribes who resisted external control and believed in individual freedom and tribal autonomy.[232] The Khawārij were violently opposed to Imam ʿAlī and were the ones who plotted against him and assassinated him,[233] since they opposed ʿAlī's acceptance of an arbitration.[234] On the other hand, many tribesmen of Kufa and lower Iraq supported the right of ʿAlī and his progeny as the rightful imams.[235]

Crone's analysis concludes that although tribesmen of Arabia desisted kings[236], they conceded to sanctity, thus suggesting that Shīʿism may have tribal roots, specifically in the tribes of southern Arabia who were accustomed to it, while the northern tribes desisted this

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[227] Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*, Vol. 2 (Damascus: Institut Français du Proche Orient, 2010), 128-129.

[228] Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia*, 7.

[229] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 25.

[230] Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia*, 77-99.

[231] Another chief movement was the Qarmatī movement. On the origins of the Khārījte movement see Hannah-Lena Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021), 316.; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 45-46

[232] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 83

[233] Crone, "The First Civil War and Sect Formation," in , 17-32

[234] Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition*, 41-44

[235] For more on the tribes which supported the Khawārij see Adam R. Gaiser, "Khārijīs," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. Kate Fleet and et al., Three ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

[236] This is not entirely correct as has been discussed in this chapter itself.

form of hereditary sanctity. However, it should be noted that an examination of the tribes supporting ʿAlī's right to the caliphate shows that even some northern tribes supported him. Crone further states that Khārījiism developed in Basra, where the dominant tribes were of northern, eastern and mostly nomadic origin, as opposed to Kufa, where they were mostly of southern origin.[237] It should be noted that at the advent of Islam and during the early Islamic State, many of these tribes were still nomadic or heavily influenced by nomadism, holding on to their traditions and especially their genealogical origins. That is probably also the reason there were constant inter-tribal conflicts between the northern and southern tribes during Umayyad and Abbasid rule.[238]

Muʿāwiyyah reorganised the Kufan tribal groups after Imam al-Hasan bin ʿAlī's (d. 49/669) abdication of the caliphate, but there were still Shīʿī sympathisers, especially among the Yamanī tribal groups. They were primarily the ones who called Hasan's brother, the second imam, al-Husayn bin ʿAlī (61/680) to Kufa, promising their support. However, most withdrew their support and Imam al-Husayn was martyred at Karbala. The *Tawābbūn* (penitents) (61-64/680-683), who sought to avenge the killing of al-Husayn and expiate their own failure to support him, were crushed by the Umayyads. According, to Daftary, they were constituted totally from Arabs, especially the Yamanī tribes of Kufa.[239] Al-Mukhtār al-Thaqafī's (d. 687) purge of Imam al-Husayn's killers was also heavily supported by southern Arabian tribesmen, but not exclusively, as this movement also drew its base from the *mawālī*[240] (pl. of *mawlā*; clients, usually of non-Arab origin).[241]

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[237] Patricia Crone, "The Khārijites," in *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Patricia Crone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005c), 55.; Patricia Crone, "The Shīʿites of the Umayyad Period," in *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Patricia Crone (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005d), 71.

[238] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 176, 242

[239] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 49-52.

[240] For more on the *mawālī* see Appendix 8.

[241] Crone, "The Shīʿites of the Umayyad Period," in , 70-86

4. Conclusion

Many Bedouin tribes were predisposed to support the right of the *ahl al-bayt* to the caliphate, which was manifested in their support of the many Shīʿite revolts.[242] Subsequent, nomadic migration, their subsequent sedentarisation and intermarriage with non-Arabs completely changed Arab demographical composition. It also led to a weakening of tribal *ʿasabīyyah* and the diminishing of tribal power structures. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the tribes ceased to play absolutely any political role.[243] For most of their history, the Abbasids had little power over the vast expanses of the deserts of Arabia and over the fringes of their empire, and hence they would not have been very interested in investing too many resources to assert their authority.[244] With the weakening of the Abbasids at the hands of the Buyids, a few nomadic tribes slowly regained lands in Iraq too.[245] This is important to understand the strengthened position of the Bedouin tribes at the time of the Fatimid State.

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[242] See Appendix 13 for the Bedouin at the time of the First Abbasid State.

[243] For Crone's views on the Bedouin of the Islamic states see Appendix 9.

[244] Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (Oxon: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 1-238.

[245] Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 84-85.
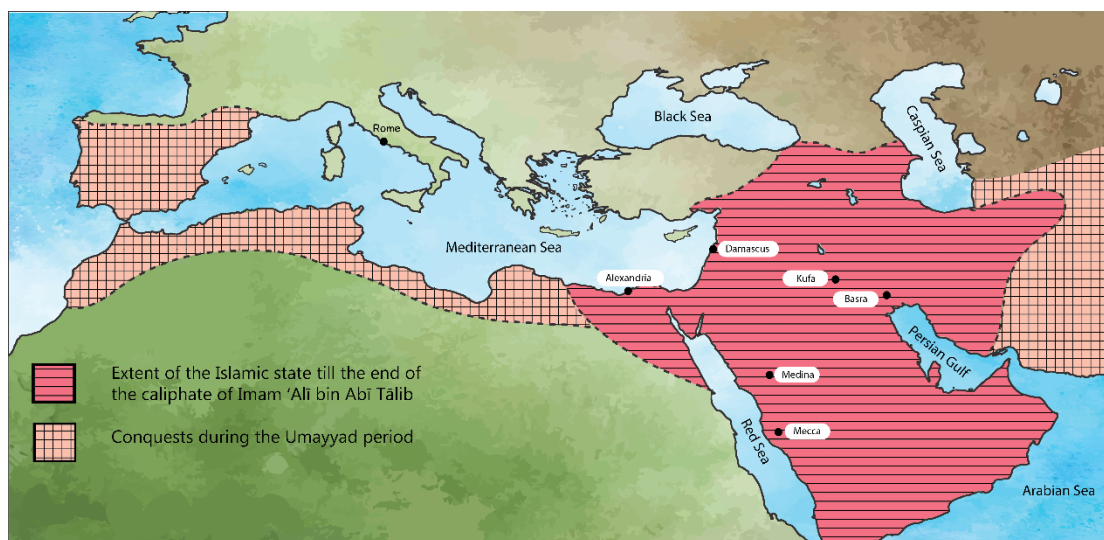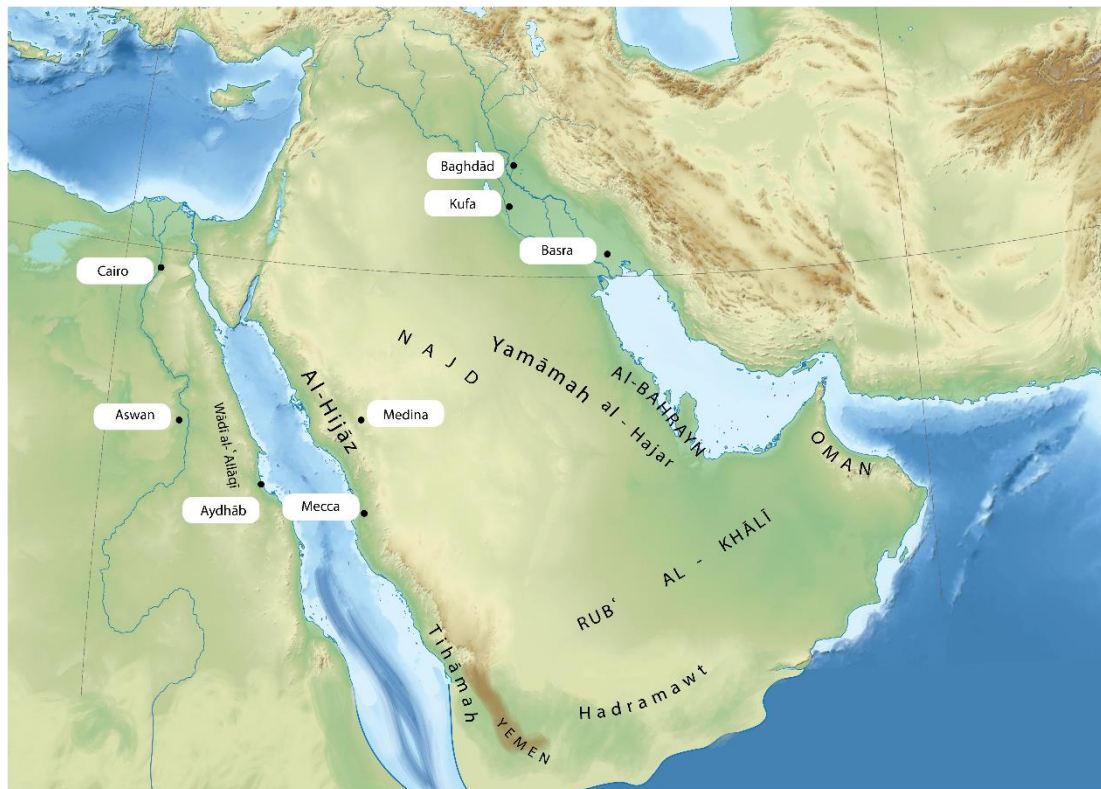
Map 2 and 3. Early Islam and the Bedouin

Chapter 3: The World of the Fatimids

1. Introduction

In this study of the relationship between the Bedouin and the Fatimids, it is necessary first to acquire a better understanding of the Fatimids. This chapter therefore aims to provide a concise understanding of the Fatimids, notably their faith, the advent of their empire and its territorial expansion, and the socioreligious conditions during the Fatimid Empire, which will provide a basis for subsequent discussions.

The Fatimids, as the name suggests, trace their lineage to the daughter of the Prophet *Mawlātunā*[246] Fātimah *al-zahrāʾ* (the radiant one; d. 11/632), and her husband, *Mawlānā* ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib.[247] They were a Shīʿī-Ismāʿīlī dynasty who ruled for over two centuries from the early tenth century CE onwards, being the first major Shīʿah dynasty to rule for such an extended period of time. The Fatimid Empire, as it is known, was a vast empire, spreading at its peak from the Atlantic Ocean, in the west, to Baghdad, in the east, and from the present-day Syrian-Turkish border, in the north, to Yemen, in the south.[248]

2. Earliest dissension in islam

According to the Shīʿah, the main reason for the split in the nascent Islamic community after the death of the Prophet was over succession rights.[249] The group which supported ʿAlī as the Prophet's successor came to be known as the *shīʿah* (partisans) of ʿAlī.[250] There

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[246] The word *mawlā* has several meanings. For the Shīʿah, and especially the Bohras, it is used for the Prophet's Legatee ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib. Used in conjunction with their imams and *dāʿī*s it means *inter alia* 'master' or 'lord'. The feminine noun *mawlātunā* and the masculine *mawlānā* both mean 'our master/lord'.

[247] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 6-9

[248] Ibid.

[249] Farhad Daftary, "Origins and Early History: Shīʿīs, Ismailis and Qarmaṭīs," in *A Short History of the Ismailis* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998c), 23-25.

[250] The Shīʿah believe that the Prophet chose and appointed ʿAlī as his successor. See Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad : A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-27, 141.

were other groups, such as the *murjiʾah*[251], *khawārij* and a commonality which did not view ʿAlī as the successor to the Prophet. During the time of the Abbasids, the majority which took ʿAlī as the fourth Caliph, later came to be known as the Sunnīs.[252] Additionally, the Shīʿah believed in the right of the progeny of the Prophet, through his daughter Fātimah and ʿAlī, to the imamate.[253]

3. The Shīʿah

For the Shīʿah, the first and second centuries of Islam were challenging times because of the lack of political authority. The Umayyads (661-750) and the Abbasids (750-1258) pursued anti-Shīʿah and especially anti-ʿAlīd policies.[254] The Shīʿah too split into various factions, each supporting an ʿAlīd as imam.[255] Those who believed in the imamate of Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq (d. 148/765), split after him into several groups. The group, which was to later become the majority, viewed his son, Mūsā al-Kādhim (d. 183/799), as the imam. This group came to be known as the 'Twelvers' or the 'Imāmīs'. A smaller group viewed al-Sādiq's second son, Imam Ismāʿīl (d. about 145/762), as the imam and supported his and his descendants' right to the imamate. This group came to be known as the Ismāʿīlīyyah (Ismāʿīlīs). A further split in the Ismāʿīlīs, after the death of al-Sādiq, resulted in the separation of the Qarāmitah (Carmathians)[256] who believed that Ismāʿīl's son Imam Muhammad (d. after 179/795-796) was the seventh and last imam/speaker-prophet, the

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[251] A group which suspended judgment on whether ʿUthmān and ʿAlī were legitimate caliphs. The *khawārij* on the other hand did not recognise either of them as legitimate caliphs. The *khawārij* abhorred all who did not believe in their doctrines, especially the Shīʿah.

[252] Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam*, 17-32; W. Madelung, "Murdjiʾa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).; John McHugo, *A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'Is* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 23-120.

[253] In some cases, descent only from ʿAlī was enough, such as in the case of those who supported ʿAlī's son Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafīyyah's (d. 81/700 or 701) imamate. Muhammad's mother was not Fātimah.

[254] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 10

[255] For more on what constitutes sects and factions and what separates them from the orthodoxy see Ronald Geaves, "Sectarianism in Sunnī Islam," in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, eds. Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 26-29.

[256] Qarāmitah (Carmathians) was the name given to the adherents of a branch of the Ismāʿīlīyyah, who will be discussed in Chapter 5.

awaited *qāʾim* (riser), anticipating his return as the heralder of the final age of God, which in effect would mean that there could be no imam after him.[257] This belief put them at odds with the Fatimids, who according to their beliefs succeeded Muhammad bin Ismāʿīl as imams, and henceforth the term Qarāmitah was used to identify those Ismāʿīlīs who refused to identify the Fatimids as legitimate imams.[258] The Carmathians were able to violently oppose the Fatimids because they gathered the support of powerful Bedouin tribes. The Chapter on the Carmathians will also discuss Carmathian origins and their relations with the Fatimids.[259]

4. Fatimid beliefs

The Fatimids believed that the 7th Imam, Muhammad bin Ismāʿīl (d. 197/813), was followed by three imams from his progeny, who remained in seclusion, the tenth being Imam al-Husayn bin Ahmad (d. circa 268/881), the progenitor of the Fatimids.[260] At this time, the identity of the imams remained hidden, except from their most trusted followers. At the heart of Fatimid doctrine was the concept of imamate, an imam was necessary at all times to preserve Islam and guide humanity towards Allah. Their supporters believed them to be the true imams, vicegerents of Allah and the heirs to the Prophet.

5. *Daʿwah* and *dawlah*[261]

The imam was the spiritual head of the *daʿwah* (lit. call or mission; reference here is to the religiopolitical organisation of the Fatimids), which regulated and spread their faith across the known world with the help of *dāʿī*s. The imam was also the temporal head of the *dawlah*

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[257] For more details on the Shīʿah-Sunni split and the subsequent split into various sects see Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 1-98; Daftary, "Origins and Early History: Shīʿīs, Ismailis and Qarmaṭīs," in , 21-62

[258] Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in

[259] See Chapter 5.

[260] Generally, the term 'Fatimids' denotes only the imam-caliphs starting from ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī bi-Allāh onwards. However, the Bohras use the term for all imams, including his predecessors and all his successors.

[261] For more on these two terms see also part two of the Conclusion.

(state).[262] For the Fatimids and their followers today, the *daʿwah* is much more than just a temporal mission, it is in fact a perpetual spiritual movement since time immemorial. Central to the *daʿwah* is the concept of imamate which became the fountainhead of Fatimid authority.[263] This, along with the idea of the apocalyptic return of al-Mahdī is important to understand Carmathian antagonism towards the Fatimids and the behaviour of some of the major Bedouin tribes of the Levant vis-à-vis the Fatimids.[264] This will subsequently be dealt with in more detail in the next three chapters and in part two of the Conclusion.

6. Advent of the Fatimid Empire

Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*s and agents had been propagating the return of God's rule. The call was messianic, and the awaited one was the al-Mahdī. Official Fatimid history records that the imam who came out of seclusion was the 11th Imam[265] ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī bi-Allāh (d. 322/934)[266], son of the 10th Imam al-Husayn.[267] A network of *dāʿī*s and agents had been planning and working for his manifestation, some nearly going back more than a century and a half, since the time of the 5th Imam, al-Sādiq.[268]

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[262] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 11-14, 78; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 6-7

[263] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 269-276; Farhad Daftary, "The Fatimid Age: Dawla and Daʿwa," in *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998a), 64, 89-106.

[264] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 20-25; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*.

[265] From the 11th Imam to the 21st, they were also rulers of a temporal state. That is why academia uses the term 'imam-caliph' for them and counts Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī bi-Allāh as the first imam-caliph, who according to the Bohras was the 11th imam. According to the Bohra doctrine, all imams were also Allah's caliphs on His Earth, and held spiritual as well as temporal authority, even though most were not able to exercise temporal authority.

[266] The name usually used in most Arabic sources is ʿUbayd Allāh, which is a diminutive form of ʿAbd Allāh. This was mostly propagated by their Sunnī Abbasid rivals as a form of disrespect.

[267] See Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*, ed. Mustafa Ghalib, 1st ed., Vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1984b), 143. For alternate discussions see Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 99-107

[268] Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire: An Annotated English Translation of Al-Qāḍī Al-Nuʿmān's Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa*, 2,5,9, 20-61, 121-128 Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān in his book *Iftitāh al-Daʿwah* narrates an interesting meeting between a *dāʿī* and an old Bedouin man, most likely in Egypt, before the Fatimid Empire had been established. The Bedouin persistently asked him questions until the *dāʿī* revealed who he was and took the oath of allegiance from him. This Bedouin turned out to be one of the finest proselytes that the *dāʿī* had converted and would later tell him that he had prior knowledge about the *dāʿī*'s arrival.

The Fatimid belief in the Mahdī, which academics term apocalyptic or messianic, was supported by a belief in the fulfilment of past prophecies based on inter alia verses of the Qurʾān or traditions of the Prophet, in addition to esoteric interpretations of the sharia. This was a powerful motivating force, as successfully demonstrated by *Dāʿī* Abū ʿAbd-Allāh in the Kutāma.[269]

ʿAbd Allah al-Mahdī was the founder of the Fatimid Empire, with the help of his *dāʿī,* Abū ʿAbd Allah al-Shīʿī and his Kutāmā tribesmen.[270] After having moved to Sijilmāsa[271] from Salamiyya (Syria), he travelled eastwards and entered Ifrīqīyyah (parts of North Africa, covering modern Tunisia, eastern Algeria and the western part of Libya), initially settling in al-Qayrawān (Kairouan; present-day Tunisia) in 296/909, and later building his own capital al-Mahdīyyah, in present-day Tunisia. Imam al-Mahdī strengthened his state, taking hold of authority over the *daʿwah* and *dawlah.* Al-Mahdī was succeeded by the Imams, Muhammad al-Qāʾim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 334/946) and Ismāʿīl al-Mansūr bi-Allāh (d. 341/953) who defeated Makhlad bin Kaydād al-Nukkarī (d. 336/947) and suppressed his Khārijī rebellion against the Fatimid Empire.

The Fatimids spread eastwards and westwards from Ifrīqīyyah on the Mediterranean coast, controlling about 1300 miles of the North African coastline, and even conquered Sicily. The other side of the Mediterranean was predominantly under the control of the Umayyads[272] and the Byzantine Empire.[273] A few small Khārijī pockets remained in the

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[269] Ibid.; Velji, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fatimid Empire*, 2, 5, 9
[270] The Berber Kutāma are discussed in part one of the Conclusion.
[271] Was a town in modern-day eastern Morocco.
[272] They had moved westwards after the Abbasid revolution and managed to form a state in the Iberian Peninsula.
[273] In Islamic sources they are mostly referred to as *al-Rūm.* With its capital at Constantinople, it stretched from southern Italy to the northern Levant and Iraq.

south. Westwards, the Fatimids had defeated the Idrīsids[274], subdued the Berbers and were now looking east.

7. The move to Cairo

Al-Mansūr was succeeded by his son, Imam Maʿadd al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh (d. 365/975), who conquered Egypt in 358/969 and moved the seat of his empire to the newly formed capital city of al-Muʿizzīyyah al-Qāhirah, modern-day Cairo.[275] With the move to Cairo and the expansion of their frontiers into the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula, the Fatimids encountered new states, becoming immediate neighbours with the Hamdānids and the Byzantine Empire. Within their own territory and on its fringes, the Fatimids also came into contact with nomadic Bedouin tribes.[276] At the time of the Fatimid conquest, the Eastern Desert, the Sinai Peninsula, along with the Levant and the Hijaz still contained many nomadic Bedouin tribes. Some of the larger tribes were hostile while others were too powerless to constitute a threat to central authority.[277]

8. Egypt under the Fatimids

Egypt flourished under the Fatimids. Imam Al-Muʿizz did not live long in Egypt, and was succeeded by his son, the 15th Imam al-ʿAzīz bi-Allāh (d. 386/996), whose reign probably represents one of the most stable periods in medieval Egyptian history. After the 15th Imam, instability started to arise because of vizierial interference. The chronological scope of this dissertation does not go beyond the time of the 18th Imam, al-Mustansir (d. 487/1094), but an overview on the later Fatimids is provided in Appendix 10.

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[274] A family tracing its roots to Hasan bin ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib.
[275] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*. 137-147; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 103
[276] Previously, while based in North Africa, the Fatimids encountered very few nomadic Bedouin such as the Banū Qurrah.
[277] Ibid. More on the Bedouin tribes will follow in Chapter 4.

The Fatimids propagated their faith through a network of *dāʿī*s even in areas far beyond their borders. The principle of *walāyah* (i.e., love, devotion and allegiance to the imam) is considered to be the most important aspect of the Fatimid Ismāʿīlī faith. The Fatimids differentiated between *imān* (belief and faith) and *islām* (submission to Allah, the basis of Islam) and believed that only the adherents to the *walāyah* of the Fatimid imams were the true believers.[278] The official creed of the Fatimid State was Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism, however, members of other Islamic jurisprudential schools were allowed to freely practice according to their religious laws and beliefs. This also extended to the Jews and Christians, who, made up a substantial proportion of Egypt's population, especially the Coptic Christians. Fatimid domains, especially in Egypt and Palestine, contained many important religious places for the Jews and Christians.[279] Jews and Christians lived as *ahl al-dhimma* i.e., those whose protection was mandated upon the state in return for paying a tax. In general, modern commentators are of the view that the Fatimids practised tolerance and inclusivity towards them. Many non-Ismāʿīlīs, members of other Islamic branches and even other religions, reached high administrative and political positions during the Fatimid period.[280]

A cross-section of the Fatimid army shows that it employed people of many ethnic backgrounds. The bulk of the army before moving to Egypt had been comprised of Berber

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[278] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 87-89.

[279] One of the reasons for the Crusades was to achieve control over Jerusalem.

[280] al-Eesawi and Al-Salami, "Al-Tarkībah Al-Sukkānīyyah Lil-Mujtamaʿ Al-Misrī Fī ʿahd Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah," , 70-71; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 126-127; den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," 339; Michael Brett, "The Islamisation of Egypt and North Africa" The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies, 2006).; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 103; Shainool Jiwa, "Religious Pluralism in Egypt: The Ahl-Al-Kitab in Early Fatimid Times" Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001).

troops, especially from the Kutāmā, whilst *Sūdān* (Blacks)[281], *Rūm*[282] and *Saqālibah* (Slavs) were also employed. After al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh's conquest of Egypt, the army started employing troops from the Turks, Daylam[283], Armenians, Nubians, Zuwayla and also from the Bedouin. Beshir states that the Fatimids made extensive use of the Bedouin as auxiliaries. Nāsir Khusraw (d. between 465/1072 and 471/1078), who visited Egypt during the time of the 18th Imam, mentions that there was a regiment of fifty thousand Bedouin armed with spears.[284]

The Fatimid period was renowned for its robust economy, especially when they moved to Egypt. Egypt was at the centre of an impressive trade network connecting Europe, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and India. The Fatimids were also patrons of art and architecture. Some of their buildings, like the al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, still stand today bearing testimony to their advanced architectural skills. They also laid much emphasis on the spread of religious scholarship and intellectual knowledge. They also supported scientific development and, under their patronage many fields of knowledge flourished, such as mathematics, astronomy and medicine.[285] Daftary sums it up by stating that "the Fatimid period marked not only a glorious age in Ismāʿīlī history but also one of the greatest eras in the history of Egypt and Islam".[286] The Fatimid state was no doubt an

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[281]The word 'Blacks' is used as a comprehensive term mainly for Sub-Saharan Africans. As far as the Fatimid army is concerned, they were mostly slave soldiers brought in from Nilotic and central Sudan, and possibly from Ethiopia, the East African coast and western Africa or their offspring born within the Fatimid State. See Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 95; Yaacov Lev, "David Ayalon (1914–1998) and the History of Black Military Slavery in Medieval Islam," *Der Islam (Berlin)* 90, no. 1 (2013), 21-43.; Jere L. Bacharach, "African Military Slaves in the Medieval Middle East: The Cases of Iraq (869–955) and Egypt (868–1171)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies; Int.J.Middle East Stud* 13, no. 4 (1981), 471-495.; Elizabeth Savage, "Berbers and Blacks - Ibadi Slave Traffic in Eight-Century North Africa," *Journal of African History* 33, no. 3 (1992), 351-368.; Ali Asgar Hussamuddin Alibhai, "Through the Eyes of Jūdhar: Reconstructing the Tenth-Century World of a Fatimid Chamberlain" (PhD, Harvard University, 2018), 61-62.

[282] 'Romans', referring to the inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire.

[283] A region in Iran and a reference to its inhabitants.

[284] Lev, "David Ayalon (1914–1998) and the History of Black Military Slavery in Medieval Islam," , 333.

[285] den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," , 323-344; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 214-223.

[286] Ibid.

economic and military power, which could match the might of the Byzantine and Abbasid Empires, albeit some Bedouin tribes were powerful enough to have sufficient bargaining leverage, as will be examined in Chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 4: Bedouin Tribes of the Fatimid Empire

1. Introduction

Islam induced many nomadic tribes of the Arabian Peninsula to migrate from their traditional areas.[287] This had a profound impact on the religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities in the Middle East and North Africa.[288] Gradually, with the rise of Islamic caliphal states, tribes from the Arabian deserts lost most of their political and military power.[289] Despite Arab tribes keeping a degree of social separateness, Arab identity significantly determined the outlook of societies over different areas and eras of the Arab World, including at the time of the Fatimids.[290] However, medieval historians usually focus on state capitals or other centres of authority and their political classes rather than the common population. The Bedouin, living at the margins of society, featured sparingly in their reports, except where there was some interaction or friction with the central authority.[291]

Most Bedouin tribes after the 1st/6th century did not play any prominent political roles and hence historical records regarding Bedouin affairs, including those living within or at the fringes of Fatimid domains, are hard to find. Notable exceptions are the tribes of the Levant and the *jazīrah*[292] which include *inter alia* the Banū Kilāb[293] of Syria, the Banū Hilāl of Najd and the Ṭayyʾ of the Hijaz and Palestine. Other powerful tribes include the Kalb, Banū Qurrah, Murrah, Fazārah, ʿĀʾidh, Numayr, ʿUqayl, and Taghlib, who had remained largely

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[287] See Appendix 11 for more on the role of climate change in early Bedouin migrations.

[288] den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," 332

[289] A. S. Tritton, "The Tribes of Syria in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 12, no. 3 (1948), 567.

[290] den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," 332

[291] Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 101

[292] The land between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers in northern Mesopotamia.

[293] The word *banū* means 'sons of' and may be used prefixed to the name of a tribe to denote members of the tribe or the tribe itself. Sometimes the word is not prefixed and merely the name of the tribe is mentioned.

Christian until the Umayyad period, from which the famous Hamdānid dynasty of Aleppo descended.[294] In the Fatimid period, some of these tribes appear in Arab sources as fierce warriors who played pivotal roles in the ongoing power struggle between the Fatimids, the Abbasids and the Byzantine Empire.

2. Eastern Egypt, Sudan and the Sinai Peninsula

Arab tribes had started migrating on a large scale out of the Arabian Peninsula for at least three centuries at the time of the Fatimid conquest of Egypt in 358/969. Egypt, with its abundance of water and other resources, became home to many tribes. Some, Arab nomadic tribes are attested in Egypt at least a thousand years before Islam.[295] Herodotus (d. 425 BCE) termed the Eastern Desert[296], or the land between the Nile and the Red Sea, as 'Arabia', which is interpreted by some Arab historians as a result of the number of Arab tribes living there.[297]

During the Islamic period, due to tribal migrations, tribal demographics underwent major changes in the form of intermarriage, mergers and sedentarisation, such as the intermarriage between people of the tribal confederation of the Hawāzin (known as the Halāniqah) and the Beja.[298] The Beja entered into alliances with Arab tribes including the Rabīʿah and eventually converted to Islam.[299]

Saleh writes that the non-hostile attitude of the Tulūnids and the Ikhsīdids towards the Bedouin encouraged them to migrate towards Egypt where they settled in large numbers in

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[294] den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," 332

[295] Ibid.; Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah*; al-Eesawi and Al-Salami, "Al-Tarkībah Al-Sukkānīyyah Lil-Mujtamaʿ Al-Misrī Fī ʿahd Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah," 72-75

[296] A desert which runs from east of the Nile to the Red Sea.

[297] Macdonald, "Arabians, Arabias and the Greeks: Contact and Perceptions," in; Al-Namki, *Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah*, 71-72.

[298] A non-Arab people of the Eastern Desert from northern Sudan and Eritrea to southern Egypt.

[299] Abdel Hamid Saleh, "Le Rôle Des Bédouins D'Egypte À L'Époque Fatimide," *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* 54, no. 1 (1980), 51-65.; J. C. Garcin and M. Woidich, "Al- Ṣaʿīd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman, Th Bianquis and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

the Eastern Province, Buhayra, on the northern coast, in the Eastern Desert and in the oases of the Libyan Desert up to Barqa.[300] Some nomadic tribes of the Eastern Desert were influenced by the ʿAlawīs (descendants of ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib) and therefore became receptive to Shīʿism.[301] This may have helped the Fatimids gather support from Arab tribes prior to their conquest of Egypt, some of whom may have assisted them with food and tactical support.[302]

Before al-Qaʾid Jawhar (d. 382/992) conquered Egypt on behalf of his master, the 14th Imam al-Muʿizz, he sent an *amān* (act of peace), in which he made clear his master's intentions for conquering Egypt. The conquest was primarily motivated by the need to secure the *hajj* pilgrimage, since protecting pilgrims was seen as one of the caliph's primary responsibilities, thus taken very seriously by the Fatimids as Islamic caliphs. Pilgrims, coming from the north, such as Egypt, Iraq and Syria, had been constantly attacked by Bedouin tribesmen.[303] Attacks had taken place, for example in 306/918-919 and 354/965. Later major attacks include those in 371/981-982, 989, 402-404/1011-1013 and 415/1024-1025.[304] Nāsir Khusraw records that although his journey, to and from the Hajj in 438/1047, was without incident, no pilgrim caravan had reached Mecca that year from anywhere as people were afraid of Bedouin attacks.[305]

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[300] Saleh, "Le Rôle Des Bédouins D'Egypte À L'Époque Fatimide," , 51-65; Garcin and Woidich, "Al- Ṣaʿīd," in

[301] Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah*, 81

[302] Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 105

[303] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 77-79

[304] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 27; Nimrod Hurvitz, "The Qarāmiṭa Scare: Public Sentiment and Political Reactions," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 9, no. 1-2 (2022), 161-182. Franz observes that attacks on Hajj caravans have been attested from the 790s onwards, possibly because of the drying up of incomes which the Bedouin had from recruitment in the armies. See also Peter Webb, "Bedouin, Bandits, and Caliphal Disappearance: A Reappraisal of the Qarāmiṭa and their Success in Arabia," in *The Historian of Islam at Work: Essays in Honor of Hugh N. Kennedy*, ed. Maaike van Berkel (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 254-282.

[305] Robert Schick, "Southern Jordan in the Fatimid and Seljuq Periods," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 305 (1997), 73-85.

2.1   The use of ʿasabīyyah (tribal solidarity) and other strategies

The Fatimids used ʿasabīyyah to check tribal uprisings. Classifying tribes as either ʿAdnānī[306] or Qahtānī[307] was therefore important. Entire tribes were made to migrate to strengthen or weaken other tribes and maintain a certain equilibrium.[308] Larger tribes, identifying themselves as ʿAdnānī Arabs, residing in Egypt (mostly in the Eastern Desert) at the time of the Fatimids, included Rabīʿah, Qays ʿAylān, Mudar, Hawāzin[309], Tamīm and Hilāl. Qahtānī tribes, included Ballī, Juhaynah, Bahrā, Tayyʾand Banū Bajrīyyah.

Some members of the Hilāl came to Egypt in the year 214/829, moving southwards to Saʿīd, and especially the Eastern Desert, where they became one of the strongest tribes of the region. Before moving to Egypt, they were allies of the Carmathians, with large numbers of them moving with the Carmathians to settle in Syria. This made them a constant threat to the stability of Fatimid Egypt, who in turn attempted to break this alliance. The 15th Imam al-ʿAzīz bi-Allāh at the outset of his reign, perhaps in an attempt at distancing them from the Carmathians, persuaded them to come to Egypt to take up mining in the mineral-rich Eastern Desert in Upper Egypt.[310] Because of their numbers, the Hilāl quickly became the dominant tribe in Saʿīd and the Eastern Desert, pillaging and looting caravans. Even after their migration to North Africa, Garcin and Woidich state that there were Hilālīs left in Egypt, loyal to the Fatimids.[311] According to one theory, the Banū Hilāl had been strategically utilised by the Fatimids twice. Initially, they were persuaded to migrate to Egypt from the Levant to break their alliance with the Carmathians. When they became too

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[306] Northern or ʿAdnānī

[307] Southern or Yamanī/Yamānī.

[308] Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 105

[309] Many of the Hawāzin worked as cameleers.

[310] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 43; Garcin and Woidich, "Al- Ṣaʿīd," in

[311] Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah*; Garcin and Woidich, "Al- Ṣaʿīd," in

difficult to control in Egypt, they were encouraged to migrate to North Africa, where they routed the Sanhājas who were headed by the Zīrid, al-Muʿizz bin Bādīs (d. 454/1062).[312] Chapter 7 contains a discussion on the two theories regarding the migration of the Hilāl and Sulaym towards North Africa. The Sulaym had come to Egypt during the early second century AH from their homelands of Najd. At the time of the Fatimids large numbers of them were found in Saʿīd and the Eastern Desert.[313]

Another tribe which supported the Carmathians were the Tayyʾ. To break their alliance some of their subtribes (in particular the Banū Sunbus as recorded by al-Maqrīzī) were similarly persuaded to migrate to Egypt, where they spread especially into the lands of the Eastern Desert.[314]

The Fatimids also dealt successfully with the Juhaynah, a tribe whose members had first migrated to Egypt from the Arabian Peninsula at the time of the Islamic conquest of Egypt. Successive waves of migrations had increased their numbers. They were centred in al-Ashmūnīn[315], where they clashed with Quraysh, in whose support the Fatimids sent troops. Juhaynah, along with their affiliates, the Ballī were forced to move southwards into the Eastern Desert, where they extended to al-ʿAydhābh.[316] Juhaynah and Ballī were primarily nomadic tribes who preferred a Bedouin lifestyle over a sedentary life of farming.[317]

The tribe of Rabīʿah had migrated from the highlands of Tihama and Najd after the Islamic conquest of Egypt. Almost all major tribes in the Sinai Peninsula even today trace their ancestry to the Rabīʿah. The Rabīʿah had already been a powerful tribe but had become

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[312] Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah*, 209-210.
[313] Garcin and Woidich, "Al- Ṣaʿīd," in
[314] Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad bin 'Alī, *Al-Bayān Wal-Iʿrāb ʿamma Bi-Ardh Misr Min Al-Āʿrāb*
[315] Located at the border between Lower and Upper Egypt.
[316] Al-ʿAydhābh is a city on the Red Sea coast of Sudan.
[317] Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 24-27; Murray, *Sons of Ishmael: A Study of the Egyptian Bedouin*; Garcin and Woidich, "Al-Ṣaʿīd," in

even more powerful fighting against the Beja during the time of the second century AH. Another reason may have been the subsequent intermarriage of their members with members of the Beja.[318] The Rabīʿah even managed to form their own semi-autonomous princely state at Wādī al-ʿAllāqī in the Eastern Desert.[319] At the time of the Fatimids, this princely state of the Rabīʿah pledged allegiance to the Fatimids, under whose patronage they increased their territory. They then moved their base from Wādī al-ʿAllāqī to Aswan, because of its strategic position, and were allowed by the Fatimids to also administer the southern part of the Eastern Desert. This reflected the Fatimids' defensive strategy of using the princely state as a buffer to prevent Nubian attacks. However, the Fatimids ensured that the Rabīʿah did not become too powerful lest they form a fully autonomous state. The Rabīʿah proved their loyalty to the Fatimids at the time of the rebellion of Abū Rakwah (d. 397/1007), which will be dealt with subsequently. The Rabīʿah thus had an exalted status because they protected the southern borders of the Fatimid Empire[320] and controlled cross-border trade with Nubia.[321]

The Berbers were the mainstay of the Fatimid army while they were based in North Africa. This changed after they moved to Egypt. Among the new groups and ethnicities which were now employed were Bedouin from various tribes, including from the Kinānah. This system continued and was well attested even at the time of the First 'Crusade'.[322] Al-Maqrīzī reports that there were thousands of nomadic Arabs in Fatimid army registers.[323] Arab

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[318] This has been suggested by al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956).

[319] Wādī al-ʿAllāqī is located in northern Sudan and southern Egypt.

[320] Before Rabīʿah migrated to Aswan, it was Juhaynah who defended Islamic lands from the Nubian tribes. See Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 53

[321] Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah*, 85-102; Giovanni R. Ruffini, "Monetization Across the Nubian Border: A Hypothetical Model," in *The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers*, ed. A. Asa Eger (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2019), 107.; Garcin and Woidich, "Al- Saʿīd," in

[322] Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, 102-103

[323] Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad bin 'Alī, *Al-Bayān Wal-Iʿrāb ʿamma Bi-Ardh Misr Min Al-Āʿrāb*

tribesmen were also employed as paid protectors of villages since the time of the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, while business travellers had to employ the Bedouin in their local areas for protection.[324] This is also attested in the Geniza documents.[325]

3. Western Egypt and Libya

The Banū Qurrah were a subtribe of the Banū Hilāl but had moved to western Egypt and Libya at the time of the Umayyads and remained nomadic, roaming the Libyan Desert.[326] They proved to be unpredictable and unruly, as is evident from their support of Abū Rakwah against the Fatimids. In 415/1024 or 1025, they even appointed a new leader and started referring to him as *Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (Commander of the Faithful); at least once in 415/1024 or 1025 Hassān bin al-Mufarrij attempted to incite the Banū Qurrah to support his cause against the Fatimids. They replied by sending a messenger to Hassān but he was caught in Cairo.[327] Even after they were defeated by the Fatimids at the time of Abū Rakwah's uprising, they retained substantial power to control Cyrenaica[328] for themselves.[329]

4. The Levant (Syria and Palestine) and Iraq

Arab tribes have been attested in the Levant[330] and Iraq long before the advent of Islam. The Islamic conquests in the first century AH caused many more tribes to move northwards

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[324] Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*; Shelomo Dov Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. Volume IV, Daily Life: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 4 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018c), 35.

[325] Eliyyahu, *Letter from the Judge Eliyyahu, in the Sinai Desert, to His Son the Physician Abū Zikri, in Jerusalem*, Pre-First Crusades). S. D. Goitein, Palestinian Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi Publications, 1980).

[326] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 43

[327] Muhammad ibn 'Ubaidallāh Al-Musabbihī, *Al-Juzʾ Al-Arbaʿūn Min Akhbār Misr*, ed. Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid, 1st ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub wal-Waṯāʾiq al-Qawmiyyah, 2015), 65, 78.; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*

[328] Eastern region of Libya.

[329] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 142

[330] For more on the people and geography of the Levant see Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in , 159-200

out of the Arabian Peninsula.[331] During medieval times, the Levant, unlike Egypt, was not unified. Its cities such as Damascus, Homs and Aleppo and provinces such as Palestine[332] were independent, each having their own economies, which made them semi-autonomous from their neighbouring states.[333] At the time of the Abbasids at the end of the eighth century CE, there were many tribal conflicts in the Levant. The Tulūnids who took direct control of Palestine from the Abbasids in about 254/868 saw the disintegration of their rule at the hands of the Carmathians around 292/905 or 906.[334]

Approximately, since the 7th century CE, Arab tribes dominated the Levantine political scene. This changed with the killing of al-Basāsīrī in 451/1059, during the time of the 18th Imam al-Mustansir. Muslim bin Quraysh (d. 478/1085) of the Banū ʿUqayl seems to be the last strong Bedouin chief of the Levant, the Syrian Desert and northern Mesopotamia. The decline of these Bedouin tribes resulted in a decline in Arab culture and literature.[335]

There is evidence that during the first Fatimid century, the sedentary population came under pressure from the Bedouin which led to previously thriving settlements becoming domains of the Bedouin, so that the Bedouin were in the majority in many areas in the Levant. One of the main reasons for this phenomenon may be attributed to the Carmathian movement.[336]

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[331] Al-Tikrity has cited several Arab authors to track tribal migrations into the Levant and Iraq until the time of the Fatimids. See Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," 166-174

[332] Palestine covers the southern part of the Levant, including modern-day Israel and Jordan.

[333] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 82

[334] Robert Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61, no. 2 (1998), 74-108.

[335] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 162

[336] Alan G. Walmsley, "Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Jordan and the Crusader Interlude," in *The Archaeology of Jordan*, eds. Burton MacDonald, Russell Adams and Piotr Bienkowski (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).; Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"; Stefan Heidemann, "Numayrid Ar-Raqqa: Archaeological and Historical Evidence for a 'Dimorphic State' in the Bedouin Dominated Fringes of the Fatimid Empire" Peeters, May 2000 and May 2001, 2005).

At the advent of the 10th century, when the Carmathian movement started to expand, many Bedouin tribes moved northwards from the Arabian Peninsula. Mainly from the ʿĀmir bin Saʿsaʿah, different tribes started occupying different regions. For example, the ʿUqayl settled around Mosul, the Numayr on the Mesopotamian-Byzantine border and the Kilāb around Aleppo. A new Kilābī wave reached Syria around the early 320s/930s. Ibn Hawqal states that prior to the new influx of nomads, the existing tribes of the Levant had largely become sedentary. The new Bedouin disrupted existing commercial systems and agriculture, and forced a life of nomadism on the existing tribespeople.[337] Franz terms the mobilisation of Bedouin tribes in 899 CE by Zikrawayh[338] (d. 294/907) until his death as a period of 'intense Bedouin insurgency'.[339] The Carmathians, under the Abū Saʿīdid dynasty (899-1077), also established a polity in Bahrayn[340] and central Arabia with the support of the Bedouin.[341] Crone cites these Bedouin Carmathian Ismāʿīlis as an example of diversity among the early converts to Ismāʿīlism.[342] Relations between the Carmathians and the Fatimids will be discussed in the next Chapter.

Most Bedouin continued to live as their ancestors did and preferred living in tents even when they controlled cities as in the case of the Mazyadites.[343] The sedentary population had mixed feelings for the Bedouin, whom they despised because of their pillaging and brigandry but whom they also depended upon to defend their cities, as desert guides and to sell them livestock.[344] Goitein quite accurately describes the Levantine Bedouin chieftains as 'rapacious' and "as always in turbulent times, being the most terrible scourge for the

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[337] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 67-68.

[338] A Carmathian leader, also spelt as Zakrawayh. More on him will be discussed in the next Chapter.

[339] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 29.

[340] Eastern Arabia on the Persian Gulf, which included the modern island nation of Bahrain.

[341] Ibid.

[342] Crone, "The Ismailis," in , 197-218

[343] Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn Al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from Al-Kāmil Fī'l-Ta'rīkh: Part 1*, trans. D. S. Richards, Vol. 13 (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 65.

[344] Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 162-164

sedentary population".[345] In Edde's opinion, there was a difference between the Bedouin of northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia compared to those in southern Syria and Palestine, i.e. the latter were drawn more into plunder than administration.[346]

Nomadic tribes of the Levant, generally, rejected Fatimid rule and saw them as a city-based and centralised administration which was against their principles of autonomy and freedom. At the same time, these nomadic tribes were opportunists, as will be explained in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7, and thus changed sides frequently, supporting the Fatimids where it seemed to suit them and even fighting and capturing territories for them. Bedouin mercenaries would serve the highest bidder and would often switch sides, even at a time of crisis. It seems that some Bedouin tribes did not like order and often provoked chaos and disorder so that they could get a chance to capture more booty. In this, there are similarities with the pre-Islamic Bedouin.[347]

4.1   Major tribes

The desert fringes of the Levant were controlled by the tribal federations of the Kilāb, the Kalb and the Ṭayyʾ. The Kilāb were mainly located around the east of Aleppo, the Kalb to the east of Damascus whilst the Ṭayyʾ were based in Palestine and Transjordan.[348] These tribes played pivotal roles after the Fatimid conquest of Egypt and their influence grew until the battle of Uqhuwānah in 420/1029.[349]

The Kalb are considered to be of Yamanī origin. Some of their members had moved to northwestern Arabia and Syria even before Islam. Controlled by the Ghassānids on behalf

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[345] Goitein and Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. I, Economic Foundations: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 35

[346] Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in, 165

[347] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 31

[348] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 95

[349] Ibid.; Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"

of the Roman empire, they became accustomed to military discipline and to law and order. During the Islamic era, the Kalb enthusiastically supported the Carmathian movement against the Fatimids.[350] They controlled the southern part of the Levant and Transjordan[351] and had previously been in open conflict with the Kilāb.[352]

The Kilāb are considered a northern Arabian tribe descended from the Hawāzin confederation, part of the larger Qays federation.[353] The Qays split into five principal tribes, of which the Kilāb, ʿUqayl and Numayr feature prominently in the political arena of the Levant during the Fatimid era.[354] During the 4th/10th century, the Kilāb came from Najd[355] to Syria, where the Mirdāsid clan from the Kilāb formed a dynasty (415/1025-472/1080).[356] The Mirdāsids were involved in the politics of northern Syria and were so influential that until 429/1028 even the Byzantine Empire supported them militarily against the Fatimids. Later, the Mirdāsids who shifted their allegiance between the Fatimids and the Abbasids, played an important role in the power struggle between the two.[357] The Fatimids successfully used the Kalbids against the Kilābī Mirdāsids, employing the traditional conflict between the northern and southern tribes to their advantage. The Mirdāsids took these attacks by the Kalb as an intrusion into their territory and not as a conflict between the Fatimids and the Mirdāsids. The mutual distrust between the two tribes can be evidenced from *Dāʿī* al-Muʾayyad al-Shīrāzī's decision not to take a Kalbid guard while

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[350] J. W. Fück and A. A. Dixon, "Kalb B. Wabara," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[351] The region east of the River Jordan.

[352] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 64-65, 77

[353] Abd al-Mawla, *Banū Mirdās Al-Kilābīyyūn Fi Halab Wa Shimāl Al-Shām*, 11

[354] Paul A. Blaum, "A History of the Kurdish Marwanid Dynasty, A.D. 983-1085, Part II," *The International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 6, no. 1 (1993), 48.

[355] Central Arabia.

[356] Muhammad Subhi Al-Shannaq, "Aaʿrab Bilad Al-Sham Fi ʿAhd Al-Mamalik" (PhD, Saint-Joseph University, 2000), 39.

[357] Abd al-Mawla, *Banū Mirdās Al-Kilābīyyūn Fi Halab Wa Shimāl Al-Shām*, 71-119.

travelling northward from Damascus. He felt that this would be seen by the Kilāb as an act of aggression and would lead to the failure of his mission.[358]

The Tayyʾ were the largest of the tribal federations in the Levant, and according to Baldwin the unruliest subjects of the Fatimid Empire, despite providing them with the bulk of their auxiliary mercenaries.[359] They had moved from Najd to Palestine, and because of their size and strength, this put pressure on the existing, largely sedentary tribes of the region.[360] The Banū Jarrāh of the Ṭayyʾ had also sided with the Carmathians. For much of the Fatimid period, Palestine was under the effective control of Arab tribes, led by the Jarrāhids, as Schick states with varying degrees of at least nominal allegiance to the Fatimids.[361] Daghfal bin Jarrāh was the first prominent member of the branch and was the one who sided with the Carmathians. His son, al-Mufarrij bin Daghfal (d. 404/1013), who was their most powerful chief, tried unsuccessfully to form a state in Palestine. He was however given Ramla by the 16th Imam al-Hākim from which he ruled for a short time over the Bedouin as their *amīr* starting from 403/1011.[362] The Jarrāhids vacillated between supporting the Byzantines, Carmathians and the Fatimids, and were quick to abandon and change sides. They remained essentially Bedouin plundering towns and the countryside.[363]

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[358] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 65. More on this mission will be discussed in Chapter 7.

[359] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 90

[360] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 29.

[361] Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy," , 74-108

[362] Tritton, "The Tribes of Syria in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," 567; Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," 166-167; Al-Shannaq, "Aaʿrab Bilad Al-Sham Fi ʿAhd Al-Mamalik" 43, 56

[363] Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*; M. Canard, "Djarrāḥids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. J. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012b).

The Banū ʿUqayl was another subtribe of the Ṭayyʾ. The ʿUqayl had moved at the end of the 3rd/9th century to the *jazīrah*[364] and formed a small emirate at Hawrān.[365] They gained prominence around 286/899 when they supported the Carmathian Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī in capturing Bahrayn from the Abbasids.[366] They supported the Carmathians again in 360/970, but later switched allegiance to the Fatimids. The Fatimid commander in Syria, Jaʿfar bin Falāh (d. 360/971), had used the Banū Murrah and Fazārah to weaken the Banū ʿUqayl. One of their chiefs, Zālim bin Mawhūb al-ʿUqaylī was appointed governor over Damascus by the Fatimids in 363/973 to disrupt Carmathian relations with their Bedouin supporters.[367]

Another northern Arabian tribe was the Banū Numayr, who had migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the *jazīrah* in approximately 309/921-922. Their chief rivals in the Levant were the Kilābī Mirdāsids. The Numayr formed the Bedouin principality at Raqqa and Harrān.[368] Their roaming grounds went down the Euphrates valley and they also controlled Aleppo for some time. The Numayrid proto state may be termed a true 'dimorphic state', which according to Michael Rowton meant that they were led by a Bedouin ruler who accommodated himself to an urban form of rulership. Numayrid *amīr*s lived outside the city in camps while *ghulām*s (military slaves), living inside the city served as administrators. Their most powerful ruler, Māniʿ bin Shabīb, was an exception as he struck coins[369] in his name in mints built by him in Harrān and Raqqa and developed the city of Harrān, building its citadel and restoring Raqqa's congregational mosque.[370] He reached the zenith of his power as a vassal of the Fatimids, in particular between 447/1055 and

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[364] *Jazīrah* is a reference to the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in northern Mesopotamia. For more on their geographical location see Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," , 163-209

[365] A region in southern Syria and northern Jordan.

[366] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 90-91

[367] Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 48

[368] A rural town in southeastern Türkiye.

[369] Other earlier coins are also attested for the Numayrids, showing their allegiance to the Fatimids.

[370] Raqqa is in northern Syria while Harrān is in southeastern Türkiye.

451/1059-1060, and became the only urban ruler of the Bedouin Numayrids. Having supported al-Basāsīrī's (d. 451/1060) rebellion against the Abbasids, their state lost its prominence after the end of the rebellion and the cessation of Fatimid interests in the region in the year 451/1060.[371] Chapter 7 will deal with al-Basāsīrī's rebellion in more detail.

Many of the tribes at the fringes of the Syrian desert and extending into Iraq were Shīʿites,[372] such as the Mazyadites, an Arab dynasty of central Iraq. They ruled from Hillah, with their authority extending to the holy cities of Shīʿism, al-Najaf and Karbala. The Mazyadites were a subtribe of the Banū Asad and maintained their Bedouin character. They played an active part in the Fatimid capture of Baghdad, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.[373]

Irrespective of their northern or southern origins, the tribes of Kalb, Ṭayyʾ, Kilāb, Numayr and ʿUqayl maintained relations with the Carmathians at some point. Baldwin states that both northern and southern tribes were in principle more attached to the Fatimids than to the Abbasids. However, the Bedouin were opportunists and would switch sides easily.[374]

Some of these tribes also supported the Byzantine Empire, with some of their chieftains also being honoured with titles, such as Thimāl (d. 454/1062) from the Mirdāsids being granted the title of '*magister*', with all its privileges. His father Sālih bin Mirdās (d.

[371] Stefan Heidemann and Robert Kool, "A Bedouin Amīr in Fāṭimid Ṭabariyya:
The Earliest Numayrid Coin Excavated
in Tiberias," *Israel Numismatic Research* 10 (2015), 207-214.; Heidemann, "Numayrid Ar-Raqqa: Archaeological and Historical Evidence for a 'Dimorphic State' in the Bedouin Dominated Fringes of the Fatimid Empire"
[372] Some personal names, as pointed out by Zakkar in the case of the Kilāb, show that they professed Shīʿīism. See Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" , 82-83
[373] C. E. Bosworth, "Mazyad," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
[374] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 87-90

420/1029) was conferred with the title '*Asad al-Dawlah*' (lion of the state) by the Fatimids.[375]

4.2   Tribal states[376]

It was Hassān bin al-Mufarrij who in 415/1024 formed a pact with the Kalbid Sinān and the Kilābid Sālih bin Mirdās to divide and control vast amounts of land. Accordingly, Palestine up to the borders of Egypt was to be controlled by the Banū Jarrāh of the Ṭayyʾ, Damascus and the surrounding region by the Kalb and Aleppo by the Mirdāsids of the Kilāb.[377] This was the first and last time that the Levantine tribes formed such a coalition dropping their tribal differences, which Franz calls unprecedented in Arab-Islamic history. This gave the three tribes immense power and leverage against the Fatimid Empire. It was also unique because it showed their intention to shift from a tribally defined space towards territorial rule centred around a capital city.[378] With regard to modern-day Jordan, and probably an indicator for other regions, Walmsley states that citadels found there are a testimony to the political aspirations of local rulers, mostly of Bedouin origin, and their opposition to Fatimid territorial expansion.[379]

The Banū Jarrāh were a prime example of tribes that strived to form state-like regimes but failed to achieve lasting stability. According to Franz there were many reasons for this, such as short-sighted predation, tribal egoism and precarious loyalties. The Bedouin were among the few social groups which had political potential distinct from the encircling polity. Some of the factors in favour of the Bedouin were relative isolation, the ease with which they moved in areas beyond government control and their military acumen. Even in pre-Islamic

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[375] Sālih bin Mirdās has been recorded by some Arab chroniclers as being accepted as *Amīr ʿArab al-Shām* (Prince of the Bedouin of the Levant).

[376] See Appendix 14 for Rappoport's views on Bedouin identity.

[377] Al-Shannaq, "Aaʿrab Bilad Al-Sham Fi ʿAhd Al-Mamalik" 33; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 162-163

[378] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094"; Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 30.

[379] Walmsley, "Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Jordan and the Crusader Interlude," in 554,

times, as has been mentioned in Chapter 1, only two tribal vassal states, the Nasrid/Lakhmid Kingdom and the Ghassānid/Jafnid Kingdom could reach beyond the oases culture into settled lands. Analogously, each tribe could be considered a nation or could in a primitive sense embody the idea of a state.[380]

Even though the Banū Jarrāh were not as successful, there were other tribes who did succeed in exercising full political rule over settled areas that were not transitory. Large parts of the Levant and Mesopotamia were partitioned between the emirates of the:

1. Mirdāsids in Aleppo

2. Numayrids in Raqqa and Harrān

3. ʿUqaylids in Mosul and by relocation in Qalʿat Jaʿbar and Raqqa

4. Mazyadites in Hillah and al-Huwayzah[381]

Franz states that all these were true 'dimorphic states' that were collecting taxes and minting currency, while at the same time maintaining a nomadic way of life.[382]

5. Northern Africa

The Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym were both 'northern' or ʿAdnānī Arabs. They were known for their warlike characteristics. They later moved to Syria and Mesopotamia, up to modern-day Iran. Some members are attested in Egypt by the end of the 9th century CE. In the 3rd/9th century, the Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym joined the Carmathian movement and gained notoriety for attacking Hajj caravans. As has been mentioned earlier, many members of the Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym further migrated from the Levant to Egypt and subsequently to North Africa.[383] While the Banū Sulaym settled mainly in Cyrenaica and

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[380] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 13-24
[381] Town situated east of the Tigris in Iraq.
[382] Ibid.
[383] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 28-42; den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," 332

Tripolitania[384], the Banū Hilāl continued westwards.[385] Their migration has had an intense impact on the ethnic and social composition of North Africa.[386]

The major subtribes of the Banū Hilāl which moved to North Africa in the 5th /11th century are the al-Athbaj, Jashm, Riyāh and Zughbah[387] In 489/1096 a clan of the Banū Hilāl even managed to form a dynasty at Gabes, the only one formed by the Bedouin tribe.[388]

6. Conclusion

It is important to have an overview of the major Bedouin tribes living within the domains of or at the fringes of the Fatimid Empire to contextualise and appreciate the events that took place. These events will be studied in more detail in the next three chapters.

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[384] The area around Libyan Tripoli.
[385] Amar Salem Baadj, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya*, Vol. 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2015)24-25.
[386] den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," 332
[387] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 43.
[388] Michael Brett, "The Central Lands of North Africa and Sicily, Until the Beginning of the Almohad Period," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 48-65.

Map 4 and 5. Bedouin tribes in the Fatimid Empire

Chapter 5: The Carmathian-Bedouin Nexus

This chapter will examine Carmathian reliance on the Bedouin who gave the Carmathians their political and military strength. Additionally, it will examine their beliefs, as they are key to understanding their relations with the Fatimids as well as important events of Fatimid history.

1. Carmathian beliefs

The Carmathians were Ismāʿīlīs who had split from the main *daʿwah* leadership of the Fatimid imams, descendants of Imam Muhammad bin Ismāʿīl soon after Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī (d. 322/934) assumed the imamate in 286/899.

The word Qarmatī (pl. Qarāmitah) anglicised as Carmathian, may have Aramaic/Nabatean origins; there are several, divergent explanations of its etymological meaning, such as short-legged or red-eyed.[389] The word may have originated with a certain Carmathian *dāʿī* called Hamdān bin al-Ashaʿth (active till 286/899), who was known as Hamdān Qarmat, although it is possible that Hamdān may have been known as Qarmat because of his association with the already existent sect.

The term Carmathian came to be used more specifically for all Ismāʿīlī dissidents who rejected the doctrine of the imamate of the Fatimids that held that ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī, as well as his predecessors and successors, were imams. It was sometimes derogatorily applied by the Abbasids and other polemists to the Ismāʿīlīs, who supported the Fatimid imamate.[390] However, no Ismāʿīlī group used 'Qarmatī' to refer to itself.[391] Official Fatimid historiography portrays the Carmathians as the ones who deviated from the Fatimid *daʿwah*

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[389] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 107-108
[390] Daftary, "The Ismāʿīlīs and their Traditions," in , 239-240
[391] François de Blois, "The 'Abu Saʿidis Or so-Called "Qarmatians" of Bahrayn," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 16 (1986), 13-21.

and mainly focusses on Carmathian attacks on the Fatimids, in particular during the imamate of Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and Imam al-Muʿizz.[392]

By the end of the 3rd/9th century, the Carmathians were actively pursuing the Bedouin, converting them to their cause, and probably playing a part in tribal migration northwards from the Arabian Peninsula in the 4th/10th century.[393] Bedouin warriors formed the bulk of their military strength, which is why the movement spread easily into regions where there were already local Bedouin or in regions with similar desert environments which new Bedouin tribes could fully capitalise on. Without Bedouin support, the Carmathian movement might not have been able to spread so widely, nor would it have remained a religiopolitical movement for about a century and retained influence for about another.

2. Lower Mesopotamia

Hamdān Qarmat was converted by a *dāʿī* called al-Husayn al-Āhwāzī and sent to the *sawād*[394] of Kufa. He was followed by his chief *dāʿī* and brother-in-law ʿAbdān (d. 286/899), both of whom pursued and converted Bedouin from the tribes of the *sawād.* Hamdān used to correspond with the imams, the heads of the *daʿwah* leadership at Salamiyya and he and ʿAbdān initially summoned towards them, though it is possible that he may have not believed in the imamate of the head of the *daʿwah*.[395] Later Hamdān and ʿAbdān severed ties with the Imam, as it was Carmathian belief that it would only be Muhammad bin Ismāʿīl who would reappear as the Mahdī and hence they did not consider the *daʿwah* leadership at Salamiyya to be actual imams.[396] Modern scholarship proposes that the *daʿwah* leadership decided later to declare themselves imams which led to the

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[392] Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids:The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century CE*

[393] Rapoport states that the 11th century saw renewed Bedouin migratory waves northwards from the Arabian Peninsula, into the Levant in which climate change played a major role. Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 234

[394] Rich agricultural land around Kufa.

[395] Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, 45-50. I have avoided the complicated polemics involved regarding the identity of the imams.

[396] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*

Carmathian secession, while Fatimid sources and their Bohra commentaries insist that the *daʿwah* leadership had always maintained that they were imams, albeit without it being revealed but to a select few. Halm speculates on what may have transpired between ʿAbdān (who went to Salamiyya) and the Fatimid Imam, though his main source is Ibn Rizām, whose openly anti-Fatimid stance makes his report biased.[397]

ʿAbdān organised his mission among the Bedouin and the rural population and was successful in converting people from the tribes of Banū ʿĀʾish, Dhuhl, ʿAnaza, Taym Allāh, Banū Thaʿlabah and Banū Shaybān. In 297/909-910, the Carmathian *dāʿī*s of the *sawād* formed a *dār al-hijrah* (abode of migration) and asked people to relocate there. According to al-Maqrīzī one of the reasons for the popularity of the Carmathians in the *sawād* was the insurgency of the Bedouin and other plunderers after 270/883-884.[398] Similarly, the success of the Carmathian *daʿwah* among the Najdī Bedouin may be attributed to their poor economic conditions after the loss of Abbasid state support.[399]

3. The Levant

The Carmathian *dāʿī* Zikrawayh b.Mihrawayh (d. 294/907) was the son of one of ʿAbdān's first recruiters. He had his Bedouin kill ʿAbdān in 286/899 in vengeance for severing ties with the Fatimid Imam, by which time Hamdān had disappeared.[400] After remaining in hiding for a year, Zikrawayh resurfaced and tried to gain the support of the Bedouin around Kufa, but with little success. Around 288/901, he then sent his sons to propagate among the Bedouin of the Samāwah Desert, mainly from the Kalb, with an aim to establish a Fatimid state.[401] This was without the authorisation of Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī, which resulted

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[397] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 58-65 See also Daftary, "Ismaili History and Historiography: Phases, Sources and Studies," in , 9-13

[398] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 126-134

[399] Webb, "Bedouin, Bandits, and Caliphal Disappearance: A Reappraisal of the Qarāmiṭa and their Success in Arabia," in , 254-282

[400] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 142; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 64

[401] Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, 157-223. Ivanow quotes passages concerning the rise of the Carmathians from two Fatimid works: *Istitār al-Imām* and *Sīrat Jaʿfar al-Ḥājib*.

in a fallout between Zikrawayh and the Imam.[402] Halm is of the opinion that Zikrawayh and his sons were sincere in their loyalty towards Imam al-Mahdī, but they aspired to form a Fatimid state without his consent.[403]

In 290/903, Husayn bin Zikrawayh, who was known as the *sāhib al-shāmah* (one of the mole/birthmark) attacked the northern areas of the Levant with 'most of the people of the desert'. He was joined by his brother, Yahyā[404] known as *sāhib al-nāqah* (one of the she-camel), who chose to dress as a Bedouin, possibly to appeal to them. These Bedouin Carmathians called themselves the *fatimiyyūn* (Fatimids). Kennedy states that in 290/903, Husayn bin Zikrawayh led a considerable number of Bedouin in an attack on northern Syria. There was much carnage everywhere. For example, in Salamiyya, all living creatures, including animals, were slaughtered.[405]

Zikrawayh's sons enjoyed much success in the Levant. Having conquered several towns by 290/903, including Salamiyya and Hims, they established a short-lived Carmathian state. They tried in vain to convince Imam al-Mahdī to take up charge of this state.[406] Yahyā was killed in 290/903, but Husayn hid his death from the Bedouin, who thought he had been carried off to the heavens.[407]

It is pertinent to note that no Fatimid source states that there was an understanding between Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and the sons of Zikrawayh. In fact, the Imam had to leave Salamiyya because they had revealed his identity to the Bedouin and thus compromised his

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[402]Farhad Daftary, "The Early Ismaili Imamate: Background to the Establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate," in *The Fatimid Caliphate: Diversity of Traditions*, eds. Farhad Daftary and Shainool Jiwa (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018), 19.

[403] Farhad Daftary, *Ismaili Literature : A Bibliography of Sources and Studies* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 12,16.; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 64-78

[404] According to Akhū Muhsin, Yahyā was a relative of Imam al-Mahdī.

[405] Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"

[406] Ibid.; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 122-125

[407] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 78

safety.[408] Further, Husayn himself at one point claimed to be the Mahdī, the descendant of Imam Muhammad bin Ismāʿīl and assumed the title of *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, which the Fatimids used exclusively for the imams, thus showing a lack of belief in their imamate.[409] Brett has incorrectly stated that the Carmathians recognised the Fatimids as their imams.[410] Similarly Gil has incorrectly said that the Carmathians had an agreement with the Fatimids that they would govern only in the west and which was offset by their conquest of Egypt.[411] Sayyidunā Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn states that Zikrawayh was one of the many *dāʿī*s of Imam al-Mahdī. His two sons hoped to take his place as *dāʿī*s but when the Imam came to know about their misdeeds and bad character, he distanced himself from them and ordered his followers to abandon them. This infuriated them and they decided to follow the Carmathian faith. Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī had to secretly leave Salamiyya in 289/902 when Abū Mahzūl, (agnomen for Husayn bin Zikrawayh) approached.[412]

In 291/903, the Carmathian Bedouins were almost routed by an Abbasid army. Husayn turned his anger against Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and destroyed his residence at Salamiyya, killing his entire family members and all attendants there. After the Banū ʿUlays from the Banū Kalb deserted him, albeit after plundering him, Husayn himself was forced to flee, but was captured by the Abbasids and sent to Baghdad. The Abbasids had bribed the Bedouin to turn against the Carmathians.[413] Before being executed in 291/904, he revealed the identity of Imam al-Mahdī to the Abbasids.[414] *Dāʿī* ʿImād al-Dīn has also

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[408] Daftary, "The Early Ismaili Imamate: Background to the Establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate," in 19

[409] Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in

[410] Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids:The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century CE*. See Farhad Daftary, "Michael Brett: The Rise of the Fatimids: The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century C.E. (the Medieval Mediterranean Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400–1453, Vol. 30.) Xi, 497 Pp. Leiden: Brill, 2001," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies; Bull.Sch.Orient.Afr.Stud* 65, no. 1 (2002), 140-262.

[411] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 339

[412] ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*

[413] Ivanow, *Ismaili Tradition Concerning the Rise of the Fatimids*, 88

[414] Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"; Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 79-88

recorded that Husayn told Abbasid authorities that he in fact was acting on the orders of Imam al-Mahdī and that the two *dāʿī*s in Yemen and North Africa were conducting *daʿwah* towards him. This incident reveals their animosity towards the Fatimids.[415]

Zikrawayh attempted to revive his form of dissident Carmathianism, ordering his Bedouin bands to invade Syria and Iraq once again in 293/906. He sent a couple of *dāʿī*s, one of whom was betrayed by his own followers of the Banū Kalb. Zikrawayh was defeated in battle by an Abbasid force in 294/907, and many of his followers were killed. Zikrawayh died in captivity a few days later.

As we have seen, one of the main reasons for the failure of Carmathian attempts to form a permanent state in the Levant was their reliance on the Bedouin, especially from the Banū Kalb, who were more interested in booty than the promotion of faith and ideological issues.

There was half a century of relative peace when the Levant was ruled by the Ikhshīdids before the next attacks from the Carmathians of al-Āhsāʾ took place. They were heavily supported by the Tayyʾ Bedouin from northern Hijaz, who at this stage were their main supporters and whose arrival considerably affected the stability of the Levant.[416]

4. Bahrayn

The Persian Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī (d. 300/913) travelled to the *sawād* from Fars and took the oath of allegiance. He was promoted to the post of *dāʿī* and after a short time in Persia proceeded to Qatīf.[417] It is said that it was Hamdān who entrusted him with the mission. *Dāʿī* Abū Zakarīyyah, who may have been despatched by another *dāʿī*, had preceded him to Bahrayn.[418] Abū Saʿīd renounced the Fatimid *daʿwah* leadership at Salamiyya and killed

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[415] ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*, 147

[416] Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 122-125; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 19

[417] An oasis in present-day Saudi Arabia on the Persian Gulf.

[418] In the early Islamic periods, the term applied mainly to the eastern parts of modern-day Saudi Arabia and included the island nation of Bahrain.

Abū Zakarīyyah, which may have been in revenge for ʿAbdān's murder.[419] From around 273/886, Abū Saʿīd won many converts in Bahrayn among the Bedouin and Persian immigrants, probably because both were marginalised groups within society. The Bedouin tribes perceived the richer sedentary population negatively. Abū Saʿīd raised Bedouin aspirations, who thought that by supporting him they would be able to conquer the world. The Rabīʿah from Banū ʿAbd al-Qays and Banū al-Adbat from the Kilāb were among those who supported Abū Saʿīd and with whose help he was able to control large parts of Bahrayn and draw closer to Abbasid Basra. He also sent an army against the Banū ʿUqayl, who submitted to him and even defeated an army sent by the Abbasids.

After a long siege, Abū Saʿīd established his capital at al-Āhsaʾ[420] where many Bedouin converts and their families moved. Later the Carmathians of Bahrayn extended their control to Yamāmah and Oman.[421] Abū Saʿīd was killed by one of his servants in either 301/913-914 or 302/914-915. His elder son Saʿīd became their chief for a few years until Abū Tāhir (332/944), one of his younger sons, came of age and took up command. It was under Abū Tāhir, that the Carmathians plundered Mecca, massacred pilgrims, and took the *al-Hajar al-Aswad* (The Black Stone) in 317/ 930. There is evidence that Abū Tāhir like his father claimed to be an imam and even the awaited Mahdī, which would demonstrate their complete deviation from the Fatimids.[422]

Abū Tāhir pursued a wider policy where his Bedouin troops promoted the interests of the merchant class. The state which Abū Saʿīd had formed effectively lasted for almost two centuries. The state seems to have been built on communal principles in which major decisions were taken by a council.[423] This Bahrayni Carmathian state fought both the

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[419] de Blois, "The 'Abu Saʿidis Or so-Called "Qarmatians" of Bahrayn," , 13-21
[420] Near Hofuf in modern-day Saudi Arabia.
[421] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 126-134; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 110-111
[422] de Blois, "The 'Abu Saʿidis Or so-Called "Qarmatians" of Bahrayn," , 13-21
[423] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 110-111

Fatimids and the Abbasids, although from around the middle of the 4th/10th century onwards the Carmathians mostly maintained cordial relations with the Abbasids and at times raised Abbasid banners and had the *khutbah* delivered in the name of the Abbasids. In 327/939 Abū Ṭāhir was able to negotiate a deal with the Abbasids by which his band of Carmathians, comprised mostly of Bedouins, would receive money to protect Hajj caravans. Abū Ṭāhir's tyrannical positions as well as his recognition of a Persian as the Mahdī, whom he subsequently killed, demoralised many Carmathians and led many of his Iraqi *dāʿī*s and Bedouin followers to abandon him, some of whom then started offering their military services to the Abbasids and others.[424] After Abū Ṭāhir's death in 332/944 his brothers continued his peaceful policy towards the Abbasids in Bahrayn and even returned the Black Stone.[425]

5. Other regions

Oman was in close proximity to the Carmathian state in Bahrayn, Since Oman was a stronghold of the Ibāḍī form of Kharjīism, Omanis violently opposed Carmathian ideology. Clashes between the two groups are reported as early as 280-283/893-896. The Carmathians along with some allied Omani tribes were able to form a base in Oman in what is now modern-day al-Buraimi. This gave them influence over the political and economic affairs of the region.[426] Carmathian *dāʿī*s were active in Iran as well. Most of the *dāʿī*s and a major part of the community in Yemen, as well as the bulk of the communities in Sindh, Egypt and North Africa remained loyal to the Fatimid Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and his successors in office.[427]

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[424] Ibid.; H. Istavan Hajnal, "Some Aspects of the External Relations of Qarāmiṭa in Baḥrayn," in *Fortress of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Ali-de-Unzaga (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 227-260.; Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in

[425] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 122-125

[426] Abdulrahman al-Salimi, "The Wajīhids of Oman," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 39 (2009), 373-381.

[427] Daftary, "The Ismāʿīlīs and their Traditions," in 239-240; Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in

6. Conclusion

The next two Chapters examine, among other things, Carmathian relations with the Fatimids after they moved their capital to Egypt. The Carmathians considered the Fatimids imposters and subsequent interaction between them was therefore turbulent and violent.

Chapter 6: Fatimid Bedouin Relations till the Time of the 16th Imam

Fatimid-Bedouin relations were for the most part rather frictional. Our main focus is to examine geopolitical ramifications of Fatimid-Bedouin relations from the advent of the Fatimid Empire until the reign of the 16th Imam al-Hākim bi-Amr-Allāh (this Chapter), followed by the numerous tensions and hostilities during the 17th and the 18th Imams (Chapter 7). While the Bedouin were often a threat to the Fatimids, especially those working for the Carmathians, the Bedouin's, unwavering martial spirit also made them an important asset for the Fatimids. While fighting for their enemies, money and other incentives, as mentioned before, could easily 'persuade' them to desert and change sides. As the Fatimid Empire expanded, so did its interaction with the Bedouin, which in turn led to periods of intense conflict with various Bedouin tribes.

1. **Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī and his successors in North Africa**

The Abbasid and Carmathian threat caused Imam ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahdī to travel continuously after leaving Salamiyya until he reached Egypt in 291/904. His chief *dāʿī* in Egypt was Abū ʿAlī, who, according to modern scholars like Madelung and Daftary, was none other than Hamdān Qarmat[428], who by then had repented and rejoined the Fatimid cause.[429] After spending around a year in Fustāt, Imam al-Mahdī set out west, where his *dāʿī,* Abū ʿAbd Allāh was active among the Kutāma. Imam al-Mahdī temporarily resided in Sijilmāsa in modern-day Morocco before moving to Ifrīqīyyah where he established the seat of his empire.[430] Since the Fatimid state mainly encompassed the province of Ifrīqīyyah

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[428] See the previous chapter on the Carmathians for more on Hamdān Qarmat. Fatimid sources are quiet about this.

[429] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 122-125

[430] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 88-95; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 122-125; Madelung, "Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ," in , 634-635. In Ifrīqīyyah, he was succeeded by three imam-caliphs: Imams al-Qāʾim (d. 334/946), al-Mansūr (d. 341/953) and al-Muʿizz (d. 365/975).

and stretched further west into Morocco at that time, the state primarily dealt with local Berber tribes, while interaction with Bedouin tribes was minimal.[431]

2. The reign of the 14th Imam al-Muʿizz li-Dīn Allāh

2.1 The conquest of Egypt

The 14th Imam al-Muʿizz's governor at Barqa, Aflah al-Nāshib, had subdued Berber tribes around Barqa as well as Bedouin tribes, like the Banū Qurrah, living eastwards towards Egypt who were inimical to the Fatimids.[432] This may have been in preparation for the upcoming conquest of Egypt. Imam al-Muʿizz sent his trusted general, Jawhar (d. 381/992), the Sicilian[433], to conquer Egypt. Even though, Egypt is in Africa, the Fatimids were about to enter the *mashriq* (east) with all its dynasties, tribes and ethnicities and their problems. Many sedentary and nomadic tribes, including the Banū Hilāl, Sulaym and Rabīʿah, welcomed the conquest.[434] However, not all tribes were so welcoming, like the Egyptian branch of the Tayyʾ in Upper Egypt. There, in 363/973, a *sharīf*[435] managed to gather the support of several tribes against the Fatimids, who took quick action by sending a large army to quash the rebellion. In a tribal skirmish in Upper Egypt, between the Quraysh on one side and Ballī and Juhaynah on the other, the Fatimids aided the Quraysh against the latter, probably because these tribes did not support the Fatimids.[436]

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[431] Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi: The Rise of the Fatimids*, 88-95; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 122-125

[432] ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*; Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*, 206-208. Ibn Hāniʾ (d. about 362/973) has recorded this in a panegyric. He says that because of Aflah, the Banū Qurrah were even forced to evacuate from Buhayra, which is much further east.

[433] Some historians have said he was Slavic.

[434] Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabiyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 157

[435] Descendant from the Prophet's progeny.

[436] Ibid.

2.2   The Carmathian threat at the doorsteps of Cairo

After Jawhar displaced the Ikhshīdids[437] from Egypt, he dispatched Jaʿfar bin Falāh al-Kutāmī towards the Levant. Unlike the conquest of Egypt, the conquest of the Levant was bloody and caused a lot of casualties. Jaʿfar succeeded in gaining the support of the Bedouin tribes of Fazārah and Murrah and convinced them to fight against the dominant tribe of the Banū ʿUqayl in Hawrān and al-Bathanīyyah. After much fighting, Damascus submitted to Jaʿfar in 359/970, but an attack on Antioch had to be called off in 360/June 971 as Jaʿfar prepared to face a new enemy: the Carmathians of Bahrayn.[438]

The Carmathians felt threatened when the Fatimids conquered Egypt in 358/969 and proceeded towards Syria and Palestine in 359/970. Hasan bin Ahmad al-Aʿsam (d. 366/977), the grandson of Abū Saʿīd al-Jannābī, was the Carmathian chief in Bahrayn. Al-Aʿsam, along with his Bedouin, had invaded Ikhshīdid Syria in 964 CE and, after defeating the Ikhshīdid governor, took Damascus in 357/968. The Carmathians of Bahrayn traded with Ikshīdid Syria and received an annual tribute of 300,000 Dinars from them.[439]

When the Fatimids refused to pay the Carmathians their annual tribute, al-Aʿsam returned to the Levant to attack the Fatimids with an army primarily composed of Bedouin from the tribes of Banū ʿUqayl, Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym. He was also supported by the Abbasids and the Hamdānids. Jaʿfar was killed outside Damascus in 360/971 and his army was destroyed, and al-Aʿsam swore allegiance to the Abbasids.[440] Gil says that the

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[437] A dynasty which nominally served the Abbasids.
[438] Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 152-155
[439] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 75; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 161-162; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 65
[440] Suroor, *Al-Nufūdh Al-Fātimi Fī Bilād Al-Shām Wal-ʿIrāq Fil-Qarnayn Al Rabiʿ Wal-Khāmis Baʿd Al-Hijrah*, 23-28; Saleh, "Le Rôle Des Bédouins D'Egypte À L'Époque Fatimide," , 51-65

Carmathians saw the Fatimids as their most dangerous enemies, perhaps because they were doctrinally closer to them.[441]

A month later al-Aʿsam entered Egypt with reinforcements from more Bedouin tribesmen, mainly from Transjordan. Jawhar built a ditch and, with the help of a relieving force from Ifrīqīyyah, forced al-Aʿsam to flee back to Palestine and then to al-Āhsāʾ.[442] The Carmathians had realised that without local Bedouin support it would be difficult for them to confront the Fatimids.[443]

Al-Aʿsam returned to the Levant with the intention of attacking Egypt again with an army composed mainly of Jarrāhid Bedouin. Meanwhile, Imam al-Muʿizz, who had moved to his new capital of Cairo[444], wrote to al-Aʿsam in an attempt to convince him to return to the faith of his forefathers. However, al-Aʿsam sent a curt reply, stating that his resolve was firm in attacking Fatimid Egypt.[445]

In 363/974 al-Aʿsam attacked Egypt with his Bedouin hordes plundering the Egyptian countryside before moving to Cairo. This was the most serious Carmathian attack on the Fatimids and their farthest westward offensive. Al-Muʿizz convinced the Jarrāhid chieftain Hassān Ibn al-Mufarrij not to support the Carmathians.[446] Historians, including modern ones like Gil, obviously influenced by older Arabic sources, have said that he was bribed by the 14th Imam. As a result, when the fighting started, Hassān abandoned the Carmathians, which led to their retreat.[447] Al-Maqrīzī however, doubted this account,

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[441] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 350

[442] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 83; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 79-80.

[443] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 340

[444] He moved to Cairo in 362/973.

[445] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 167-180

[446] The sources are divided, with some giving the name as al-Mufarrij bin Daghfal bin Jarrāh (d. 1013) and some giving it as his son Hassān. Al-Mufarrij was the then chief of the Jarrāhids.

[447] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 352-353; Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 94; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 343

commenting that it was of the 'easterners', i.e., Iraqi historians, who were biased against the Fatimids. [448]

Al-Muʿizz himself deployed Bedouin along with his army to fight al-Aʿsam. Zālim bin Mawhūb al-ʿUqaylī initially chose to support the Carmathians, but after the Fatimids took over Damascus, he started supporting them. In 363/973 or 974, as a tactical move to win over the Bedouin tribes that had sided with the Carmathians, the Fatimids appointed Zālim as governor of Damascus.[449]

The heir-apparent, ʿAbd Allāh bin al-Muʿizz (d. 364/975)[450], was instrumental in driving the Carmathians out of Egypt. Their retreat also allowed the Fatimids to reoccupy Damascus.[451] But the Levant, as is apparent from its history, was difficult to control because of multiple factors, including the Bedouin whose chieftains Farag considers to be the 'most terrible scourge for the sedentary population'.[452] The Tayyibī *dāʿī*, Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, when describing al-Aʿsam's supporters states that they had moved far away from the precepts of Islam. For example, he writes that they 'were ignorant of the merits of Islam and could not distinguish between the permitted and the impermissible' and also that they 'strove to spread corruption in the sharia'. This may be an allusion to their Bedouin practices.[453]

2.3   The rise of Aftakīn

Aftakīn[454] was a Buyid *ghulām*[455] of Turkish origin, who had fled from Baghdad. He allied with the Carmathians and the Bedouin and attacked Fatimid Palestine. Several Bedouin

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[448] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 181-184

[449] Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 48-49

[450] However, he passed away before his father, and his brother al-ʿAzīz succeeded his father as imam.

[451] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 86

[452] Wesam Farag, "The Aleppo Question: A Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 14, no. 1 (1990), 44-61.

[453] Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*, 253, 266

[454] The name being Turkish is spelt in a number of ways such as Alptakīn and Alptegīn.

[455] Literally means a young man or boy. Used in this context for a slave-soldier.

tribes, including the ʿUqaylids, tried to stop Aftakīn but Zālim bin Mawhūb al-ʿUqaylī was forced to retreat to Baalbek. Aftakīn seized control of Damascus from the Fatimids in 364/974. As he was good at controlling and organising the Bedouin,[456] the ʿUqayl quickly switched sides to join him. This shows the complexity of the situation and the number of protagonists in the Levant, many of whom were frequently switching allegiances, making it thus very difficult to control.[457]

3.   The reign of the 15th Imam al-ʿAzīz bi-Allāh

Generally, Imam al-ʿAzīz's (d. 386/996) reign was peaceful. The Fatimid Empire prospered and the *daʿwah*[458] spread widely. The *khutbah* was read in the name of Imam al-ʿAzīz in a number of places outside the realms of his empire, such as in Mosul, which was then ruled by an *amīr* from the Banū ʿUqayl Bedouin, and in faraway Multan.[459]

3.1   Last of the Carmathians in the Levant and Aftakīn's downfall

Imam al-Muʿizz had prepared an army to send against Aftakīn, but died before he could send it. Upon his accession, Imam al-ʿAzīz had to face the immediate threat of controlling the Levant. Aftakīn, was a powerful commander, who had allied with the Carmathians, and other nomads,[460] in addition to being backed by the Damascenes under their headman Qassām[461], who was a Bedouin himself.[462]

The Byzantines were generally content with Bedouin polities that formed at the turn of the millennium in northern Syria and Mesopotamia, and they tolerated them as a potential

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[456] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 344
[457] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 200-203; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" , 162-163.
[458] See Chapter 3 for more on this term.
[459] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 176
[460] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*
[461] He was the head of the city's militia.
[462] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 94-95; Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part I)," , 151-167; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" , 168-169

nuisance rather than an actual military threat.[463] The Bedouin polities acted as buffer states between them and the Fatimids and Abbasids and were hence advantageous to all as they avoided direct conflict, leaving room for trade between the larger empires.[464] However, during this occasion, the Byzantines collaborated with Aftakīn and his Bedouin and Carmathian allies against the Fatimids, as they were eager not only to participate but also to start a war with the Fatimids. Contemporary Jewish Biblical commentaries have recorded that the Byzantines collaborated with the Bedouin to drive the Jews out of Jerusalem. Because the Byzantines collaborated with the Bedouin, including those backed by the Carmathians, the Christians of Palestine supported them.[465]

Imam al-ʿAzīz sent his trusted general Jawhar who besieged Damascus, but Aftakīn and Qassām held on for five months.[466] The people of Damascus advised them to write to al-Aʿsam in al-Āhsāʾ asking for Carmathian help. Al-Aʿsam arrived two months later, forcing a retreat that became a rout.[467] Al-Aʿsam died in Ramla in 366/977 and his cousin Jaʿfar succeeded him as the head of the Carmathians and they withdrew possibly on the guarantee of receiving an annuity.[468]

Aftakīn was joined by another 50,000 Bedouin from the Tayyʾ. Jawhar's forces were besieged for a year in Ascalon by Aftakīn and his allies until 368/978 when Jawhar's Kutāma forces mutinied, forcing him to ask the Imam for help.

Imam al-ʿAzīz himself marched onto Syria. Aftakīn was deserted by al-Mufarrij and forced to flee. Aftakīn sought al-Mufarrij's help, but since Imam al-ʿAzīz had put a large reward

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[463] Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 512-534

[464] Brauer has studied frontiers within the Islamic context. See Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography*, 42-44

[465] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 345-347

[466] Gil says that the siege lasted for seven months.

[467] Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 100

[468] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 348-350

on his head, al-Mufarrij surrendered him to the Fatimids.[469] However, Imam al-ʿAzīz pardoned Aftakīn and welcomed him into his army.[470] The Fatimids appointed another Bedouin from the tribe of ʿUqayl as the governor of Syria. However, Qassām, who had preserved Damascus's autonomy since 368/978 prevailed over him.[471]

The Carmathian challenge to the Fatimid Empire diminished after Imam al-ʿAzīz's triumphant expedition. Additionally, according to Brett, the Kilāb and the Kalb were offered the chance of an alliance while the Jarrāhids took control of Palestine.[472] The Carmathians did attack Iraq a number of times in the 370s/980s but in 378/988 their capital al-Āhsāʾ was sacked by Bedouin tribesmen of the al-Muntafiq branch of the Banū ʿUqayl. The Carmathians of Bahrayn were now reduced to a local power. In 382/992 they renewed their nominal allegiance to the Fatimids, but this did not last long as their relations with the Fatimids soured at the time of the 16th Imam al-Hākim.[473] However, this allegiance was not to the Fatimid *daʿwah* but only to the Fatimid State, as the Carmathians differed fundamentally from the Fatimids on the question of imamate.

The Carmathians, mostly with their Bedouin troops, had managed to seriously trouble the Abbasid and the Fatimid empires which was no small feat. In addition to the Carmathians, Bedouin were used as auxiliary troops by many organised armies, although their loyalty to their employers was always dubious. When strengthening state armies, the Bedouin's main role seems to have been to pursue the defeated enemy because they possessed light cavalry. Interestingly, the Bedouin Jarrāhids employed Turks and Persian archers. This was possibly

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[469] Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 102; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 351

[470] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 111; Shainool Jiwa, "Study of the Reign of the Fifth Fatimid Imam/Caliph Al-'Aziz Billah" (Doctorate, University of Edinburgh, 1989), 46-47.; Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 96-103

[471] Ibid., 106-109

[472] Jiwa, "Study of the Reign of the Fifth Fatimid Imam/Caliph Al-'Aziz Billah" 172-174; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 95

[473] Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in 111; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 173-175

done to increase their military scope and to add discipline to their Bedouin army, but it also shows how powerful the Jarrāhids were.[474]

3.2   The troublesome al-Mufarrij

In 369/979, the Bedouin chief al-Mufarrij b. Daghfal b. al-Jarrāh, allied with the Fatimids, played a key role in capturing and killing Abū Taghlib, a Hamdānid prince, who was supported by the ʿUqaylids.[475] However, in 370/979-980 al-Mufarrij switched allegiance to the Buyids and turned against the Fatimids in Palestine. He took over Ramla and defeated a Fatimid army in Aqaba in 371/981-982.[476] The Jarrāhid attacks left Palestine in ruins.[477]

The Fatimids soon recovered and a Fatimid army from Egypt, under the command of the Turkish *ghulām* Bultakīn[478], defeated the Jarrāhid Bedouin in the following year. Bultakīn also managed to capture Damascus from Qassām in 373/983.[479] Another Fatimid army chased al-Mufarrij towards the Arabian Peninsula. They also took control over the al-Sharah district of southern Jordan.[480] Al-Mufarrij returned northward to Hims, where Bakjūr, the Hamdanid *wāli* (governor), gave him refuge. From Hims, al-Mufarrij travelled to Antioch where he found asylum with the Byzantines, as the Tayyʾ had a tradition of allying with the Byzantine Empire.[481]

Bakjūr, who had now switched sides, was appointed by the Fatimids as governor over Damascus but was forcefully ousted by the Fatimid vizier Ibn Killis (d. 380/991) in

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[474] Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 171, 188-189

[475] Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," 184-186; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 167-168; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 354-355

[476] Jiwa, "Study of the Reign of the Fifth Fatimid Imam/Caliph Al-'Aziz Billah" , 176

[477] Kennedy, "Nomads and Settled People in Bilād Al-Shām in the Fourth/Ninth and Fifth/Tenth Centuries"; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 355

[478] Some sources give the name as Subuktakīn.

[479] Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 418

[480] Schick, "Southern Jordan in the Fatimid and Seljuq Periods," , 73-85; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 168

[481] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 358

378/988.[482] Bakjūr had sought the help of the Kalb Bedouin but could not stand up to the Fatimid army which was reinforced by Bedouin from the Fazārah, Qays and ʿUqayl.[483] After being pardoned he moved northwards to try and capture Aleppo with the support of al-Mufarrij and his tribe. However, the Hamdānids managed to bribe the Bedouin to desert him, leaving Bakjūr abandoned and vulnerable. Bakjūr was captured and executed in 381/991 by the Hamdanids.[484]

Ibn Killis's deathbed advise to Imam al-ʿAzīz shows how unpredictable al-Mufarrij, the archetypal Bedouin, was and the threat he posed to the Fatimids. Ibn Killis advised him firstly to not act against Byzantium as long as they did not attack; secondly to settle for a vassalage from the Hamdānids; and lastly to not let al-Mufarrij bin Daghfal live if the opportunity so presented itself.[485]

4. The reign of the 16th Imam al-Hākim bi-Amr-Allāh

4.1 The role of the Jarrāhids in the conflict between the *maghāribah* and the *mashāriqah*

The term *maghāribah*, meaning 'westerners', was used to refer to the mainly Berber troops of the Fatimid army that moved to Egypt after the Fatimid conquest. These troops were originally from the Berber tribes of the Kutāma, Sanhājah and Zuwaylah. The term *mashāriqah*, meaning 'easterners', was used primarily to refer to Turkish and Daylamī troops in the Fatimid army. While there were other groups, the two most powerful factions

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[482] Jiwa, "Study of the Reign of the Fifth Fatimid Imam/Caliph Al-'Aziz Billah" 228

[483] Mahasinah, *Tārīkh Madinat Dimashq Khilāl Al-Hukm Al-Fātimī*, 111-112; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 173-175

[484] Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," 173-175

[485] Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 166; Abbas Hamdani, "A Possible Fatimîd Background to the Battle of Manzikert," *Tarih Arastirmalari Dergisi* 6 (1968) 18.; Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 32

in the army and bureaucracy after the move to Egypt were the *maghāribah* and the *mashāriqah*.[486]

When the 15th Imam al-ʿAzīz bil-Allāh passed away in 386/996, an administrative power struggle ensued. Hasan Ibn ʿAmmār[487], a westerner, seized power and assumed the office of *wasātah* (highest administrator, intermediary) for the succeeding 16th Imam al-Hākim (d. 411/1021), who was only 11 years old at that time. Ibn ʿAmmār's policies caused resentment among the *mashāriqah*. His chief rival was Barjawān[488] (d. 390/1000), who seems to have been responsible for the person of the Imam.[489]

Egypt and the Levant became theatres of strife between the *maghāribah* and the *mashāriqah.* In the Levant, Manjūtakīn, a Turk, was the governor of Damascus and general commander of the Fatimid army in Syria, and was supported by Barjawān. Manjūtakīn had an army that also contained Jarrāhid Bedouin. Manjūtakīn was called to Egypt by Barjawān to free Egypt from the Berbers, but he was defeated in battle by Sulaymān bin Jaʿfar bin Falāh, at the head of a Berber army from Egypt, which is reported to contain thousands of Bedouin.

In 387/997 the two armies fought for three days. In a tactical move, Sulaymān was given great sums of money by Ibn ʿAmmār to deter the Bedouin chiefs of Palestine.[490] The Bedouin, led by al-Mufarrij bin Daghfal, realised that Manjūtakīn would not win and deserted him to join Sulaymān's camp. The high reward for the capture of Manjūtakīn, prompted a Bedouin chief, ʿAlī bin al-Mufarrij to betray him and deliver him to Sulaymān.

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[486] Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" 59-96

[487] Ibn ʿAmmār's origins are disputed. He is reported to either be a Berber or of Arab descent from the tribe of the Banū Kalb, but since his family had settled in northern Africa, he was seen as a westerner.

[488] Barjawān is said to be of Slavic origin.

[489] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 28, 100

[490] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 179

Manjūtakīn was subsequently sent to Ibn ʿAmmār.[491] Ultimately, Barjawān overthrew Ibn ʿAmmār in 387/997 and became the most powerful official in the Fatimid State.

4.2   Abū Rakwah's rebellion and the Banū Qurrah

After the Fatimids came to power, Sunnī-Shīʿah hostility, which had been brewing for some time, increased significantly, sometimes manifesting openly.[492] There were several disturbances during the time of the 16th Imam al-Hākim bi-Amr Allāh, of which the rebellion of Abū Rakwah (d. 397/1007) was the most serious. Lasting for two years, it had a profound impact on the Fatimid Empire. Forsyth describes it as having 'almost brought down the Fatimid state' and refers to it as a 'Bedouin rebellion'.[493]

4.2.1   Background to the conflict

In 1002 CE a group from the Banū Qurrah was sent to assist Yahyā bin ʿAlī bin Hamdūn, who had been despatched by the Imam to Libyan Tripoli. The operation was unsuccessful and the Banū Qurrah were accused of abandoning Yahyā during the battle. Yahyā was pardoned by Imam al-Hākim upon his return to Cairo but the chief of the Banū Qurrah was executed, with other members being killed near Alexandria in 1003. Fatimid troops were also despatched to the province of Buhayra in 395/1004-5 to disperse the Banū Qurrah. All this seems to have aggravated the situation, prompting and leading the Banū Qurrah to support Abū Rakwah's revolt.

Abū Rakwah's origins are obscure. Abū Rakwah was a nickname given by the Egyptians[494] to the man who later called himself Walīd bin Hishām and rose from the region of Barqa.[495]

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[491] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 366-367
[492] Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" 25-26

[493] Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" ; Van Nieuwenhuyse, "The Uprising of Abū Rakwa and the Bedouins Against the Fāṭimids," , 245-264
[494] The man with the goat-skin waterbag, which he carried in his journeys.
[495] Ancient city of Barce located 900 kilometres west of Alexandria, halfway between Cairo and Qayrawān.

He claimed to be related to the Umayyads of Spain, although it is possible that he may have been an Umayyad client. Abū Rakwah was also supported by the other Bedouin of Barqa and Buhayra, the Berber Zanātah, as well as by elements of the Berber Mazātah and Lawātah.[496]

4.2.2   Abū Rakwah's road to rebellion

Abū Rakwah was from Andalusia and started out as an itinerant scholar before settling among the Banū Qurrah to tutor their children. He was adopted by the Banū Qurrah and his influence grew among them until they ultimately pledged their loyalty to him. He spoke about the purported injustices of the Fatimid Empire. The poor economic conditions of the inhabitants of Barqa and the nomads living around it provided ideal conditions for him to preach. He also preached that the Mahdī/Qāʾm would manifest from the Umayyads, thereby advocating an apocalyptic version of Islam.[497] This is interesting, since Islamic apocalyptic leanings are mainly found among the Shīʾahs and more so among the Ismāʾīlīs. Consequently, Abū Rakwah may have promoted himself as the Mahdī/Qāʾim redeemer, the one who would end tyranny and bring justice.[498]

Abū Rakwah laid siege to Barqa with his army of Bedouin and Berbers, repelling a Fatimid relief force led by Yanāl, the Turk. He killed Yanāl in 395/1005 and captured Barqa, after its Fatimid governor had fled by sea. He now declared himself the Commander of the Faithful and took the throne name of al-Nāsir li-Dīn Allāh (Defender of Allah's faith)[499],

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[496] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 135-137; Saleh, "Le Rôle Des Bédouins D'Egypte À L'Époque Fatimide," , 51-65.

[497] Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" ; Van Nieuwenhuyse, "The Uprising of Abū Rakwa and the Bedouins Against the Fāṭimids," 198-201

[498] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 169

[499] Other titles are attested as well. Some sources say that he declared himself the caliph several months earlier. See Van Nieuwenhuyse, "The Uprising of Abū Rakwa and the Bedouins Against the Fāṭimids," 249

which was an allusion to him claiming to be the champion of Sunnīism against the Shīʿid Fatimid Empire.

A famine and plague in Barqa forced Abū Rakwah to lead a tribal migration towards Alexandria, which he besieged for several months but could not capture Alexandria. In December 1005, he killed Qābil (or Fātik as some historians record the name), the Armenian commander of the Fatimid forces outside Alexandria. Meanwhile Imam al-Hākim appointed Fadl bin Sālih as the commander of the army in 396/1005-1006. In the same year, the Imam wrote to the Jarrāhid chieftain al-Mufarrij bin Daghfal appealing for aid, who sent many tribesmen with three of his sons ʿAlī, Hassān and Mahmūd to assist Fadl bin Sālih.[500] Interestingly in 415/1024 or 1025, Hassān would ask help from the Banū Qurrah against the Fatimids.[501]

Since Abū Rakwah could not take Alexandria, he marched down the western edge of the Delta. He attacked a Fatimid army at Giza but could not take the bridge across the Nile to cross into Cairo. He therefore proceeded to Fayyum, where his army of Bedouin and Berbers could be fed and marshalled for an ultimate attack on Cairo, whose palaces he had promised to give to the tribal chiefs of his army along with lands for the tribesmen.

Assaad reports that Abū Rakwah even tried to bribe the Jarrāhids by contacting them through some chiefs of the Banū Qurrah and offered the establishment of an independent state for the Bedouin in the Levant. However, this attempt was cleverly thwarted by Fadl bin Sālih, with the Jarrāhid troops fighting valiantly for the Fatimids. Abū Rakwah was

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[500] Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" ; Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study"

[501] Al-Musabbihī, *Al-Juzʾ Al-Arbaʿūn Min Akhbār Misr*, 65, 78; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 390

ambushed and defeated in Fayyum by a Fatimid army commanded by Fadl and supported by the Jarrāhid Bedouin.

In Fayyum, Fadl demanded security from the Banū Kilāb and other tribes of the area. For Rapoport, this was because much of Abū Rakwah's support was from the nomadic Banū Qurrah (both Kilāb and Qurrah were Qaysī tribes).[502] The Bedouin Banū Qurrah were badly defeated and decided that Abū Rakwah should save himself. He fled south towards Aswan to take refuge in the Nubian Kingdom of Muqurra. A large payment ensured that he was handed over to the Bedouin chieftain of the Rabīʿah who then handed him over to Fadl. He was taken to Cairo, where he was either executed or died of exhaustion, humiliation and lynching during the victory parade in 397/1007.[503] Al-Musabbihī (d. 420/1030) reports that Imam al-Hākim told him that he had not intended to kill Abū Rakwah and what happened to Abū Rakwah had been out of his control.[504]

Commentators state that the rebellion may have changed Fatimid state policy towards the Sunnīs, making it more lenient.[505] The Banū Qurrah, themselves were pardoned and allocated a large area in Lower Egypt. This is also reflected in Fatimid policy towards the Bedouin tribes of the Levant who rebelled in 400/1010.

As a result of their support in containing the rebellion of Abū Rakwah, al-Mufarrij, the Jarrāhid chieftain, received a robe of honour. Similarly, the Bedouin chief of the Rabīʿah, Abū al-Makārim Hibat Allāh, was also given the title *Kanz al-Dawlah* (Treasure of the

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[502] Rapoport, "1068 in the Fayyum: A Micro-History of an Environmental Crisis," in 190-191

[503] Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" 211-212

[504] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 72

[505] Ibid.

State).[506] His descendants were later called Banū al-Kanz and were left in charge of the Egyptian-Nubian frontier at Aswan. The last of them was killed in 570/1174.[507]

4.2.3   The resilient Banū Qurrah

The Banū Qurrah remained in control of Cyrenaica after the rebellion. Their willingness to challenge the Fatimid Empire, even after the revolt was supressed and many of their members were killed by the Fatimid army, is evidenced by the fact that two or three years after Abū Rakwah's defeat, they gave refuge to a former official of the Fatimid court, Husayn bin Tāhir al-Wazzān.[508] Similarly, in 400/1009 al-Husayn bin Jawhar, who was appointed as the *wāsitah*[509], fled and was given refuge by them.[510] The Banū Qurrah lived up to their reputation as a fearsome tribe by showing disrespect for authority. For example, they plundered a courtly present sent by the Zīrids in 405/1014-15 which landed in Barqa for its onward journey.[511] Further evidence of their strength, and interestingly their patronage of non-Islamic monuments is demonstrated by al-Antākī's noting in his history that one of the churches which remained undestroyed at the time of the 16th Imam, did so because it received protection from the Banū Qurrah and the Kilāb.

Since 1014 a clan of the Banū Qurrah, headed by Mukhtār al-ʿArab and his son Jabbārah bin Mukhtār effectively controlled Barqa and its district; they were nominal suzerains of the Fatimids. Bramoullé describes it as a 'corsary emirate', which enjoyed a significant degree of autonomy from the Fatimids and helped to maintain the Fatimids' reputation of

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[506] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" ; Van Nieuwenhuyse, "The Uprising of Abū Rakwa and the Bedouins Against the Fāṭimids," , 245-264

[507] Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad bin 'Alī, *Al-Bayān Wal-Iʿrāb ʿamma Bi-Ardh Misr Min Al-Āʿrāb*

[508] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Michael Brett, "The Diplomacy of Empire: Fatimids and Zirids, 990–1062," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies; Bull.Sch.Orient.Afr.Stud* 78, no. 1 (2015), 149-159.

[509] Holder of the office of *wasātah*. He acted as an intermediary between the caliph and others.

[510] Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" , 105.

[511] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Brett, "The Diplomacy of Empire: Fatimids and Zirids, 990–1062," , 149-159. Walker gives the year as 1012 CE. See Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 234

naval strength even when the main Fatimid fleet was inactive. Bramoullé also commends the Fatimids for their pragmatic approach to managing their empire in their relationship with the Banū Qurrah. Jabbārah and his father are unconventional Bedouin in the sense that they had moved to piracy.[512]

The Banū Qurrah continued to be a disruptive force long after that.[513] That is why ʿAzīz al-Dawlah, a Turkish commander, who attacked the Banū Qurrah in 439/1048, was praised upon his return to Cairo. The tribe even attacked Egypt as late as 1051 along with their chief Jabbārah bin Mukhtār and laid siege to Alexandria. However, this was more of a nuisance than an actual threat, as they were easily defeated by the Fatimids. After being subdued at Giza in the same year, they pledged allegiance to Imam al-Mustansir.[514] After the Fatimids attacked them, the Banū Qurrah regrouped at Giza in 442/1051 and were strong enough to defeat a Fatimid contingent. Imam al-Mustansir sought the help of the tribes of Sunbus, Tayyʾand Kalb to counter the Banū Qurrah, reinforcing them with a contingent from his army. The Banū Qurrah were defeated in 443/1051 or 1052.[515] Letters from the Cairo Geniza archive from the 11th century have recorded frightening details of Bedouin excesses for example, a letter from the beginning of 1052[516] gives details about the precarious situation at Giza because the Banū Qurrah had reached there.[517] As has been

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[512] Bramoullé, "L'émirat De Barqa Et Les Fatimides : Les enjeux De La Navigation en Méditerranée Centrale Au Xie Siècle," , 73-92; Goitein and Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. I, Economic Foundations: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 327-328

[513] See the letter written by a Jewish merchant where he mentions Bedouin leaving a lake near Alexandria, leaving the caravans alone, implying that they were a threat to the caravans. It is probable that these Bedouin were from the Banū Qurrah. See Mardūk b. Mūsā, *Letter from Mardūk B. Mūsā from Alexandria to Nahray B. Nissim in Fustat*, 1047). Moshe Gil, In the Kingdom of Ishmael (in Hebrew) (1997), vol. 3.

[514] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Brett, "The Diplomacy of Empire: Fatimids and Zirids, 990–1062," , 149-159; Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir*, 67-68

[515] Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad bin 'Alī, *Al-Bayān Wal-Iʿrāb ʿamma Bi-Ardh Misr Min Al-Āʿrāb*, 59.

[516] Gil may have miscalculated the Gregorian date.

[517] Moshe Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part II)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67, no. 2 (2004b), 168-184.; Stefan C. Reif, "The Cairo Genizah: A Medieval Mediterranean Deposit and Modern Cambridge Archive," *IFLA Journal* 27, no. 1 (2001), 9-13.

recorded elsewhere in this study, similar letters attest to the conditions in the Levant and North Africa due to Bedouin excesses.[518]

Medieval historians have recorded that tribesmen from the Banū Qurrah were charged with the murder of Imam al-Hākim. Seven Bedouin from the Banū Qurrah who came to him the day he disappeared to appeal to him for financial help, were among the last men who saw him.[519] The Bedouin were later executed on charges of murder.[520] It is interesting to note that in spite of all the hostilities Imam al-Hākim's appeal, even among the Banū Qurrah, was so strong that a magician managed to live among the Banū Qurrah for two years, pretending to be the Imam.[521]

4.3   Jarrāhid rebellions

Although being an easterner, Barjawān chose Jaysh bin Samsāmah (a westerner) to be the general governor of Syria. Jaysh faced many problems, including the rebellion of the Jarrāhids of Palestine. After the death of Imam al-ʿAzīz, al-Mufarrij rebelled and established himself at Ramla.[522] In 386/996, the Fatimids captured Ramla and all the strongholds of al-Mufarrij in the al-Sharah district. After Jaysh's victory at Tyre, he moved towards the south of Palestine to attack the rebellious Jarrāhids, who were attacking Hajj

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[518] Shelomo Dov Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. Volume III, the Family: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018b), 43.; Shelomo Dov Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. Volume II, the Community: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018a), 137, 281.; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. Volume IV, Daily Life: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 281-282; Shelomo Dov Goitein and Paula Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. V, the Individual: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 46, 129.

[519] Assaad gives the number as nine, Richards as ten. Fatimid sources merely state that he disappeared. For example, see ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*. Also see Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance
of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim"

[520] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*

[521] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*; Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" 270-271

[522] Farag, "The Aleppo Question: A Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D." , 44-61

caravans and refused Fatimid suzerainty. In the following year Jaysh forced al-Mufarrij to briefly flee to the traditional tribal strongholds of the Banū Ṭayyʾ in northern Hijaz.[523] Al-Mufarrij realised that Jaysh's army was too powerful for him and asked for pardon, promising future loyalty and obedience to the Fatimid Imam, which he was granted.[524]

Bedouin tribes of the Levant and the Transjordan repeatedly attacked Hajj caravans travelling to Mecca. At times the pilgrims lost so much that they had to return home, as is recorded to have happened in 401/1010. In 402/1011, Imam al-Ḥākim ordered pilgrims to leave earlier to ensure they would reach Mecca in time for the pilgrimage. Despite living in lands under Fatimid control, the Bedouin paid little heed to state laws. In fact, attacks on pilgrims peaked when the Bedouin were asserting their independence. The Jarrāhids were at the forefront of these attacks on the caravans coming in from the north, though other tribes like the Banū Kalb and the Banū Kilāb plundered caravans too. For the Bedouin, plundering caravans and raiding other tribes were a steady source of income and a way of life. On the other hand, some Bedouin tribes were also contracted to protect caravans, while some provided information to caravans of possible attacks, as has been recorded by al-Musabbihī about Bedouin from the Kilāb warning a goods caravan about a possible attack. Again, this may have been purely to seek monetary rewards.[525]

Although the Jarrāhids under their chieftain al-Mufarrij had previously helped the Fatimids during Abū Rakwah's rebellion, al-Mufarrij was an opportunist and was ready to change sides to achieve his goal of an independent state.[526] The Jarrāhids retained control over Palestine and continued to rebel against the Fatimids, just as before when they took every

[523] Schick, "Southern Jordan in the Fatimid and Seljuq Periods," , 73-85

[524] Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" ; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 178-179; Lev, "The Fāṭimids and the Aḥdāth of Damascus 386/996–411/1021," , 99

[525] Al-Musabbihī, *Al-Juzʾ Al-Arbaʿūn Min Akhbār Misr*, 40-41

[526] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 25

opportunity to control Palestine. In 400/1009, they gave refuge to Abū al-Qāsim Husayn al-Maghribī (d. 418/1027), who had fallen out of favour with the Imam. This Jarrāhid stand was an open disobedience of the state and Husayn al-Maghribī was to become a major instigator against the Fatimids. Another example of their emboldened disobedience can be seen in 403/c.1012 when three family members of al-Qāiʾd Jawhar tried to take al-Mufarrij's help to flee to Antioch, but they were caught and killed.[527]

Between 401/1011 and 404/1013, the Fatimid army had to face a large-scale revolt by the Jarrāhids.[528] Al-Mufarrij rose in revolt in 402/1011-1012 and ambushed Yārukh, who was sent from Egypt with an army as the newly appointed Fatimid governor of Damascus and with the goal to contain the rebellion. Upon Husayn al-Maghribī's provocation, al-Mufarrij executed Yārukh and then occupied Ramla.[529]

4.3.1   The installation of a rival caliph

Husayn al-Maghribī then instigated, al-Mufarrij and his three sons to rebel against the Fatimid Empire in 403/1012 by supporting the *sharīf* of Mecca, Abū al-Futūh al-Hasan bin Jaʿfar to claim the caliphate. Abū al-Futūh declared himself the Commander of the Faithful and his followers kissed the ground before him as was the practice followed for caliphs. He had the Friday *khutbah* (sermon in the ritual Friday prayers) delivered in his name and was recognised as the caliph in Mecca and Palestine.[530]

Husayn al-Maghribī came to Mecca and convinced Abū al-Futūh to travel to Ramla. On the way, Husayn established contact with the tribes of Hilāl, Sulaym and others who promised support for Abū al-Futūh. The rebellion lasted for two and a half years, during

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[527] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 470

[528] Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 167

[529] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 142-143; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 381-382

[530] Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" ; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 182

which time the Jarrāhids gained control of Palestine and the southern districts of Syria. At this time the Hajj pilgrimage was completely interrupted. The rebels minted their own coins in Palestine in the name of their rival caliph.[531]

The primary motive in supporting Abū al-Futūh appears to have been al-Mufarrij's own desire to create an independent Bedouin state, as Abū al-Futūh did not have an army or a powerful tribe under his command. A lack of acumen in administering state affairs, insufficient funds and a lack of Byzantine support made it difficult for the Jarrāhids to maintain their newly formed state.[532] Al-Mufarrij had earlier tried to win the favour of the Byzantine Empire and the Christians of Jerusalem by partially restoring the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which demonstrates the influence he held at that time.[533]

Imam al-Hākim did not send troops to suppress the rebellion. Instead, he persuaded Hassān bin al-Mufarrij, a chieftain of the Jarrāhids, to abandon Abū al-Futūh. He also paid family members of Abū al-Futūh and had a rival *sharīf* instated at Mecca. In despair, Abū al-Futūh pleaded with Hassān and Husayn to assist him in returning to Mecca.[534] Upon reaching Mecca, he was pardoned and reinstated as the *sharīf* of Mecca by the Fatimid Imam.[535] Thus, the two major threats to the Fatimid Empire (Abū Rakwah and al-Mufarrij) at the time of the 16th Imam were rebellions by Bedouin tribes.

Husayn al-Maghribī left for Baghdad and the Jarrāhids submitted to a Fatimid commander. However, they retained control over Palestine and continued to threaten peace and security therein, raiding towns and caravans. In 404/1013 Imam al-Hākim decided to deal with the

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[531] Schick, "Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy," , 74-108
[532] Schick, "Southern Jordan in the Fatimid and Seljuq Periods," 73-85; Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" 218-227
[533] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 182; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 384-385
[534] Some sources state that he pleaded with al-Mufarrij. See Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 469
[535] Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" ; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*

Jarrāhids more effectively by sending an army of twenty thousand men. Al-Mufarrij died suddenly, two of his sons surrendered, while a third Hassān bin al-Mufarrij, retreated to the desert, and sent his mother to beg for mercy from the Imam. Hassān was pardoned and became the dominant figure of the Jarrāhid clan. He remained loyal to the Fatimids throughout the remainder of Imam al-Hākim's reign.[536] Shakir also reports that Hassān escaped to Egypt, asked for Imam al-Hākim's mercy and was subsequently imprisoned by the Imam until he was subsequently released by his son Imam al-Zāhir.[537]

4.4   Other tribal chiefs

Qirwāsh bin al-Muqallad (d. 444/1052), the ʿUqaylid chief, changed the *khutbah* to be delivered in the name of Imam al-Hākim in 401/1010 in Mosul and all his other territories, some of which were within thirty kilometres of Baghdad.[538] According to Daftary, it was the famous Fatimid *dāʿī* Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020) who converted the ʿUqaylid ruler.[539] This suggests that it was not merely a political transformation but also a religious one which demonstrates the potency of the Imam's *daʿwah*, even for those outside his borders.[540] It is also possible that Qirwāsh had changed his allegiance to bolster his position among his Bedouin enemies and to gather leverage over the Buyids. However, due to better monetary incentives offered by the Buyids, Qirwāsh changed his position and declared loyalty to the Abbasid Caliph within a matter of months. Similarly, ʿAlī bin Mazyad, the Mazyadite Bedouin chief at Hillah, south of Baghdad, briefly pledged allegiance to the Fatimids.[541]

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[536]Ibid.; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" 219-227

[537] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 470

[538] Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 250

[539] Farhad Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2005), 77.

[540] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 120-121

[541] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 114-115

4.5   Northern Syria

Aleppo had been captured by the Hamdānid prince, Sayf al-Dawlah al-Hamdāni (d. 324/967) in the mid-940s.[542] In 1004, the Hamdānid *ghulām* Luʾluʾ dispossessed the last of the Hamdānids and ruled as a client of Byzantium. Byzantium wished to retain a buffer state rather than confront the Fatimids themselves, making the region of Aleppo a proxy battle ground.[543] Luʾluʾ diffused a threat of a coalition of tribesmen mainly of the Numayr and Kilāb tribes, commanded by a self-proclaimed warrior for Islam, al-Asfar from the Banū Taghlib. Luʾluʾ captured al-Asfar, but the events gave the Kilāb tribe a more prominent place in Syrian and Aleppine affairs.

4.5.1   The rise of the Mirdasids

After Luʾluʾ's death in 399/1008, his son Mansūr declared loyalty to the Fatimids and became a Fatimid vassal. In 400/1009, some members of Aleppo and the Kilābid chiefs sought to restore the Hamdānid dynasty through Abū al-Hayjāʾ. With the support of Kilābid tribesmen, Abū al-Hayjāʾ moved towards Aleppo. However, Mansūr successfully negotiated with the Kilābid tribesmen by promising them lands outside Aleppo. Accordingly, when a Fatimid army reached Aleppo, the Banū Kilāb deserted Abu al-Hayjāʾ and joined Mansūr. When Mansūr failed to deliver his promise to the Banū Kilāb, they overtook the outlying districts of Aleppo and devastated the region. Mansūr responded by

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[542] Sayf al-Dawlah was undoubtedly the most famous of the Hamdānid rulers who belonged to the Banū Taghlib tribe. His fame lies inter alia for waging a prolonged war against the Byzantine Empire to the north. Hamdānid ascendancy in the 9th century marked the domination of the pastoral nomads over the sedentary population. Although they had Bedouin origins and retained some Bedouin traits, they had become sedentary and moved far from their tribal roots, ruling from various capital cities such as Aleppo. See Edmund Bosworth Clifford, "Iraq and Jazira before the Seljuqs," in *The New Islamic Dynasties: A Chronological and Genealogical Manual*, ed. Edmund Bosworth Clifford (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996) 85-86.; Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids:The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Fourth Century of the Hijra, Tenth Century CE*, 224

[543] Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Hākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" ; Farag, "The Aleppo Question: A Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D." , 44-61

killing the Kilābid chiefs at a banquet he had invited them to and incarcerating the rest.[544] Some, escaped, notably Sālih bin Mirdās who received the allegiance of the Banū Kilāb and rallied them around him.

In 406/1016, Mansūr was expelled by his *ghulām* Fath and was forced to turn towards Byzantium. While Fath offered his allegiance to Imam al-Hākim, Sālih wrote to the Byzantine emperor Basil II about Mansūr's deceit and offered loyalty and clientage, sending his son as surety for the sincerity of his pledges. He then represented Byzantine interests in Aleppo until Imam al-Hākim's death.[545] Upon Sālih's insistence Fath intended to expel Fatimid troops from Aleppo. Imam al-Hākim asked Hassān of the Jarrāhids and Sinān of the Kalb, among others, to move towards Aleppo in support of the Fatimid troops, and the first Fatimid governor of the city took over in 407/1017. There was a power-sharing understanding between the Fatimids and the Kilābids; the Fatimids controlled the city and the Kilābids controlled the countryside. The Byzantine Empire did not interfere due to a ten-year truce with the Fatimids, and trade resumed between the two Empires. However, in 415/1024 Aleppo fell to the Kilāb, leading to the beginning of the Mirdāsid dynasty in that year, which may be seen as the successor to the Hamdānid dynasty.[546]

Imam al-Hākim had appointed his cousin, ʿAbd al-Rahīm bin Ilyās, as *Walī ʿAhd al-Muslimīn* (Heir apparent of the Muslims)[547], whom he additionally appointed as the governor of Damascus in 409/1018. However, ʿAbd al-Rahīm's political support for Hassān bin al-Mufarrij, the Jarrāhid rebel, apart from the other contentious issues, led the Imam to

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[544] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 42-47
[545] Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" ; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 155-156
[546] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 36, 48-55; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 165
[547] There is a distinction between this title and the title 'Heir apparent of the Believers'.

distrust his cousin, resulting in his temporary arrest.[548] It is also reported that ʿAbd al-Rahīm sought Hassān's support as protection against the Imam, demonstrating the immense strength of Hassān and his tribe.[549] Furthermore, ʿAbd al-Rahīm's son along with his nephew took refuge with the Mirdāsid Sālih. The Fatimid State attempted to retrieve them. This affected Sālih's relations with the Fatimids and may have influenced his decision to join the tribal alliance.[550]

This tribal alliance between the three tribes of the Levant was a unique event and which seriously threatened Fatimid sovereignty. It will be examined in the next chapter.

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[548] Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" 84
[549] Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" , 225; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 156
[550] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 95

Chapter 7: Fatimid Bedouin Relations during the Time of the 17th and 18th Imams

While the previous Chapter covered a more extended period, the present Chapter covers the reigns of only two Imams, the 17th, al-Zāhir and the 18th, al-Mustansir (who reigned for about 65 years). Their reigns saw several major events and disturbances, necessitating a separate chapter dedicated to examining Fatimid-Bedouin relations under these two Imams. Special focus is given to Bedouin tribal politics, which was dominated by alliances, the fragility of which resulted in ever-changing borders, especially in the Levant and Mesopotamia.

1. The reign of the 17th Imam al-Zāhir li-Iʿzāz Dīn-Allāh

Al-Zāhir li-Iʿzāz Dīn-Allāh (d. 427/1036) was sixteen years old when he assumed the imamate after his father, Imam al-Hākim. His reign saw the development of a coalition of Levantine Bedouin tribes against his empire. The Fatimids' entrance into the Levant had resulted in drawn-out military campaigns until their victory over this coalition in the Battle of Uqhuwānah in 420/1029 under the Turkish general Anushtagīn al-Duzbarī (d. 433/1042). This was followed by a period of relative stability for forty years until the Seljuq invasion in 463/1071.[551]

1.1   The unlikely Bedouin coalition

After the ascension of Imam al-Zāhir, tensions had been mounting in the Levant. The Jarrāhids were continuously testing the patience of the Fatimid State. A few years into Imam al-Zāhir's imamate, in the summer of 1024 (415 AH), there were Jarrāhid attacks on Ramla, Eilat and al-ʿArīsh.[552] Rapoport reports that a Fatimid naval expedition was sent to several Levantine coastal towns to suppress local rebellions and Bedouin incursions, which

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[551] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 91
[552] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 386-387

could well be those incited by the Jarrāhids.[553] However, in the autumn of that year, the

Levant also saw large-scale Bedouin revolts.

The situation deteriorated in the September of 1024 (415 AH), as the Jarrāhids, under

Hassān attacked Tiberias and took Ramla a second time.[554] The rebellion spread like

wildfire.[555] Further north, Aleppo fell to Sālih bin Mirdās in November of the same year.

Hassān was a master of deception. When he entered Ramla, he feigned to profess allegiance

to the Imam but then plundered and ransacked Ramla. He simultaneously launched a

campaign to show that he was not fighting the Imam but only al-Duzbarī.[556] Hassān even

tried to take the fearsome Banū Qurrah as allies and is reported to have established contacts

with Ibn Bādūs, the treasury minister of the Fatimid State. A letter was intercepted and Ibn

Bādūs was executed for treason in October 1024 (415 AH).[557]

In November 1025 (415 AH), the three major tribes of the Levant, the Kilāb, Kalb and the

Tayyʾ under Sālih[558], Sinān and Hassān respectively, agreed to form an unlikely coalition

to drive the Fatimids out of the Levant and to divide it amongst themselves. Zakkār

provides details of how a pact was formed between the three tribes. Although their attempt

to garner the support of Byzantine Emperor Basil II (958-1025) was unsuccessful, the

coalition gave the three tribes immense military capabilities which became difficult for the

Fatimid armies to confront. As a result, the coalition came close to imposing a provincial

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[553] Yossef Rapoport and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Lost Maps of the Caliphs: Drawing the World in Eleventh-Century Cairo* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 193.
[554] On the number of attacks see footnote no. 43 in Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 389
[555] Ibid.
[556] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 471-472; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 388-389
[557] Michael Brett, "The Men of the Pen," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019c), 78-80.; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 390
[558] Gil has incorrectly attributed Sālih to the tribe of ʿUqayl. In fact, he was from the Kilāb as he himself notes elsewhere.

government based on tribal protection (*himāyah*) instead of the centralised government of the Fatimids.[559]

Imam al-Zāhir tried winning over Hassān, but according to Shakir, Hassān found out about a plot to poison him from his informers at the Fatimid court and therefore did not accept the Imam's offer. He also wrote to the Fatimid court to have him officially recognised as the master of Palestine, but his offer was rejected.[560] The Imam was ready to cede Nablus to the Bedouin but not Jerusalem, which means that he did not accept Hassān, Sinān and Sālih as his representatives in the Levant as they demanded of him.[561]

Al-Musabbihī records that when Imam al-Zāhir rode on the first day of Ramadan 415/November 1024 in an official procession, there were men from the Jarrāhids, Tayyʾ, Banū Qurrah and Kilāb in attendance. This was at a time when the rebellion had already started, and the tribesmen may have been brought in specifically to see the pomp and pageantry of the Empire.[562]

Heavy taxes were imposed by both the Fatimids and the Jarrāhids. Even though the Damascenes were fighting both the Fatimids and the Bedouin, at one point they thought it better to spend money on paying the Fatimid troops, rather than to pay the Bedouin, which shows the fear and mistrust among the common populace for the Bedouin.[563]

A few letters from the Cairo Geniza demonstrate the hardships that people faced due to this rebellion. The heaviest casualties were reported in Ramla, with most of its population having died and only a few of the poor having survived. Because of their numbers, in one of the letters, the Bedouin are compared to locusts: 'killing anybody they found'. Another

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[559] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 162-163; Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 91-96; Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 30-31
[560] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 471-472
[561] Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, 52; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 389-390
[562] Al-Musabbihī, *Al-Juzʾ Al-Arbaʿūn Min Akhbār Misr*, 70
[563] Lev, "The Fāṭimids and the Aḥdāth of Damascus 386/996–411/1021," , 97-106

letter records a prayer for the long life of the Imam: "to overcome the people of the Orient (i.e. the Bedouin) who razed the Holy Land, whose paths are deserted and no traveller ever passes, no visitor being able to enjoy safety".[564] Goitein records from a letter, regarding the Bedouin revolts of 415 /1024, that the Bedouin were as ruthless to Muslims as to Jews and Christians, and that the atrocities perpetrated by the Bedouin had never been witnessed under Islam.[565]

1.2   The Battle of Uqhuwānah (420/1029)

Plague, poverty and famine spread widely, and people suffered heavy taxes. Having defeated a Fatimid force at Ascalon, the coalition seriously threatened Fatimid control over the Levant. However, after Sinān's death in 419/1028, the Kalbids switched their support to the Fatimids, enabling the Fatimid general al-Duzbarī to defeat the Kilābids at Uqhuwānah near Lake Tiberias, after which the revolt was quashed. The Jarrāhids had been defeated earlier in the same year. As a result of the victory at Uqhuwānah, the Fatimids were able to reoccupy Aleppo and Damascus, and their sovereignty was reestablished in Syria and extended as far as Harran and Raqqa in Mesopotamia.[566]

1.3   Fragility of the alliance

It was uncommon for two Bedouin tribes to form an alliance and coalition, let alone a three-party coalition. For the Bedouin, the circle of trust usually began with the individual and ended with the tribe and tribal interests came above all other interests.[567] That is why this

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[564] Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part II)," , 168-184 See. *Letter from Shelomo B. Yehuda to Efrayim B. Shemarya*, 1050). Gil, Palestine, vol. 2, pp. 116-119. This letter may have been written any time before 1050 but may date to 1025 or 1026 as Gil suggests. This information was provided by my colleague Yusuf Umrethwala, who translates documents for the Princeton Geniza Project.

[565] Goitein and Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. V, the Individual: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 58

[566] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 192; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 162-163; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 396; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 162-163

[567] See Chapter 1 on 'Bedouin origins' for more information on the importance and function of Bedouin tribes.

tribal coalition was unique but also difficult to maintain. The coalition and its dissolution had immediate repercussions for each tribe.

1.3.1   The Kalb welcomed the Fatimids when Mansūr bin Luʾluʾ fled from Aleppo, which enabled the appointment of the first Fatimid governor in Aleppo in 407/1017.[568] Then in 415/1024, the Kalb joined the alliance of the three great Bedouin tribes of Syria against the Fatimids. After Sinān's death, Imām al-Zāhir appointed his nephew Rāfiʿ as his successor and was able to win over the allegiance of the Kalb. This may have been a strategic move as the Fatimids probably used the southern Yemenite Kalbids against the northern tribe of the Kilāb, thus weakening the alliance of the three tribes. As a result, the Kalb supported the Fatimids at the Battle of Uqhuwānah.[569] It was the Kalbid Rāfiʿ who cut off the heads of Sālih and his son, and sent them to al-Duzbarī.[570] While this demonstrates the fragility of Bedouin alliances it also demonstrates the importance of shared feelings of common ancestries and knowing how to evoke ʿasabīyyah to handle tribal affairs.[571]

1.3.2   With regard to the Kilāb, after their chieftain, Sālih bin Mirdās, had been killed at the battle of Uqhuwānah, many Mirdāsids[572] were massacred as they fled south to the Arabian Peninsula, and many accepted Fatimid sovereignty.[573] Sālih was acclaimed for his courage and leadership skills. His small dynasty, which he founded when he settled in Aleppo in 416/1025, lasted about fifty years. After his death, his son Nasr ruled from Aleppo, with the protection of the Byzantines.[574] However in 421/1030, Salih's two sons

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[568] Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction-Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, 1st ed., Vol. 2 (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2013), 17.

[569] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 101-102

[570] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 397

[571] See Chapter 1 for more on common ancestry and ʿasabīyyah.

[572] The Mirdāsids were a family of the Bedouin tribe of Banū Kilāb, descendants of Mirdās.

[573] Marina Rustow, "“Glory of the Two Parties”: Petitions to Qaraite Courtiers," in *Heresy and the Politics of Community: The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate*, ed. Marina Rustow (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 176-199.

[574] Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 168-169

Thimāl and Nasr along with their allies from the Numayr, fought and routed a Byzantine army, despite the low number of Bedouin compared to the larger Byzantine army.[575] In 422/1031, Nasr concluded a peace treaty with Byzantium after which he acted like their vassal. Having recaptured Aleppo, Nasr swayed between paying allegiance to the Fatimids and to Byzantium.

1.3.3 Hassān bin al-Mufarrij along with the Tayyʾ took refuge with the Byzantines. In about 421/1030, he contacted the Byzantine emperor suggesting an alliance to attack Syria. When it ended with a Byzantine defeat outside Aleppo, Hassān fled along with the Jarrāhids to northern Syria and did not return until 433/1041 after Anushtagīn al-Duzbarī was forced out of Damascus.[576]

An interesting historical note concerning Hassān, is that in 422/1030 he sported a cross when attacking Apamea with the Byzantines.[577] Even his father al-Mufarrij maintained good relations with the Christians of Palestine. Owing to the nature of the times, Jarrāhid actions were controversial but can be understood to be a commitment to their own interests rather than to any religion.[578]

2. The reign of the 18th Imam al-Mustansir bi-Allāh

This leads us to the 18th Imam al-Mustansir bi-Allāh (d. 487/1094), who was only seven years old when he acceded to the throne as imam-caliph after his father's death. His mother al-Sayyidah Rasad was a powerful personality and played an important role in his early years. His long reign of sixty years was a reign of much variation: The borders of the Fatimid Empire reached as far south as Yemen, while the capital Cairo, was showing signs

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[575] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 114-122
[576] Brett, "The Men of the Pen," in 78-80; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 391
[577] Al-Aamiry, Ali Faisal Abd al-Nabi, "Al-Siyāsah Al-Khārijīyyah Lī Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah: 427-567 AH/1035-1171 CE" (MA, University of Kufa, 2012), 56.
[578] Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 385

of magnificence and riches. However, when infighting between the various ethnicities of his army led to a civil war from 459/1067-466/1073, the state's apparatus seriously weakened, its resources were all but emptied and its borders shrunk dramatically. There was some respite with the arrival of Badr al-Jamālī (d. 487/1094)[579], the Armenian, who undertook drastic steps to stabilise the empire. At the same time, it is also pertinent to note that during the Imam's era, the size of his *daʿwah* increased and reached as far as western India where his *dāʿī*s managed to win a sizable number of converts making western India a vibrant and flourishing centre for *daʿwah* activities.[580]

Long before Badr al-Jamālī's arrival, Nāsir Khusraw travelled through the Empire and was impressed by its riches. He wrote favourably of his travels through Egypt and the Levant, and his writings present a very prosperous image of the Fatimid Empire.

Nāsir Khusraw observed that the largest contingent in the Fatimid army at the time of Imam-al-Mustansir was the Bedouin one, whose numbers are recorded as being fifty thousand. This may have been exaggerated, but it was certainly sufficiently impressive for Nāsir to make a note of the Bedouin force. In all likelihood, the Bedouin may have been brought in as a ceremonial show of caliphal power.[581] Similarly, letters, written by Jewish merchants, retrieved from the Geniza archives, record a flourishing trade in Fatimid territories as the Empire spanned the Mediterranean and the Red Seas.[582]

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[579] He was later known as al-Badr al-Mustansirī.

[580] Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir*, 30-39, 187-197

[581] Ibid.; Alice C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (London: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000), 168.

[582] Goitein and Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. I, Economic Foundations: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*; Shelomo Dov Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 172

2.1.1 An overview of the Levant till al-Basāsīrī's rebellion

As mentioned earlier, Sālih's two sons, Thimāl and Nasr, were wedged between the Fatimids and the Byzantine Empire. Being the Bedouin opportunists that they were, they constantly switched between fighting and paying allegiance to their two larger neighbours, until Anushtagīn al-Duzbarī, though without agreement from Cairo, killed Nasr in 429/1038. Aleppo was properly annexed to the Fatimid Caliphate that year and Fatimid power reached its zenith in northern Syria. About three years later, al-Duzbarī was disowned by al-Jarjarāʾī, and fled Damascus, taking refuge in the citadel of Aleppo. About a month later, the people of Aleppo welcomed Nasr's brother, Thimāl, and Aleppo managed to gather the support of both the Fatimids and the Byzantines. In 433/1041, Fatimid domination in Palestine and Syria ended with the revolt of the Jarrāhid Hassān in Palestine and the fall of Aleppo to the Mirdāsid Thimāl.[583] Thimāl's relations with the Fatimids remained strained. [584]

As for southern Syria and Palestine, Hassān did manage to regain possession after al-Duzbarī fled Damascus, but the new Fatimid governor of Damascus pursued him. In 458/1065-1066, a couple of Hassān's nephews were imprisoned by Badr al-Jamālī and sent to Cairo. Little else is recorded about the Jarrāhids after that as their influence waned.[585]

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[583] There was a power struggle to regain Aleppo in 440-441/1048-1049. See Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 114-122; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 172-173; Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 532-553; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 169-170

[584] An interesting anecdote that also sheds light on the status of Bedouin women, particularly those in proximity to positions of power, can be gleaned from what transpired at the court of Imam al-Mustansir, as reported by Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262). Al-Sayyidah (the lady) was the title of ʿAlawīyyah, daughter of Waththāb, chief of the Numayrids and wife of Nasr and then subsequently Thimāl of the Mirdāsids. Thimāl sent her to Cairo in 442/1050 as an envoy to appease the Imam. The Imam admired her wit and her carefully chosen words and then observed: 'Allah will not disappoint him who entrusts the management of his affairs to you in this mission'. The embassy succeeded in securing Thimāl as the *amīr* of Aleppo. The next seven years were a period of prosperity and stability for Aleppo. In 453/1061 al-Sayyidah was able to reconcile her brother Maniʿ and Thimāl. See Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 75-76

[585] Canard, "Djarrāḥids," in

2.1.2   Fragility of Bedouin alliances in the Levant till al-Basāsīrī's rebellion

Levantine society in the tenth and eleventh centuries was very tribal in nature. The major tribes were strong enough to be power brokers. As the Bedouin tribes were constantly changing sides and switching allegiances, the political situation in the Levant remained complex and volatile. The Fatimids were not keen on the Jarrāhids forming their own state in Palestine, although they reluctantly accepted the rule of the Kilābid Mirdāsids in Aleppo.[586] During the reign of the 18th Imam, as the fortunes of other tribes declined, the fortunes of the Kilāb gradually ascended until they became the most powerful tribe in the Levant. In 335/946, the Kilābids had supported the Hamdānids against the Ikhshīdids. Later, after the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, in the 4th/10th century, under Carmathian influence, they fought both the Hamdānids and the Fatimids. The Kilābid chieftain Sālih bin Mirdās then joined the above-mentioned coalition of three Levantine tribes against the Fatimids before being killed in 420/1029.

Perhaps a Bedouin state on their[587] north-eastern border acted as a buffer state and in all probability such a state could not have existed if they or the Byzantines did not want it to.[588] Lev states that it is with this interest that the Byzantine Empire demanded from Imam al-Zāhir that Hassān bin al-Mufarrij, who had been expelled be allowed to return to his territories in Palestine, but the Imam refused. This was one of the conditions set by the Byzantines for a truce with the Fatimids, which they demanded in a conference between

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[586] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 467; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 169
[587] Reference is to the Fatimids.
[588] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 467; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 169

the various 'stakeholders' of the Levant that took place in 429/1037.[589] The Bedouin tribes of Kalb, Kilāb, Banū Jarrāh, and the Kurdish Marwānids all wanted to be part of the conference in Constantinople which had the objective to define the borders between Muslim and Christian domains of northern Syria and Mesopotamia. Nasr bin Sālih was wary of being sidelined by a Fatimid-Byzantine truce, and tried to bargain for a special treaty for Aleppo, which the Emperor Romanus III accepted. Interestingly, after the death of Romanus III, in 428/1038, Michael IV had advised Nasr to acknowledge Fatimid sovereignty. In 429/1038-1039, a thirty-year truce was signed between the Fatimids and the Byzantines. In that same year, Nasr formed an alliance with the Banū Numayr of Harrān.[590]

The Byzantines broke the truce and attacked Thimāl's territories in northern Syria. Subsequently, the Fatimid vizier al-Jarjarāʾī (d.437/1045) asked Thimāl to attack al-Duzbarī in Aleppo. After al-Duzbarī's death in 433/1042, Thimāl entered Aleppo and captured it. As soon as Thimāl entered Aleppo the Byzantine empress awarded Thimāl with the title of *magistros*. In 436/1044, Imam al-Mustansir confirmed Thimāl's investiture in Aleppo. But with the constant change of viziers in Cairo, so too were Thimāl's relationships changing with the Fatimid Empire, for example, he fought and defeated Fatimid armies in 440/1048 and 442/1050.[591] Apart from occasional periods of conflict, the Mirdāsids accepted the nominal sovereignty of the Fatimids.[592] However, Farag argues that the Kilāb,

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[589] Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, 40-41; Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," 188-189; Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, 402

[590] Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 169-170; Th Bianquis and Samir Shamma, "Mirdās, Banū Or Mirdāsids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and Th Bianquis, Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[591] Hamdani, "A Possible Fatimîd Background to the Battle of Manzikert," ; Bianquis and Shamma, "Mirdās, Banū Or Mirdāsids," in ; Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir*, 131; Henri Michel Khaÿat, "The Šīite Rebellions in Aleppo in the 6th A.H./12th A.D. Century," *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* 46, no. 3 (1971) 169-170.

[592] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 183

took part in almost all battles in the tenth century for their own benefit.[593] The Mirdāsids were opportunists but their delicate handling of two powerful empires and maintaining a balance between them, along with managing other Bedouin tribes, is admirable and rather unexpected. Apart from the Mirdāsids, the other powerful tribes in the Levant and Egypt were more inclined to pillage and plunder than administration.[594]

2.2   Iraq: Al-Muaʾyyad al-Shīrāzī and the Bedouin

Abū al-Nasr Hibat-Allāh bin Mūsā al-Shīrāzī (d. 470/1077 or 1078) or Sayyidunā al-Muaʾyyad al-Shīrāzī as the Bohras fondly call him, was a Fatimid *dāʿī*. He was a religious scholar, author, poet, statesman and military tactician, perhaps the most illustrious *dāʿī* at the time of the 18th Imam.[595] Al-Muaʾyyad's careful handling of affairs, a considerable amount of which was dedicated to his political negotiations with the Bedouin tribes in the Levant and Mesopotamia is recorded in his autobiography.[596]

After being forced to flee from Ahwāz, possibly al-Muaʾyyad's first encounter with the Bedouin was with al-Mansūr bin Husayn, the Mazyadite chief around Hillah. Al-Mansūr even went to Ahwāz to put in a good word for al-Muaʾyyad with the Buyid, Abū Kālijār (d. 440/1048). Abū Kālijār asked al-Mansūr to persuade al-Muaʾyyad not to return to Ahwāz as that would ruin his chances of being elevated to the top Buyid post. When al-Muaʾyyad learnt that Qirwāsh bin al-Muqallad (d. 444/1052) had pledged allegiance to the Fatimids, he decided to go to him, hoping to capitalise on this new development to bring upon the

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[593] Farag, "The Aleppo Question: A Byzantine-Fatimid Conflict of Interests in Northern Syria in the Later Tenth Century A.D." 44-61

[594] Bianquis and Shamma, "Mirdās, Banū Or Mirdāsids," in ; Communal Letter, *Communal Letter in Hebrew, from a City in Palestine Or Damascus*, 1055). A communal letter records how the Bedouin strong armed the Jews to cut off their water supply either in a city in Palestine or in Damascus. This is also evidence of misrule and mismanagement by the governors.

[595] Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, Al-Mu-Ayyad Fi'L-Din Al-Shirazi*, xiii-xx

[596] See Ibid.

downfall of the Abbasids. When he reached Mosul, al-Muaʾyyad learnt that Qirwāsh had already switched back his allegiance to the Abbasids, and therefore proceeded to Cairo.[597]

The Fatimid administration was alarmed by the Sunnī Seljuq Tughril Beg's westward movement from Persia and the rumours of a possible Abbasid-Byzantine alliance.[598] Al-Muaʾyyad was chosen to meet this challenge. In 447/1055 or 1056, he was sent by Imam al-Mustansir, upon the insistence of his vizier al-Yāzūrī (d. 450/1058) to Syria and Iraq, where al-Muaʾyyad played a major role in al-Basāsīrī's rebellion against the Abbasids and the Seljuqs. He had three major tasks according to Klemm: first, to take the oath of allegiance from al-Basāsīrī for the Fatimids; second, to convince the Bedouin to support al-Basāsīrī's rebellion to overthrow the Abbasid caliph and capture Baghdad; and third, to stall Seljuq advancements. For this, al-Muaʾyyad departed with a huge amount of gold and military equipment to initially pay and arm a coalition of troops from Damascus and from the Levantine Bedouin, mostly of the Kalb and the Kilāb. For about two years, he was involved in extensive one-to-one negotiations and exchanged numerous letters with al-Basāsīrī, the Mirdāsid Thimāl, the Mazyadite Dubays, the ʿUqaylid Quraysh bin Badrān, the Numayrid Māniʿ and other local *amīrs* to forge a coalition against the Abbasids. Although most of these Levantine and Mesopotamian Bedouin chieftains already adhered to Twelver Shīʿism it was because of al-Muaʾyyad's statesmanship and knowledge that he won and maintained the allegiance of the Bedouin for the Fatimids for such an extended period.

2.3.1 Al-Basāsīrī's rebellion

Abū al-Hārith Arsalān al-Basāsīrī (d. 451/1060) was a Turkish military commander during the last decade of Buyid rule. Al-Basāsīrī temporarily captured Basra and other towns

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[597]Ibid.; ʿImād al-Dīn, *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*
[598] Tughril Beg was a Turkoman chieftain and military leader of the Oghuz Turkoman tribes.

seizing the opportunity of a poor situation at Baghdad, where there was continuous violence and rioting, a Sunnī-Shīʿah conflict, and turbulence created by various Buyid and ʿUqaylid pretenders and other Arab and Kurdish tribesmen. At the same time the Abbasid vizier, Ibn al-Muslimah (d. 450/1058) who had forged relations with Tughril (d. 455/1063), had become al-Basāsīrī's chief adversary. Al-Basāsīrī may already have had Shīʿite leanings and was accused by Ibn al-Muslimah of colluding with the Fatimid Imam al-Mustansir. Ibn al-Muslimah, according to al-Muaʾyyad was even instigating al-Muʿizz bin Bādīs of Ifrīqīyyah in his revolt against the Fatimids.[599] Al-Basāsīrī moved to his brother-in-law, the Mazyadite Dubays bin ʿAlī (474/1081). However, Dubays was forced by Tughril to break with al-Basāsīrī, and in turn, al-Basāsīrī wrote to Imam al-Mustansir to allow him to come to Cairo. Although he was not allowed to proceed to Cairo, the Imam responded to his request for assistance to conquer Baghdad in the Imam's name.

Al-Muaʾyyad al-Shīrāzī took the oath of allegiance from Thimāl and a few military commanders of al-Basāsīrī's army in Aleppo and then in Rahbah from al-Basāsīrī and others, who had moved there. Al-Muaʾyyad gave the Bedouin, Kurds and Turks assembled at Rahbah ceremonial clothes and money. Al-Basāsīrī was appointed the governor of Rahbah, and a large sum of money and weapons were delivered to him by al-Muaʾyyad. Further, al-Muaʾyyad convinced Dubays to march to Rahbah from Hillah and join forces with al-Basāsīrī. Apart from money, Dubays was given some titles including *Sultān Mūlūk al-ʿArab* (Sultan of the kings of the Arabs).

Al-Muaʾyyad was instrumental in directing al-Basāsīrī's moves and intensifying anti-Seljuq sentiments. In 448/1057, al-Basāsīrī and Dubays, primarily with Bedouin forces, were able to defeat the Seljuqs and the ʿUqaylids at Sinjār after which the ʿUqaylids, under

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[599] Hamdani, "A Possible Fatimîd Background to the Battle of Manzikert," 9-12

their leader Quraysh bin Badrān of Mosul again pledged allegiance to the Fatimids. Al-Muaʾyyad was able to have the *khutbah* read in the name of the Fatimid Imam in Mosul, and as far south as Wasit and Kufa. Mosul was retaken later in the same year by Tughril, and al-Muaʾyyad returned to Aleppo, where he stayed for a year and a half, while al-Basāsīrī fell back to Bālis.

In Aleppo, al-Muaʾyyad continued negotiations with Thimāl to exchange the city of Aleppo for the lordship of Jubayl, Beirut and Acre. A deal was concluded in 449/January 1058. This strengthened the Fatimid position in northern Syria but was offset by Tughril's triumphant return to Baghdad. Tughril had to deal with the revolt of his brother Ibrāhīm Ināl, who left Mosul and aspired to seize the Seljuq sultanate for himself with the help of al-Basāsīrī and the Fatimids. This enabled al-Basāsīrī to enter Baghdad along with the ʿUqaylid Quraysh in 450/December 1058. Al-Muaʾyyad returned to Cairo just before al-Basāsīrī entered Baghdad. In Baghdad al-Basāsīrī had the *khutbah* to be read in the name of the Fatimid Imam al-Mustansir. He was supported by the Sunnīs and the Shīʿah population of Baghdad. Al-Basāsīrī killed Ibn al-Muslimah and took over the Abbasid palace but agreed to leave the Abbasid caliph al-Qāʾim as a captive of Quraysh. Imam al-Mustansir was expecting the Abbasid caliph to be sent to Cairo, instead only his royal insignia were sent to him as Quraysh and then later his cousin Mahārish refused to deliver the Abbasid caliph over despite a substantial monetary offer. Al-Basāsīrī subsequently also conquered Wasit and Basra.

Close to Ināl's departure from Mosul in 450/February 1058, the Fatimid vizier al-Yāzūrī was killed in Cairo for high treason and misappropriation of funds. His successor Ibn al-Maghribī refused to further support al-Basāsīrī. Tughril suppressed his brother Ināl's revolt and moved towards Baghdad in December 1059 which forced Quraysh to move back to

Mosul and al-Basāsīrī to flee towards Syria, but he was overtaken and killed near Kufa by the Seljuqs.[600]

2.3.2. Al-Muaʾyyad's genius

Al-Muaʾyyad's support of the tribes also had other unexpected influences. The Numayr had reached their peak during their nearly two-year tutelage of the Fatimids. The funds which al-Muaʾyyad transferred to Māniʿ allowed him to represent himself, as Heidemann puts it, as 'the first and only Numayrid *amīr* as an urban ruler'. He developed Harrān as his capital which was unique. After it became clear in 451/1059 that al-Basāsīrī would not receive further Fatimid funds, Māniʿ changed sides to support Tughril. Māniʿ was already at the peak of his power at that time and may not have gained anything further. Indeed, he was again drawn into further tribal quarrels between different Mirdāsid clans.[601]

Earlier in 1044 CE the Mazyadite Dubays and the ʿUqaylid Qirwāsh had to form a coalition against the Turkomans who were moving westwards into Mesopotamia and competing with them for pastures and power. The Turkomans even managed to briefly take Mosul but were driven away by the coalition.[602] This coalition, between the two tribes was already quite exceptional, but the coalition which al-Muaʾyyad managed to form between the Fatimids, the Turks, Kurds and the Bedouin was truly unique. For example, al-Muaʾyyad managed to broker peace between the Numayrids of Harrān and the Mirdāsids of Aleppo. The Numayrids and the Mirdāsids were drawn into a protracted feud over control over Rahbah and the pasturelands around it.[603] For the Fatimids, northern Mesopotamia was critical as a

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[600] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 195-197, 203-204; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 194-197; Th Bianquis, "Al-Yāzurī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).; Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, Al-Mu-Ayyad Fi'L-Din Al-Shirazi*, 69-86

[601] Heidemann, "Numayrid Ar-Raqqa: Archaeological and Historical Evidence for a 'Dimorphic State' in the Bedouin Dominated Fringes of the Fatimid Empire"

[602] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 178-179

[603] When al-Basāsīrī moved to Rahbah in 447/1055, Thimāl of the Mirdāsids and Māniʿ of the Numayrids fought over Raqqa.

key to the conquest of Baghdad, and al-Muaʾyyad had to stabilise the political situation. His initial impression of Māniʿ was unfavourable, advising the vizier al-Yāzūrī to engage with the more reliable Thimāl, who al-Yāzūrī was not in favour of. However, Dubays convinced al-Muaʾyyad of the importance of including Māniʿ in the coalition. Thimāl was pressured to give up Raqqa to Māniʿ, which resulted in some friction among the tribe of Kilāb but it was al-Muaʾyyad's diplomacy which again averted fraternal conflict.[604]

During his two years in the Levant and Mesopotamia, al-Muaʾyyad, by his skilful statesmanship, managed to create political stability among the many warring Bedouin tribes from northern Syria to the Euphrates valley which facilitated the Fatimids' conquest of Baghdad, albeit for a short time.

2.3   Northern Africa: The Hilālī invasion

The 14th Imam al-Muʿizz, at the time of transferring his seat from Ifrīqīyyah to Cairo, had appointed Buluggīn bin Zīrī (373/984), the prince of the Sanhājah Berbers, as governor of Ifrīqīyyah, since the Sanhājah had been loyal defenders of the Fatimids. Buluggīn formed the Zīrid dynasty which ruled as Fatimid governors with increasing independence from 361/972 onwards.[605] Since the reign of the 15th Imam, they were acknowledged as a hereditary dynasty. According to Brett, the Zīrids had for years maintained a delicate relationship with the Fatimids maintaining a vassal-suzerain relationship. For the Zīrids it was essential for their legitimacy and for the Fatimids it was a matter of keeping their empire intact.[606] However, relations with the Zīrids became increasingly strained.[607]

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[604] Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" 156-157

[605] Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies*

[606] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 113-114, 135-136; Brett, "The Diplomacy of Empire: Fatimids and Zirids, 990–1062," 150-151

[607] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance"

Al-Muʿizz bin Bādīs (d. 454/1062), the fourth ruler of the Zīrids, was only a minor when he became the ruler in Ifrīqīyyah after his father's death, with his aunt acting as his regent. The Shīʿah minority in Ifrīqīyyah was massacred during this time in 407/1016. He overthrew his aunt to start his personal reign c. 413/1022. In 441/1049-1050, to appease the majority Sunnī Mālikī population, al-Muʿizz finally chose to secede from the Fatimid Empire, proclaimed Sunnīism and pledged allegiance to the Abbasids. While the Fatimids could not act immediately,[608] Jabbārah bin Mukhtār, the chief of the Banū Qurrah in Barqa, declared complete submission for al-Muiʿzz bin Bādīs and announced in a letter that he and the people in Barqa had cursed the Fatimids, set fire to the pulpits upon which the Fatimids had been praised and burnt their banners.[609]

The tribes of Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym, who had moved to Syria, were used by the Fatimids as an auxiliary force. Many thousands of the newly arrived Bedouin had become supporters of the Fatimid cause[610] and were thus drafted in the Fatimid army, many of whom moved to Egypt. About half a century later they again became a source of disorder in Egypt and were deemed unruly by the Fatimid administration, even being blamed for a severe famine in Egypt.[611] It was either the famine which led the Hilāl and Sulaym to increase their raids in the Eastern Desert, or it was their disorder and disruptiveness which were major causes for the famine. Nevertheless, the Banū Hilāl and Banū Sulaym began to cause disorder in Egypt and their constant bickering, even amongst themselves, had become troublesome for the administration.[612]

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[608] M. Talbi, "Al- Muʿizz B. Bādīs," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman and et al., Second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[609] Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part II)," , 168-184; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 186

[610] It is not clear how many of them would have entered the Fatimid *daʿwah.*

[611] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 44

[612] Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part II)," , 168-184

2.3.1   Did the Fatimids send the Banū Hilāl?

The most common account states that Imam al-Mustansir sent his vizier al-Yāzūrī to the Banū Hilāl who convinced them to raid North Africa. Al-Yāzūrī saw this as an opportunity to do away with the Zīrids and to retribute them for changing allegiance towards the Abbasid al-Qāiʾm and at the same time to contain the tribal menace which plagued Egypt. He promised each Bedouin individual a dinar and a camel and permitted them for the first time to cross the Nile westwards into North Africa and promised them governorships of the various regions of North Africa. Prior to this Imam al-Mustansir brokered peace between the al-Zughbah and Riyāh (subtribes of the Hilāl) who were fighting among themselves.[613] Another possible reason for sending the Bedouin to punish the Zīrids is that in this way the costs would be far less than mobilising a regular army.[614]

A similar example of al-Yāzūrī trying to solve two problems with 'one stone' is recorded by Saleh. He writes that the Banū Sunbus were becoming troublesome in Palestine, so al-Yāzūrī invited them to Egypt and augmented the regular army with them to fight the renegade Bedouin of Buhayra in 443/1051-1052.[615] This may well be a reference to the Banū Qurrah which is mentioned in al-Muʾayyad's autobiography.[616]

Modern scholarship uses the term 'the Hilālī invasion' to refer to the westward migration of the Banū Hilāl, Banū Sulaym and possibly other tribes as well.[617] It is possible that the Banū Sulaym's numbers may have been more than the Banū Hilāl, however, since the Banū

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[613] Al-Zanki, Jamal M. H. A, "The Emirate of Damascus in the Early Crusading Period 488-549/1095-1154" (PhD, University of St. Andrews, 1990), 45-47. It may also be the vizier al-Yāzūrī who brokered peace.
[614] Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir*, 50
[615] Saleh, "Le Rôle Des Bédouins D'Egypte À L'Époque Fatimide," , 51-65
[616] Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, Al-Mu-Ayyad Fi'L-Din Al-Shirazi*, 74
[617] The *Sīrat Banū Hilāl*, is an epic that continues ancient Bedouin tradition and tells the tale of Banū Hilāl's migration from their homelands in the Arabian Peninsula until their entry and conquest of North Africa. See Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 99-101

Hilāl were the dominant tribe, the migration became associated with their name.[618] The Banū Hilāl left Upper Egypt in 441/1049 and the invasion of Ifrīqīyyah began in 442/1050. In 443/1051-1052, al-Muʿizz and his troops were ambushed and then routed at the battle of Haydarān, a mountain near Qayrawān, by the Bedouin and had to leave Qayrawān for al-Mahdīyyah. Bedouin chiefs planted their headgear as they spread out over the countryside as a sign of possession. Qayrawān was plundered in 449/1057 along with the palace city of Sabra al-Mansūrīyyah.[619] Al-Muʿizz returned to pledging allegiance to the Fatimids, perhaps from 446/1055 but certainly from 449/1057-1058. The Banū Hilāl, supplemented by new arrivals, then moved further westwards into what is now Algeria and started clashes with the Zenatā Berbers. Northern Africa dissolved into city-states and tribal domains and its strategic value to the Fatimids was lost.[620]

Brett is of the opinion that al-Yāzūrī did not send the Banū Hilāl to punish the Zīrids and that this was developed by an anti-Yāzūrī narrative. According to Brett, the Banū Hilāl were already present in North Africa by then and al-Yāzūrī merely used them to his advantage.[621] According to Brett, they were present in North Africa at least since the second half of the fourth/tenth century, which is much before the Battle of Haydarān.[622] Brett goes on to say that al-Muʿizz tried bargaining with the Hilālī tribes, but the Riyāh and Zughbah quarrelled amongst themselves for booty and reached out to al-Yāzūrī to adjudicate, thus giving al-Yāzūrī an opportunity to intervene. Al-Yāzūrī sent Amīn al-Dawlah Ibn Mulhim who urged the tribes, already present there, to resume the siege of Qayrawān and to invite

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[618] Al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad bin 'Alī, *Al-Bayān Wal-Iʿrāb ʿamma Bi-Ardh Misr Min Al-Āʿrāb*, 67
[619] Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part II)," , 168-184; Gil, "Institutions and Events of the Eleventh Century Mirrored in Geniza Letters (Part I)," , 151-167; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 187
[620] Brett, "The Diplomacy of Empire: Fatimids and Zirids, 990–1062," , 105; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 201-202; Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 59; Talbi, "Al- Muʿizz B. Bādīs," in
[621] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 188-190; Brett, "The Way of the Nomad," , 251-269
[622] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 176

al-Muʿizz to submit again to Fatimid suzerainty.[623] Ibn Mulhim returned with a share of the booty from the battle of Haydarān, which was celebrated in an official Fatimid *sijill* (letter)[624] written to Yemen.[625]

Brett's view is certainly debatable as there is no doubt that the migration took place in migratory waves over a period and hence even if some members of the Banū Hilāl were already present in northern Africa before al-Muʿizz's revolt, it does not negate the fact that more members could have been sent by al-Yāzūrī.[626] It is pertinent to note that although *Dāʿī* Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn has also stated that Ibn Mulhim was sent to reconcile between the two tribes already present there, the *sijill* which he quotes clearly states that it was the Imam who had sent the Riyāh and Zughbah earlier, who then quarrelled amongst themselves after which the Imam sent Ibn Mulhim to them.[627]

However, whatever the reason may be, it is indisputable that the Fatimids used Hilālī tribes to their advantage as al-Muʿizz returned to pledging allegiance to the Fatimids in 449/1057. It is also beyond doubt that the migration of Arab tribes in particular the Banū Hilāl has had an intense impact on the ethnic and social composition of North Africa, with the entry of a new race of warrior nomads which pushed Berber languages and cultures into the

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[623] Ibid.

[624] The official letter makes a reference the two Hilālī subtribes with the words (Translation by Brett): "*Amīr al-Muʾminīn shot from the quiver of his judgement arrows that pierced his (Ibn Bādis) vitals, and struck him with blades that severed his joints, and loosed upon him the tribes of Riyāḥ and Zughbah who dried up his saliva and stopped his breath, and threw him into the prison of a siege from which there was little or no deliverance, taking possession of all the domains of which he had been so proud, until he stood upon the brink of ruin*". See Ibid.; Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman: The History of an Islamic Community*, ed. Ayman Fuʾad Sayyid, Vol. 4 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 94-96.

[625] Brett, "The Central Lands of North Africa and Sicily, Until the Beginning of the Almohad Period," in , 48-65; Michael Brett, "Variorum II Introduction: The Fatimids in Context," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019e), 1-13.; Brett, "The Diplomacy of Empire: Fatimids and Zirids, 990–1062," 119

[626] Ibid.; Mathew Andrew Barber, "Fatimid Historiography and its Survival. A Case Study of the Vizierate of Al-Yāzūrī (R. 442-450/1050-1058)" (Doctorate, The University of Edinburgh, 2021), 68-69. Similarly, the opinion of Ibn al-Sayrafī (head of the Fatimid chancery in the 12th century) that al-Yāzūrī sent the Banū Hilāl to punish al-Muʿizz for having used in his letter before his name the expression 'his creation' i.e. of the vizier instead of the humbler 'his slave' may not be a historical reality. Brett may have misunderstood the expression 'his creation' as a reference to the Imam, though it seems likely that it was a reference to the vizier.

[627] Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman: The History of an Islamic Community*

mountains and deserts.[628] A few letters from the Cairo Geniza record public despair at the time.[629] Recently, Benchekroun argues that although the Banū Hilāl became the most important force for the Arabisation of the Berbers, they may not have started the economic downfall in northern Africa as it had already begun earlier.[630] Whatever the case may be, the rout was lamented by one of al-Muʿizz's poets himself by describing it as the defeat of the southern Arabs by the northern Arabs, as al-Muʿizz claimed descent from the southern Arabs and the Banū Hilāl belonged to the northern Arabs.[631] However, the invasion did not stimulate the resurgence of Shīʿism in northern Africa, probably because although the Banū Hilāl supported the Fatimids they were not overtly religious.[632]

2.4   An overview of the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula from the time of al-Basāsīrī's rebellion

As has been narrated above, Thimāl had supported al-Basāsīri's rebellion against the Abbasids and in 449/1058 Thimāl even concluded a deal with the Fatimids in which he exchanged Aleppo for Jubayl, Beirut and Acre. In the meanwhile, there was a power struggle between Thimāl, his brother ʿAtīyyah and his brother's son Mahmūd bin Nasr, while the fighting with the Fatimids and Byzantium continued. Nevertheless, when he went to Cairo, Thimāl was warmly welcomed by the Imam.

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[628] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*; Brett, "The Central Lands of North Africa and Sicily, Until the Beginning of the Almohad Period," in , 48-65

[629] b. Sughmār, Labrāṭ b. Moshe, *Letter from Labrāṭ B. Moshe B. Sughmār, in Al-Mahdiyya, to His Brother Yehuda, in Fustat*, 1061).; b. Sughmār, Labrāṭ b. Moshe, *Letter from Labrāṭ B. Moshe B. Sughmār, in Sūsa, to His Younger Brother Abū Zekharya Yehuda B. Moshe, in Fustat*, 1056).; Abū l-Ḥayy b. Avraham, *Letter from Abū L-Ḥayy B. Avraham, in Ifrīqiyya, to His Uncle, Moshe B. Abī L-Ḥayy, in Alexandria*, Mid-11th century).

[630] Chafik T. Benchekroun, "Hilāl, Banū," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. Kate Fleet and et al., Three ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

[631] Michael Brett, "The Poetry of Disaster," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett, 1st ed. (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019d), 129.

[632] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 62

The Fatimids irrevocably lost their hold on northern Syria in 452/1060 after al-Basāsīrī's rebellion and the Mirdāsid Mahmūd bin Nasr's recapture of Aleppo from the Fatimids. A Fatimid contingent under the governor of Damascus, Nāsir al-Dawlah Husayn bin Hamdān (d. 465/1073) who was sent to recover the city, lost disastrously at the Battle of Funaydiq when the Bedouin Kalb and Tayyʾ deserted him. In 452-453/1061, Thimāl was supported by the Fatimids to recover the city as a vassal of the state.[633]

After Thimāl's death, ʿAtīyyah and Mahmūd bin Nasr continued fighting and Mahmūd sought the assistance of the Turkoman, thus introducing a new component in the power struggle. ʿAtīyyah had remained loyal to the Fatimids and ruled between 454/1062-457/1065. His rule was followed by that of Mahmūd. Finally, in 462/1070 Mahmūd changed his allegiance to the Abbasids and had the *khutba* to be read in the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Qāʾim and Alp Arsalān, even though Aleppines, who were predominantly Shīʿite at that time, were not in favour of doing so.[634] Although the Mirdāsids remained the dominant power in northern Syria until 471 or 472/1079 when they were overthrown by the ʿUqaylids, they could not fully capitalise on the problems faced by the Fatimid Empire and weakened, especially after the death of Thimāl in 454/1062.[635]

As for Damascus, Badr al-Jamālī tried to enforce Fatimid sovereignty there in the years 455/1063-456/1064 and 458/1066-460/1068. It was during 455/1063 that Badr appeared first as an important figure in Fatimid history with his takeover of Damascus from the Bedouin. Badr later hired a Turkoman chief, Atsiz bin Uyak (d. 471/1078), to rein in the

[633] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 172-173; Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 532-553; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 169-170
[634] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 198; Hamdani, "A Possible Fatimîd Background to the Battle of Manzikert," ; Bianquis and Shamma, "Mirdās, Banū Or Mirdāsids," in ; Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir*, 131; Khaÿat, "The Šīite Rebellions in Aleppo in the 6th A.H./12th A.D. Century," 169-170
[635] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 172-173; Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 532-553; Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in 169-170

Bedouin of Palestine, but Atsiz revolted against the Fatimids and occupied Jerusalem in 463/1071 and Damascus in 468/1076.[636] Another interesting example of a rapid change of alliances is the Turkish or Armenian Nāwikī, Hārūn bin Khān, who formed and subsequently changed alliances with the Mirdāsids, the other members of the Banū Kilāb, the Banū Numayr and others. The Nāwikīs were brought in by Badr as an independent force, 'worthy matches of the Bedouin'. They initially fought the Bedouin, but then later some of them fought with the Bedouin against the Fatimids.[637] This helped the entry of the Turkomans into the Levant which gradually but permanently upset its political balance.[638]

In 459/1067 the Carmathians lost control of the island of Uwal (Bahrain) and then al-Qaṭīf. In 469/1077 they lost al-Āhsāʾ to ʿAbd Allāh bin ʿAlī al-ʿUyūnī, a chief from the tribe of the Banū Murrah bin ʿĀmir, who then formed his own local state which recognised the suzerainty of Imam al-Mustansir. By the 5th/11th century, the Carmathians outside of Bahrayn were mostly absorbed into Fatimid Ismāʿīlism or disintegrated, though pockets of core Carmathians did survive in Iraq.[639]

2.5   Bedouin role in the Egyptian civil war[640]

During, what modern historians term as 'the Egyptian civil war' (approximately 459/1067-466/1074), because of the infighting between the Turkish, Black and Berber troops, the political situation had deteriorated rapidly within the Fatimid realms. The resultant anarchy

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[636] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 197. He may have taken it twice see Alexander Matveev, "Palestine in the Last Third of the XI C.: Between the Fatimids and the Crusaders," *Вестник Санкт-Петербургского Университета. Серия 13. Востоковедение. Африканистика*, no. 4 (2010).

[637] Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction-Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, 24-26, 46-47; Bianquis and Shamma, "Mirdās, Banū Or Mirdāsids," in

[638] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 359-360

[639] Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in ; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 185-186, 210

[640] See Appendix 15 for the rise of the Turks and the downfall of the Bedouin.

and mismanagement were one of the main reasons for the *al-shiddah al-ʿuzmah* (the great crisis/famine).[641]

Nāsir al-Dawlah harboured ambitions of overthrowing the Fatimid dynasty and replacing it with the Abbasids. He supported the Turkish troops against the Blacks.[642] He took control of Cairo and his Turkish troops appropriated state funds and even looted the palace. After he was expelled from Cairo, he took refuge with the Banū Sanīn Bedouin of the Buhayra province, rallied the Bedouin and took control of the Delta, from Alexandria to Damietta.[643] He put a blockade from the north, which was one of the causes of the great famine. There was total anarchy in the capital and control over the provinces had been lost.[644] Nāsir al-Dawlah colluded with the Seljuqs and tried to change allegiance to the Abbasids, and in the process severely stifled the Fatimid State. After having burnt Fustāt, in 464/1071-1072, he retook control of Cairo. Goitein, perhaps mentioning this period when the Bedouin 'conquered the Egyptian capital', mentions that a letter from the Cairo Geniza states that slaves ran away from their masters with the Bedouin. This demonstrates the loss of administrative authority in Cairo at that time.[645] Earlier in 458/1065, Nāsir al-Dawlah had even colluded with a Jarrāhid chieftain to have an anti-caliph installed.[646] Nāsir al-Dawlah

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[641] For more on the 'easterners' and the 'westerners' along with the Blacks see Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 171-172

[642] Sub-Saharan Africans.

[643] Ibid.

[644] This anarchy is mentioned in one of the state related documents found in the Cairo Geniza. See *State-Related Report on Unrest all Over Egypt*, Mid-11th century). Yusuf Umrethwala, PGP Transcriptions (in Arabic) (2023). With suggestions by Alan Elbaum (09/2023).

[645] Goitein and Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. I, Economic Foundations: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 144; Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. Volume IV, Daily Life: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 242

[646] Shakir, "Falastīn Ma Bayn Al-ʿAhdayn Al-Fātimī Wal-Ayyūbī ," in 473

was killed by his Turkish opponents in 465/1073, but the condition remained critical until Imam al-Mustansir summoned Badr al-Jamālī from Palestine in 466/1074.[647]

After reaching Egypt, Badr set out to stabilise the Fatimid domains. This included wiping out the disorderly Turks and Blacks, and then in 469/1076-1077 dealing with the Bedouin who were taking advantage of the precarious political situation in Egypt to create an insurgency. Badr recovered lands from the Juhaynah and Thaʿālibah Bedouin of Upper Egypt and attacked the Bedouin in the Delta.[648] About twenty thousand Bedouin were killed in Buhayrah alone.[649] Atsiz bin Uyak, who had now turned rogue, attacked Egypt along with the Seljuqs in 469/1077. His army contained Bedouin from Syria. Badr himself utilised Bedouin tribesmen in repelling this attack.[650] Saleh reports a rebellion of the Banū Sulaym and the Fazārah in 469/1076 or 1077, which Badr crushed and forced many of them to flee in the direction of Barqa.[651] In 478/1084 or 1085 Badr killed his son Awhad who had rebelled in Alexandria with the support of a few members of the army and the Bedouin.[652]

The family of the Banū Kanz had been the effective rulers in Aswan from the time of the advent of the Fatimids in Egypt, but it was the 16th Imam, who had given one of their forefathers the title of *Kanz al-Dawlah* (Treasure of the State) for his role in the capture of Abū Rakwah. The Banū Kanz, being far from Cairo, took a large amount of land at the

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[647] Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," 349-352; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 202-204; Mark R. Cohen, "Fatimid Realities and the Coptic Patriarchate," in *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt: The Origins of the Office of the Head of the Jews, Ca. 1065-1126*, ed. Mark R. Cohen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 56-58.

[648] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 206; Josef W. Meri, ed., *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encylopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 90.; Cohen, "Fatimid Realities and the Coptic Patriarchate," in 62-63

[649] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 219

[650] Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," 352, 364; Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction-Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, 24-26; Johannes Den Heijer and Joachim Yeshaya, "Solomon Ben Joseph Ha-Kohen on Fāṭimid Victory: A Hebrew Ode to Al-Mustanṣir Billāh and Badr Al-Jamālī Reconsidered," *Al-Masaq* 25, no. 2 (2013), 155-183.

[651] Saleh, "Le Rôle Des Bédouins D'Egypte À L'Époque Fatimide," , 51-65

[652] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 210; Seta B. Dadoyan, "Badr Al-Jamālī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Kramer and et al., Three ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

southern frontier of Egypt bordering Nubia. Badr was forced to act against them, recovering

Aswan in the process. In 469/1076, Badr al-Jamālī had the Coptic Patriarch demand from

the Nubian king at Muqurra the extradition of the rebellious 'prince of the Arabs' at Aswan,

Kanz al-Dawlah, who was the last of the rebels in the south.[653]

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[653] Michael Brett, "Badr Al-Jamālī and the Fatimid Renascence," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett, 1st ed. (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019b), 146.; Michael Brett, "Al-Karāza Al-Marqusīya," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett, 1st ed. (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019a), 167. One of the Muslim chroniclers also records that the last *Kanz al-Dawlah* was killed in battle.

Conclusion Part One

Looking back at the first research question whether the Fatimid faith had any influence on Bedouin tribal politics, I would like to compare them to the Kutāma Berbers. The Berbers are a varied, fiercely proud and independent, largely tribal inhabitants of the mountains, valleys, plains and deserts from Morocco to Egypt.[654] Some Arabs saw the people known collectively today as Berber (or by their modern-day self-name Amāzīgh) as descendants of Noah. Although they had converted to Islam, they had been subjugated at the hands of the Arabs and hence held resentment toward them, a resentment which manifested in a quest for self-rule and a need to break free from the central authority of the Islamic state of the Umayyads and the Abbasids, which at times, manifested in support for Khārījiism.[655] The Berbers of the Lesser Kabylia, a mountainous region in modern-day northern Algeria, were the Kutāma. They were the ancient Ucutumani who did not participate in the Khārijī rebellions which had begun in the 120s/740s. According to Brett, this was part of a larger phenomenon of tribal people attempting to take control over the empires that had to varying degrees incorporated them. Brett says they seem to have governed themselves while recognising the values of the larger society.[656]

The Kutāma were the initial supporters of the Fatimids in North Africa. They became the mainstay of the Fatimid army that helped al-Qāʾid Jawhar conquer from the Atlantic coast to Cairo and onwards into the Levant. Ibn Khaldūn in his prolegomena analysed how

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[654] Brett and Rouighi hold contrasting views on Berber origins. See Ramzi Rouighi, *Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 3-8, 44-73.; Ramzi Rouighi, "The Berbers of the Arabs," *Studia Islamica* 106, no. 1 (2011), 49-76.; Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress, *The Berbers*, 1st ed. (Oxford ; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

[655] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 26-29, 297-298; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 15-20; Brett, "The Islamisation of Egypt and North Africa"; Rouighi, *Inventing the Berbers: History and Ideology in the Maghrib*, 1-2

[656] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 26-29, 297-298; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 15-20; Brett, "The Islamisation of Egypt and North Africa"; Qurboniev, "Traditions of Learning in Fāṭimid Ifrīqiya (296-362/909-973): Networks, Practices, and Institutions" , 28-31; Gaiser, "Khārijīs," in

ʿasabīyyah, headed by a religious revolutionary, contributes to forming empires.[657] The rise

of the Kutāma seems to fit his model, a view supported by Brett, who states that it was "a

prime example of tribal *ʿasabīyyah* put to the use of faith".[658]

A group of Kutāma pilgrims had gone to Mecca around 280/893, about 17 years prior to

Imam ʿAbd-Allāh al-Mahdī being proclaimed caliph in Ifrīqīyyah. While in Mecca, they

met a man, whom they later found out to be a Fatimid missionary, *Dāʿī* Abū ʿAbd-Allāh,

who unbeknownst to them, was on a mission to convert them to the Fatimid faith. Impressed

by his erudition and piety, they invited him to their homeland as a teacher. Over the years,

Abū ʿAbd-Allāh taught them in sessions of wisdom the tenets of the Ismāʿilī faith, including

the basics of the faith, the centrality of the imam in Islam and the need to establish a state

for the emergence of a Fatimid imam. The process was a long one, but the audiences grew

steadily. Later he gave others from the Kutāma permission to teach. The foundation had

been laid doctrinally for the establishment of a new Shīʿī caliphate with a Fatimid imam as

its head.[659]

Abū ʿAbd-Allāh managed to transform the stateless people into a 'disciplined' society

based on religious principles, which also produced disciplined soldiers, devoted to the

cause.[660] He took up arms with the Kutāma and by 290/903 embarked on a conquest,

initially challenging the authority of several other local Berber tribes and leading to the

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[657] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 202-203, 212-214; Brett, "Variorum II Introduction: The Fatimids in Context," in , 1-13; Brett, "The Islamisation of Egypt and North Africa". Ibn Khaldūn also states: "Bedouins can acquire royal authority only by making use of some religious colouring, such as prophethood, or sainthood, or some great religious event in general".

[658] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 29-32; Qurboniev, "Traditions of Learning in Fāṭimid Ifrīqiya (296-362/909-973): Networks, Practices, and Institutions" 41-42.

[659] Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 102-103; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 141-142; Lindsay, "Prophetic Parallels in Abu ʿAbd Allah Al-Shiʿi's Mission among the Kutama Berbers, 893–91," 39, 42; Paul E. Walker, *Kutāma* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).; Laqbal, *Dawr Kutāma Fī Taʾrīkh Al-Khilāfah Al-Fāṭimīyyah: Mundh Taʾsīsiha Ilā Muntasaf Al-Qarn Al-Khāmis Al-Hijrī*, 193-329

[660] Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire: An Annotated English Translation of Al-Qāḍī Al-Nuʿmān's Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa*, 101-103; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 15-20; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 65, 126-127; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 29-32

downfall of the Sunnī Aghlabids of Ifrīqīyyah, the Ibādī-Khārijī Rustamids of Tāhart[661] and the Midrārids of Sijilmāsa.[662] In 296/909, in Sijilmāsa, he freed Imam ʿAbd-Allāh al-Mahdī who had been put under house arrest by the Midrārid ruler and identified him as his master, the Fatimid Imam, heralding the advent of the Fatimid Empire.[663] When the seat of the Fatimid Empire was translocated from North Africa to Egypt[664], large numbers of the Kutāma, who at that time formed the bulk of the Fatimid army, migrated to Egypt.[665]

The Kutāma, like the Bedouin were a tribal society, though they were semi-sedentary.[666] The Arab Bedouin tribes, whom the Fatimids engaged with, were like the Kutāma, fiercely independent with intense ʿasabīyyah. They mostly only recognised the authority of their chiefs and had sufficient combat capabilities to be relevant to the surrounding states.[667] But while the Kutāma rose rapidly and achieved much success with the Fatimids, no Bedouin tribe achieved the same.[668]

Dāʿī Abū ʿAbd-Allāh managed to form a society based on religious ideals and values among the Kutāma as noted above. But no missionary ever managed to nurture in the Bedouin the same passion for the Fatimid cause as Abū ʿAbd-Allāh managed to cultivate in the Kutāma. The closest this was achieved was perhaps among the Levantine Bedouin before they switched to the Carmathian cause. It is interesting to note that Crone thought that apocalyptic politics worked only for villagers and tribespeople as their outlook was

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[661] A town in modern-day Algeria, known currently as Tiaret or Tihert.
[662] Was a town in modern-day eastern Morocco.
[663] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 126-128; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 33-36
[664] Egypt was conquered in 358/969. The 14th Imam moved to his new capital a few years later in 362/973.
[665] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 126-128; den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population,"; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 31-35
[666] Traditional Arab classification of the Berbers is into the *Butr* and the *Barānis*, which is roughly equivalent to nomadic and sedentary respectively. Accordingly, the Kutāma are classified as being from the *Barānis* branch of the Berbers.
[667] Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire: An Annotated English Translation of Al-Qāḍī Al-Nuʿmān's Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa*, 6, 49-51; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 29-32
[668] Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," 344-345

communal[669], for which she cites the Berbers (by which she probably meant the Kutāma) and the Bahraynīs (by which she probably meant the Bedouin who supported the Carmathians).[670]

The Kutāma were an obvious asset to the Fatimids, but it came with its own set of liabilities. Their rise to power prompted a series of rebellions in North Africa from other Berber tribes, sometimes taking the form of Khārjjīism.[671] The Kutāma themselves rebelled against Imam al-Mahdī and even installed their own Mahdī.[672]

The 14th Imam, al-Muʿizz is reported to have highly praised the Kutāma, His words in praise of the Kutāma are quoted several times by al-Qādi al-Nuʿmān.[673] By the time of the 16th Imam, there is a palpable change and the Kutāma seem to have lost their privileged status in the Fatimid State. This study proposes that the main reason for the Kutāma losing their preferred status was their gradually weakening conviction in the Fatimid faith. Al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān had praised the early Kutāma society established by *Dāʿī* Abū ʿAbd-Allāh, which, as he says achieved this exalted position because the *Dāʿī* established it on the principles of religion.[674]

Already at the time of the 15th Imam al-ʿAzīz, Jawhar had reported his disappointment with the Kutāma troops while facing Aftakīn. Lev states that the 15th Imam introduced new elements into the army because he could not find the same military specialisation in the Berbers that he found in the Turks.[675] Walker states that the Imam therefore started looking

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[669] This may have been a reference to *ʿasabīyyah*.
[670] Crone, "The Ismailis," in , 197-218
[671] Also see the Literature Review for a brief discussion on the Khārjjīs.
[672] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 36-39; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 38-39; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 141-142
[673] See, for example, a passage from *al-Majālis wal-Musāyarāt* by al-Qādi al-Nuʿmān, quoted in *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār*. Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*, 147-153
[674] Haji, *Founding the Fatimid State: The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire: An Annotated English Translation of Al-Qāḍī Al-Nuʿmān's Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa*, 100-109
[675] Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," 337

for Turks as they fought more as individuals or in smaller groups, dedicated to their patron. The motive though was more military than religious.[676] Turks started being employed along with the Berbers, most of whom were from the Kutāma. The aim may also have been to weaken the grip of the Berbers on the army. The Turks quickly came to occupy the most important positions in the army, giving rise to tensions between the two groups[677], and eventually leading to open warfare at the time of his successor, Imam al-Hākim. When Barjawān seized power and became the *wasīt* in 387/997, the loss of power for the Berbers was permanent.[678]

Initially, the Kutāma had fought with dedication, motivated by religion, with the imam being their patron. Over the years, they lost that dedication, possibly because of loss of religious zeal. Imam al-ʿAzīz tried to reinvoke it in the Kutāma who still lived in North Africa, from amongst whom he also wished to recruit dedicated soldiers. However, the Zīrids suppressed the Kutāma in 378/988 and 379/989, signalling the end of their power in Ifrīqīyyah.[679] The political situation deteriorated much at the time of the 18th Imam al-Mustansir. The lack of loyalty in the troops of the Fatimid army, most of whom were mercenaries, can be juxtaposed with the loyalty of the Kutāma troops of the early Fatimid State. For example, the Turkish and Black troops laid waste to Cairo and attacked the personal wealth of the Imam, showing utter disrespect for him, something which would

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[676] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 28

[677] The Berbers, along with a few other ethnicities were known as the *maghāribah* and the Turks along with a few other ethnicities were known as the *mashāriqah*. See Chapter 6 for more on these two factions.

[678] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 178-179; Lev, "Army, Regime, and Society in Fatimid Egypt, 358-487/968-1094," 344-353; Michael Bonner, "Empires, Armies, and Frontiers," in *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practice*, ed. Michael Bonner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 134-135.

[679] Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Hakim Bi-Amr Allah, 996-1021*, 231-232; Jiwa, "Study of the Reign of the Fifth Fatimid Imam/Caliph Al-'Aziz Billah" 201-204; Laqbal, *Dawr Kutāma Fī Taʾrīkh Al-Khilāfah Al-Fātimīyyah: Mundh Taʾsīsiha Ilā Muntasaf Al-Qarn Al-Khāmis Al-Hijrī*, 589-592; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 113, 121; Lev, *State and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, 81-92 There is a slight difference between Walker and Jiwa in the intentions of the *dāʿī* sent by the Imam.

have been unthinkable for the Kutāma in the early years of the Fatimid State. Nevertheless, the later Kutāma[680] were not as valuable to the Fatimids as their forefathers had been.[681]

That same level of collective belief and conviction seen in the Kutāma of the early Fatimid State cannot be identified in any of the Bedouin tribes, in fact not even in the later Kutāma. Therefore, the major difference between the early Kutāma and the Bedouin was belief in the Fatimid faith, the Kutāma, with their zealousness and conviction became ardent supporters of the Fatimids, while the Bedouin prioritised self-interests over faith. Since Fatimid faith necessitated complete obedience to the imam, it was very difficult for the Bedouin, with their love for freedom, to comply with the demands of the faith. Even though prima facie it seems that faith had little influence on Bedouin tribal politics during the Fatimid era, I submit that in fact it did. But rather than being advantageous for the Fatimids, it aroused anti-Fatimid sentiments, like in the case of the Bedouin supporting the Carmathians and the rebellion of Abū Rakwah.[682]

This takes us to the next thesis question regarding Bedouin tribal politics within the Fatimid Empire and how it created fluid borders. Boundaries in the medieval Islamic world were complex, consisting of permeable lines of demarcation and assimilation. According to Brauer, they were zones, rather than sharply defined borders. Their very nature was based on fluidity, and the more volatile a frontier group was the more fluid interstate borders would be. For the medieval Muslim states, authority was concentrated in the cities. The further one moved away from them the more it would dilute. At the frontier zones between two states, sometimes because of a power vacuum, it would be difficult to discern whose

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[680] That is after the 16th Imam.

[681] Thomson, *Politics and Power in Late Fatimid Egypt: The Reign of Caliph Al-Mustansir*, 48; Walker, *Kutāma*

[682] The 14th Imam's words in praise of the Kutāma are quoted several times by al-Qādi al-Nuʿmān. See a passage from *al-Majālis wal-Musāyarāt* by al-Qādi al-Nuʿmān, quoted in *ʿUyūn al-Akhbār*. Jiwa, *The Founder of Cairo: The Fatimid Imam-Caliph Al-Muʿizz and His Era: An English Translation of the Text on Al-Muʿizz from Idrīs ʿImād Al-Dīn's ʿUyūn Al-Akhbār*, 147-153

authority was more prevalent. This is where the Bedouin would thrive.[683] The eastern borders of the Levant and the southern borders of Egypt, where Fatimid authority faded, were ideal environments for the Bedouin.

Generally, for the Bedouin, except if struck by religious fervour, loyalty to the tribe and protecting its interests preceded everything else. This not only affected their relations with the *dawlah* (state) but also the *daʿwah*. According to the Fatimid faith, recognition, allegiance and obedience to the imam is a basic requirement of the faith, without which one does not become an actual believer.[684] We even have evidence that some Bedouin did give the oath of allegiance to the Fatimid imams.[685] However, most Bedouin, even those living within the Fatimid Empire would never have been part of the inner circle of believers in the *daʿwah*, unlike the Kutāma. The conviction of even those who did join the *daʿwah* is questionable. Mostly these Bedouin nomads functioned as a singular unit, in the form of the tribe, and hence collective decisions would have had more impact than individual ones. The actual number of Bedouin who pledged allegiance to the *daʿwah* is impossible to ascertain. Even more difficult is ascertaining the number of those who did so out of sincere belief in the imamate of the Fatimids and subsequently remained steadfast.

 Bedouin spirit made it difficult for them to truly be loyal subjects of any polity except their own tribes. That is why each tribe could not forsake their dream of forming their own independent state, or at least being independent from external political forces. For this they would do whatever was possible, including changing alliances and allegiances. A prime example are the Jarrāhids, who initially, at the time of the 14th Imam, supported the

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[683] Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography*, 1-73; A. A. Eger, "The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers: An Introduction," in *The Archaeology of Medieval Islamic Frontiers*, ed. A. Asa Eger (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2019), 3-28.

[684] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 83; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 88-89

[685] Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, Al-Mu-Ayyad Fi'L-Din Al-Shirazi*, 81-82

Carmathians in their attacks on Fatimid Egypt in the early 360s/970s. However, even this support was not completely sincere. At one point while the Carmathians were busy fighting, the Bedouin looted them, which was one of the reasons for their defeat. In 396/1005-1006, at the time of the 16th Imam, they supported the Fatimids against the rebel Abū Rakwah and then in 401/1010 revolted and supported the *sharīf* of Mecca Abū al-Futūh.[686]

Ever-changing Bedouin alliances and allegiances are one of the reasons why the empires that had stakes in the Levant had to deal with fluid borders. For the Fatimids, it started after their conquest of Egypt. The Carmathians with their Bedouin hordes in the east[687], Abū Rakwah with the Banū Qurrah[688] in the west and various other Bedouin tribes (though their role was limited compared to that of the Turks and Blacks[689]) during the Egyptian Civil War[690] in the heart of Egypt, not only managed to threaten the borders of the Fatimid Empire but also its sovereignty. On the other hand, during the reign of the 18th Imam, al-Mustansir, al-Muaʾyyad's statesmanship and handling of the Levantine and Mesopotamian tribes enabled the extension of the Fatimid State well into Iraq, while the 'Hilālī invasion', drastically changed the fabric of North African society.

In the next part of the Conclusion we will continue examining the effect of faith on the Bedouin and focus on the distinction, according to Fatimid doctrine, between a *muʾmin* (believer, who was part of the *daʿwah*) and a *muslim*, and how that correlates with being a Bedouin.[691]

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[686] Richards, "From the Shadows into the Light: The Disappearance of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim" 25-26, 46-48; Forsyth, "The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle (938-1034) of Yahya B. Sa'id Al-Antaki. (Volumes I and II)" 225-226; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 83; Lev, "A Political Study of Egypt and Syria Under the Early Fatimids 358/968 – 386/996" 79-80; Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 167-180

[687] During the time of the 14th and 15th Imams.
[688] During the time of the 16th Imam.
[689] See a footnote in Chapter 3 for a discussion on the term.
[690] During the time of the 18th Imam approximately between 459/1067-466/1074.
[691] The Fatimids differentiated between the two. See Chapter 2 on the Bedouin in Early Islam and the second part of the Conclusion for more details.

Conclusion Part Two

I continue examining the effect of faith on the Bedouin. In the absence of direct evidence of religiosity[692] among the Bedouin of the Middle Ages, it can only be assumed based on historical accounts. Even in contemporary populations with the help of quantitative tools, religiosity is difficult to accurately assess.[693]

1. The Khawārij and the Carmathians

Despite having diverging beliefs regarding the imamate, the Khawārij and the Carmathians were similar in many respects. To argue that both movements were in fact Bedouin movements that took an Islamic character runs the risk of oversimplifying the matter, though it is safe to argue that they were heavily influenced by the Bedouin spirit and adopted a Bedouin character.[694] It is therefore not surprising that both based their martial requirements on the Bedouin. The 18th century Ikhwān or Wahhābī movement of Najd also seems to be very closely associated with the Bedouin and their relations are an avenue for further research.[695]

The Khawārij have sometimes been equated with the Bedouin.[696] Watt demonstrates that the Khawārij originated in a nomadic milieu, and they tried to recreate their tribal structures

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[692] Religiosity and religiousness may be used interchangeably. Both may have a negative connotation of a person being overtly devout. However, it is used in this study to mean: 'the quality of being religious'.

[693] Michelle Walsh and Marsha Cutting, "Religiosity Scales: What are we Measuring in Whom?" *Archive for the Psychology of Religion; ARP* 30, no. 1 (2008), 137-153.; Adem Şahin, "Reflections on the Possibility of an Islamic Psychology," in *Psychology of Religion in Turkey*, ed. Zuhâl Ağilkaya-Şahin (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 63.; İlhan Topuz and Sakin Özışık, "Muslim Religious Development Scale: An Attempt in the Light of Al-Ghazzali`s Perspectives of Religious Development," in *Psychology of Religion in Turkey*, ed. Zuhâl Ağilkaya-Şahin (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 178.; Şahin, "Reflections on the Possibility of an Islamic Psychology," in 63; Topuz and Özışık, "Muslim Religious Development Scale: An Attempt in the Light of Al-Ghazzali`s Perspectives of Religious Development," in 178

[694] On the origins of the Khārījte movement see Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition*, 316. Also Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 45-46

[695] Bonacina, *The Wahhabis seen through European Eyes (1772-1830) Deists and Puritans of Islam*, 85, 95, 131, 143, 171; Cole M. Bunzel, *Wahhābism: The History of a Militant Islamic Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023), 13. Ameer Ali has stated that the Wahhābī movement was an extension of the Khārījte movement. See Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam: The Life and Teachings of Mohammed* (Calcutta: S. K. Lahiri, 1902), 328.

[696] Petersen, *Ali and Muawiya in Early Arabic Tradition*, 11

in an Islamic setting. He points out that their leaders were nomads, with the most pious ones being chosen[697], and that their socio-political structure resembled that of nomadic tribes, such as basic equality, reliance on smaller groups and counting non-Khawārij as enemies. The Bedouin were attracted to the movement because they resented centralised power which curtailed the freedom of their tribal society.[698] Watt interprets the fact that Khārijī revolts continued after ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib's assassination as confirmation that they were opposed to the whole system of rule established by the Islamic proto-state, which supported his hypothesis of nomadic origins.[699] Because of the Khārijī movement, relations between the Bedouin tribes which supported the movement and Shīʿism remained turbulent. This continued well after the Abbasid Caliphate was established.[700]

As for the Carmathian movement, the question arises whether Bedouin support for this movement is evidence of their religiosity. Undoubtedly, the Carmathian movement attracted many followers from the Bedouin, including the major tribes of the Kilāb, Kalb, ʿUqayl, and Tayyʾ.[701] The Kilāb, according to Madelung seem to have been fully integrated into the Carmathian community.[702] Nevertheless, the Bedouin seem to have supported the Carmathian movement not for religious ideals but for their own political reasons.[703] Some tribes such as the Hilāl and Sulaym, who gained notoriety by attacking Hajj caravans with the Carmathians[704] did not even understand basic Carmathian beliefs and principles, and

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[697] This was unlike the pre-Islamic Bedouin.

[698] Joseph P. Schultz, *Judaism and the Gentile Faiths: Comparative Studies in Religion* (East Brunswick, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1981)175.; Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 83

[699] William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 20.; Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition*, II

[700] A *khārijite* uprising was recorded as late as 929.

[701] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 87

[702] Madelung, "Ḳarmaṭī," in

[703] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 167-180; Istvan Hajnal, "Some Aspects of the External Relations of the Qarāmiṭa in Baḥrayn," in *Fortresses of the Intellect: Ismaili and Other Islamic Studies in Honour of Farhad Daftary*, ed. Omar Ali-de-Unzaga (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 227, 248.

[704] They gained notoriety by attacking Hajj caravans after joining the Carmathian movement in Bahrayn.

probably merely joined them to get a chance at attaining booty and as an escape from the harsh conditions which they endured.

Therefore, I argue that the fierceness in the Carmathian movement, which no doubt stemmed from their beliefs, appealed to the Bedouin spirit of raiding, plundering, belief in egalitarianism and non-conformation with conventional religious rules.[705] In this way, their spirit and ethos corresponded more with Carmathian beliefs. Hence the Carmathians, who fell out with the Fatimids to became one of their most intractable opponents[706], were more successful in drawing Bedouin to their movement than the Fatimids were to their *da'wah*.[707]

Although most of the larger Bedouin tribes of the Levant and Mesopotamia were Shī'ah, albeit Twelvers, they did not always support their fellow Shī'iites: the Fatimids, Buyids, Hamdānids or Carmathians. They constantly switched support and at various times not only supported the Sunnī Abbasids and Ikhsīdids, but also the Christian Byzantine Empire.[708] This shows that their alliances and allegiances were mainly self-serving and for geopolitical and economic reasons, rather than based on ideological or religious ideals. Having connections with several states was also an opportunity for tribal chieftains to show how broad their spheres of influence were. Even in North Africa the Bedouin, mainly from the Hilāl and Sulaym, sought their self-interests, giving them precedence over religious beliefs.

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[705] Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 124; Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 2; Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," , 353-376; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*

[706] Contrary to some claims, the Black Stone was not returned because of the influence of the 13th Fatimid Imam al-Mansūr, rather it was after communication with Baghdad that the Carmathians finally returned the Black Stone to Mecca in 339/950-951. See Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 21

[707] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo*, 60, 167-180; Hajnal, "Some Aspects of the External Relations of the Qarāmiṭa in Baḥrayn," in 227, 248; Daftary, "The Early Ismaili Imamate: Background to the Establishment of the Fatimid Caliphate," in 19; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 18; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 151-152

[708] See Chapters 6 and 7 for more.

This may be a reason why Shīʿism did not see a revival in North Africa after the Hilālī invasion.[709]

Although the 'Crusades'[710] are beyond the scope of this study, it is prudent to highlight the cordial relations that the Muslim Bedouin tribes had with the Crusaders, even fighting for them against the Fatimids, Seljuqs and the Ayyubids. Bedouin support for the 'Crusaders' (during the first three Crusades) was a practical as well as a theological problem for the Muslim armies. Saladin reduced Bedouin presence in the Egyptian army, especially after the defeat at Montgisard[711], where the Bedouin of Palestine started killing his men and selling his friends to the Franks. The situation deteriorated so much that in the 1180s, Saladin ordered mass deportations of Bedouin away from Frankish frontiers so that they could not act as guides for the Franks. Clearly, the Bedouin were opportunistic, as Tibble explains, looking generally to exploit the losing side, even if it was their employer and they were notorious in killing stragglers even of the army which employed them. [712]

With the many tribes living within their borders and at their frontiers, the Fatimids had to deal with the Bedouin extensively, which leads us to the next research question regarding the nature of the Fatimid State's relationship with the Bedouin and whether that was purely political or were there ideological considerations as well. A similar question was posed on Fatimid tolerance. Lev et al. had enquired whether Fatimid 'tolerance' of other communities was driven by practical considerations or by Ismāʿīlī ideological considerations.[713]

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[709] Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" 41-62

[710] I have used the term 'Crusades' only because it is a widely used term, The intention is not to oversimplify this complicated era by portraying these wars merely as a clash of civilisations.

[711] A hill in Palestine where Saladin lost to King Baldwin IV in 1177.

[712] Steve Tibble, "Crusading Enemies 1099-1187," in *The Crusader Armies*, ed. Steve Tibble (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 219, 237, 297-298, 312, 313, 314.; Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction-Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, 19

[713] den Heijer, Lev and Swanson, "The Fatimid Empire and its Population," , 323-344 The authors state: *"Despite this problematization of the "tolerance" concept, an important historical question remains that of its motives: Was Fatimid policy in this respect driven by practical considerations or by Ismāʿīlī ideological considerations? With regard to Christians and Jews specifically, it has been suggested that the Fatimid rulers*

Certainly, that is beyond the scope of this study, but it brings us back to the question of the influence of ideology on state decisions.

2. The *dawlah* and *daʿwah*

The Fatimid State was a theocratic state, with the imams as head of the state. It is significant to note that the Fatimid imams also administered the *daʿwah*[714] and their primary goal was safeguarding their *daʿwah*, and the *dawlah* was one of the means to do so. The *daʿwah* existed before the establishment of the Fatimid State and continued after its demise.[715]

Before the establishment of the *dawlah*, the Ismāʿīlis targeted different social classes across various regions of the Islamic world. The *daʿwah* gained support as a religious and social movement against the ruling urban elite, as was the case with the Bedouin tribespeople notably in southern Iraq and Bahrayn. That is why some Sunnī authorities have observed that the Ismāʿīlis paid more attention to social equities and grievances. Among the urban population, the *daʿwah's* emphasis on seeking knowledge appealed to the educated elite. However, according to Daftary, their reliance was more on peasants and the Bedouin rather than the urban elite. It is noteworthy that many references to pre-Fatimid State missionary activities among the Bedouin and the peasants, may well be references to the Carmathian *daʿīs*, and not to those sanctioned by Imam al-Mahdī and his predecessor imams.[716]

For the Bedouin at the margins of society[717], the promise of the emergence of the Mahdī was an instant success. Similarly, even after the establishment of their state, the Fatimids

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most of all tended to be pragmatic, but several contributors to this collection do link this question to the larger context of Fatimid Ismāʿīlī attitudes towards other beliefs, even if a satisfactory answer cannot be given at this time".

[714] Literally, call or mission; reference is to the religiopolitical organisation of the Fatimids.

[715] Idrīs ʿImād al-Dīn, *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman: The History of an Islamic Community* He states that the *dawlah* is cyclical but the *daʿwah* is perpetual.

[716] The *daʿwah* though was active even before the Carmathian movement came into existence.

[717] Jiwa, *Towards a Shi'i Mediterranean Empire: Fatimid Egypt and the Founding of Cairo* At page 57 of Jiwa's book she has used the word 'bedouins' with reference to her comments on the gifts given during the

propagated their *da'wah* through a network of *dā'ī*s within and without the realms of their

boundaries.[718]

The Fatimids frequently changed their strategies and applied different policies to win over

the Bedouin.[719] While some policies seemed merely political, others were religious. In

some cases, the Bedouin were won over by appealing to their already existing Sh'īah

sentiments, as in the case of what al-Kirmānī did with the Numayrid chief Ibn Waththāb,

who lived within Abbasid territories.[720] In al-Mu'ayyad's campaigns in the Levant and

Mesopotamia, it was his brilliant handling of affairs that won over whole Bedouin tribes.

To secure their pledges, he used a combination of religious appeal, a generous offering of

gifts and money and incentives for the Bedouin chiefs to increase their political clout and

increase their tribal lands.[721] Earlier, at the time of the 16th Imam, the Jarrāhid chieftain

Hassān bin al-Mufarij was pardoned upon an appeal by his mother. Not only was her plea

for granting money and land accepted, but the Imam also sent for Hassān robes and a turban

worn by him, along with a seal. He was confirmed as the chief of the Tayy' and kept his

lands in Palestine. Hassān pledged his loyalty to the Imam and became an essential ally

until the end of the Imam's reign.[722]

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circumcision feast held by the Imam-Caliph al-Muʿizz. She has said, quoting al-Qāḍī al-Nuʿmān, from his book *al-Majālis wal-Musāyarāt* that the least, being a sum of ten dirhams was given: 'to the children of the bedouins and those who are of the same status as them and the slaves'. The words in Arabic are '*al-majhūlūn min ahl al-bawādī*' which would translate to 'the unknown people from the people of the deserts/open plains' and indicate that these people were not merely from the people of the deserts/open plains but were also unknown and of a possibly lower socio-economic status. Additionally, this could also be a reference to the Berbers and not the Arab Bedouin.

[718] Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies*, 62-63; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 114-115, 184; Jiwa, *The Fatimids: The Rise of a Muslim Empire*, 14; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 296

[719] See Chapter 7 for more on Fatimid attempts to win over the Bedouin.

[720] Al-Tikrity, "The Political Role of the Arab Tribes in the Levant and the Euphrates Island from the Middle of the Fourth Century AH to the Last Decade of the Fifth Century AH (Tay, Kilab and Numayr)," 192

[721] Klemm, *Memoirs of a Mission: The Ismaili Scholar, Statesman and Poet, Al-Mu-Ayyad Fi'L-Din Al-Shirazi*; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 114-115; Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 193-194. For example, his dealings with the Numayrid chieftain.

[722] Ibid.; Assaad, "The Reign of Al-Ḥākim Bi Amr Allāh 386/996-411/1021: A Political Study" 219-227; Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*

3. Fatimid *taʾwīl*

Secondly, to deal with this research question, I wish to reflect upon the Fatimid concept of *taʾwīl*.[723] The Qurʾān uses the word *aʿrāb* for the Bedouin.[724] They have been generally chastised in the Qurʾān.[725] For example, in (49:14) the Qurʾān dismisses the claim of those Bedouin who said they were believers by stating that they were not, and they should rather say that they had submitted, i.e. become Muslims.[726] The Fatimids used this and other similar verses[727] to show the distinction between *īmān* (belief and faith) and *islām*[728], and consequently, between those who believe in the imamate of the Fatimids and those who do not. Al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān dedicated a chapter in the *Daʿāiʾm al-Islām* to explain the Fatimid stance regarding this distinction.[729]

Additionally, al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān explained the esoteric meaning of both *īmān* and *islām* in his book *Taʾwīl al- Daʿāiʾm*.[730] He states that *islām* is the exoteric and *īmān* is the esoteric and Muslims are those who believe only in exoteric aspects of religion, while the true believers, the ones who have pledged allegiance to the imam are the ones who believe in both.[731] According to Fatimid doctrines, the Fatimid imams were the rightful rulers of the

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[723] For more on *taʾwīl* see Velji, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fatimid Empire*, 14-21; Walker, "The Doctrine of Taʾwīl in Fatimid Ismaili Texts," in , 137-150; David Hollenberg, *Beyond the Qurʾān; Early Ismāʿīlī Taʾwīl and the Secrets of the Prophets* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), vii-xi.
[724] In (12:100) the Qurʾān uses the word *badw*, which is translated by most translators as 'desert'. Yusuf Ali translates the verse as: '*And he raised his parents high on the throne (of dignity), and they fell down in prostration, (all) before him. He said: "O my father! this is the fulfilment of my vision of old! Allah hath made it come true! He was indeed good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (all here) out of the desert, (even) after Satan had sown enmity between me and my brothers. Verily my Lord understandeth best the mysteries of all that He planneth to do, for verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom*'. *Saheeh International* translates the word *badw* in the Verse as 'bedouin life' which in my opinion is incorrect.
[725] See the chapter on Early Islam and the Bedouin (Chapter 2) for more such verses.
[726] See Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People*, 361-362
[727] (49:17), (51:35-36)
[728] Submission to Allah, the basis of Islam.
[729] al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān bin Muḥammad, *The Pillars of Islam: Daʿaiʾm Al-Islam of Al-Qadi Al-Nuʿman (Volume I)*, 15-17
[730] An esoteric analogue to the book *Daʿāiʾm al-Islām.*
[731] al-Tamīmī, al-Qādī al-Nu'mān bin Muhammad, *Ta'wīl Al-Da'āim*, 12 V1

world, heirs to Prophet Muhammad. Fatimid worldview divided people into non-Muslims, Muslims, believers, and hypocrites, upon which their policies were dependent.[732]

Fatimid hermeneutics is a powerful motivating force. *Taʾwīl*, as stated above is connected to *īmān*, whose very essence is based on professing *walāyah*[733] for the Fatimid imams.[734] Therefore, anybody who does not profess *walāyah,* and therefore is not a true believer, can never understand the esoteric essence of Islam. Similarly, a Bedouin, the one who has not made the *hijrah* to the abode of Islam, in an esoteric sense signifies a pariah who has not made the spiritual *hijrah* towards the abode of *daʿwah*[735], and hence cannot partake its blessings nor understand or appreciate Islam's true sense.[736]

Al-Qādī al-Nuʿman generally portrays the *aʿrāb* in his book *Taʾwīl al-Daʿāiʾm* unfavourably.[737] One interpretation is fascinating as it defines the *aʿrābī* as someone who had pledged the oath of allegiance but subsequently left the *daʿwah* and does not pay heed to its conditions.[738] This is reminiscent of Bedouin, who pledged the oath of allegiance to the Fatimid imams, especially those who did so because of al-Muaʾyyad's efforts but subsequently broke the pledge. Interestingly, while explaining the meaning of the word

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[732] al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān bin Muḥammad, *The Pillars of Islam: Daʿaiʾm Al-Islam of Al-Qadi Al-Nuʿman (Volume I)*, 5-122; Daftary, "The Fatimid Age: Dawla and Daʿwa," in 63
[733] Love, devotion and allegiance to the imam.
[734] Velji, *An Apocalyptic History of the Early Fatimid Empire*, 16-17
[735] Crone poses the interesting question, whether it was imperative for everyone who had pledged allegiance to the imams, but living outside the realms of the Fatimid Empire, to do *hijrah* to Cairo or at least move within its realms, and if not then why not. I submit that al-Qādī al-Nuʿman, when speaking of the importance of Friday prayers addresses this question when he says that if one has accepted the imam's *daʿwah*, then it is akin to doing *hijrah* towards him. See Crone, "The Ismailis," in , 213-215; al-Tamīmī, al-Qādī al-Nu'mān bin Muhammad, *Ta'wīl Al-Da'āim*, 295 V1
[736] Wilferd Madelung, Paul E. Walker, *Affirming the Imamate: Early Fatimid Teachings in the Islamic West* [An Arabic critical edition and English translation of works attributed to Abu Abd Allah al-Shi'i and his brother Abu'l-'Abbas] (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 95-96. The Dawoodi Bohras attribute the work to al-Qādī al-Nu'mān.
[737] The verb *tabaddā* (lit. to become a Bedouin) has also been interpreted as an allusion to someone who does not attend the sessions of wisdom of the *daʿwah*. See al-Tamīmī, al-Qādī al-Nu'mān bin Muhammad, *Ta'wīl Al-Da'āim*, 291 V1. See also below.
[738] Ibid. In another passage, al-Nuʿman explains the difference between the different types of Arabs: *ʿāribah*, *mustaʿribah* and the *aʿrāb*, and explains the esoteric meanings of all three. See Chapter 1.

badawī, al-Qādī al-Nuʿman interprets it to mean someone who goes forth in the pursuit of knowledge, like a Bedouin who pursues rain and pasture.[739]

The beauty of Fatimid *taʾwīl* is its applicability to other situations and periods. For example, the 52nd *dāʿī*, Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, in one of his public sermons, narrated a tradition of Mawlānā ʿAlī bin Abī Tālib regarding forsaking congregational prayers interpreted by al-Qādī al-Nuʿman. He stated that its esoteric meaning was to forsake the sessions of wisdom of the *daʿwah,* and if one were to do so he would gradually become a *badawī*, i.e. he would gradually lose his faith.[740] In this manner, Fatimid *taʾwīl* allowed for a broad understanding of Bedouin identity. According to Fatimid hermeneutics, a Bedouin could be anyone who had not made the *hijrah* towards the abode of *daʿwah.* Conversely, an Arab nomad living in the desert, but who had answered the call of *daʿwah*, in an esoteric sense would not be a Bedouin. In conclusion, I propose that the Fatimids dealt with both types[741] of Bedouin in a pragmatic manner, basing their policies on their religious ideologies to safeguard their *dawlah* but primarily their *daʿwah.* [742]

This study introduces other questions which require more extensive research:

1. Since the number of resources available on Aleppo and Damascus are voluminous, therefore there is scope for more research on the Bedouin in these two cities and their environs at the time of the Fatimid Empire.

2. Role of Bedouin tribes in al-Basāsīrī's rebellion and the subsequent capture of Iraq.

3. Individual research on the three larger Levantine tribes: Tayyʾ, Kalb and Kilāb.

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[739] Ibid. See also *Asās al-Taʾwīl* by the same author in his explication of the account of Prophet Yusuf.

[740] Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, *Al-Iqtibāsāt Al-Nūrānīyyah 1423* (Mumbai: Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah, 2002).

[741] I.e., who were actual nomads or were esoterically viewed thus.

[742] A possible counterargument could be that not all state decisions were taken by the imams themselves or by their consent, especially after the 16th Imam, for which one possible answer could be that the Ismāʿīlīs believe that pre-ordainment plays a key role in the unfolding of history.

4. Although some Arabs regarded the Berbers as being of southern Arabian descent this study does not focus on the Berbers, as they were non-Arabic speaking peoples.[743] Berber relations with the Fatimids, with a focus on the Kutāma and their rise to prominence, may be a good avenue for research.

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[743] Imam al-Muʿizz also is reported to have said so. See al-Tamīmī, al-Qādī al-Nuʿmān bin Muhammad, *Al-Majālis Wal-Musāyarāt*, ed. Muhammad Al-Yalawi, 1st ed., Vol. 1&2 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1997).

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ʿImād al-Dīn, Idrīs. *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*, edited by Ghalib, Mustafa. 1st ed. Vol. 6. Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1984a.

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———. *Uyūn Al-Akhbār*, edited by Ghalib, Mustafa. 1st ed. Vol. 5. Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1984b.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Bedouin migrations between legends and reality

As has been stated earlier, some academics today believe that both those who settled in the north of Arabia and those who settled in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula originated from the Fertile Crescent, or even farther north.[744] Much later, a reverse migration is attested to in pre-Islamic times from Yemen to various parts of the Arabian Peninsula. This migration is traditionally recorded by the Arabs as taking place after the floods which inundated the lands around Marib after the dam there had burst. However, it seems more likely that instead of a single wave of migration, there was a series of migrations that resulted in the movement of southern tribes, such as Azd and Ghassān, which today are attested to in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. This became a catalyst for major changes across the Peninsula and notably contributed to an increase in nomadism.[745] Hoyland states that the names of the tribes attested to in southern Arabian pre-Islamic inscriptions can be identified mostly from Muslim accounts; this is contrary to northern Arabian inscriptions, as the tribes named in these inscriptions cannot be connected with certainty, except for two tribes, to later Muslim accounts of pre-Islamic Arabia, which suggests movement of certain tribal groups.[746] Other important factors for tribal migrations must have been climate change and a search for better economic opportunities as has been attested to for pre-modern Bedouin. This is an avenue for further research.[747]

It is interesting to know that in the first century of Islam, Bedouin were encouraged to emigrate (undertake *hijrah*) initially to Medina and later, to the newly formed garrison

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[744] Some have even suggested Armenia.

[745] Tim Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 74-75.

[746] Robert G. Hoyland, "Arab Kings, Arab Tribes and the Beginnings of Arab Historical Memory in Late Roman Epigraphy," in *From Hellenism to Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 374-400.

[747] Shahajada Md Musa, "The Emergence of a Scholar from a Garrison Society: A Contextual Analysis of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhāb's Doctrine in the Light of the Qur'ān and Hadīth" (Master of Research, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2022), 48. See also Appendix 11.

towns. Choosing to live in the desert again (*taʿrrub*) was frowned upon. Thus, it was the

actions of the state which sped up the settling of these nomads. Conversely, the state could

also promote people to take up a nomadic lifestyle with over-taxation and persecution.[748]

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[748] Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam* (London: Routledge, 2001), 102.; Patricia Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3, no. 3 (1993), 368-369.

Appendix 2: A note on etymology

The word *ʿarab* (Arab) has been used for people living in Arabia and its adjacent areas since at least the middle of the ninth century BCE.[749] There is evidence from Egyptian papyri that the word *ʿarab* may have been used for nomads, though not systematically.[750] Hodgson points out that the word was used for nomads and more specifically camel nomads of Arabia, even though the camel was domesticated after nomadism had already started at the margins of the Peninsula, that is in Syria and Yemen.[751] Hoyland believes that the word Arab became synonymous with desert dwellers in the texts of the settled peoples.[752] This shows the extent of Bedouin penetration beyond Arabia and also beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Before the Greeks, references by the Assyrians and the Old Testament to Arabians were mostly to the nomads. Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Persian and Latin names had variants of the root *ʿ-r-b* referring to the people of the northeastern Peninsula, although Franz says it is impossible to link them exclusively with nomads.[753] The Greeks called inhabitants of the southwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, such as the Sabaeans, Hadramīs, Qatabanians as 'Arabians', even though they may have not identified themselves as such.[754] Macdonald clarifies that 'Arab' is not a reference to the stereotypical nomad who plundered and rode camels. He identifies a wide range of people in different geographical locations who were identified as Arab.[755]

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[749] Ruqayya Y. Khan, *Bedouin and ʿAbbāsid Cultural Identities: The Arabic Majnūn Laylā Story* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 4.
[750] Greg Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 142-143.
[751] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 147-151.
[752] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 8
[753] Kurt Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," *Nomadic Peoples* 15, no. 1 (2011), 22.
[754] M. C. A. Macdonald, "Arabians, Arabias and the Greeks: Contact and Perceptions," in *Literacy and Identity in Pre-Islamic Arabia*, ed. M. C. A. Macdonald (London: Ashgate, 2009b), 1-33.
[755] M. C. A. Macdonald, "Arabs, Arabias and Arabic before Late Antiquity," *Topoi Orient-Occident* (2009a), 277-332. Macdonald discusses in detail in the article his views about the ethnic backgrounds of the Arabs and the languages that they spoke.

Some modern authors, citing examples from Assyrian and southern Arabian early inscriptions, view that *ʿarab* originally meant 'desert people, nomads'. In other words, *badw* and *ʿarab* would essentially mean the same thing. This meaning continued until recent times.[756] Webb shows that the word *aʿrāb* is attested in southern Arabian Semitic languages, eight centuries before Islam, to mean Bedouin, Bedouin mercenaries and/or hill dwellers.[757] Franz suggests that the sense of the proper name (*ʿarab*) declined until the emergence of Islam, when it became a status term for the supporters of Prophet Muhammad, before declining again and being reduced to the desert-dwelling nomadic Bedouin.[758]

The word 'Arab' as a reference to the people was later even replaced with 'Saracens' and '*tayyāyē*'.[759] 'Saracen' was first used for a nomadic group living in the Sinai Peninsula and northwestern Hijaz. It was only much later in the third or fourth centuries that it was used as a general term for nomadic Arabs. After the fourth century the term 'Ishmaelite' was used for the 'Saracen'. It is interesting to note that they are described as following some Jewish customs and practices such as circumcision and refraining from pork.[760]

The word used for nomads in the Qurʾān is *aʿrāb*, its singular being *aʿrābī* which was how it was adopted by Arab lexicons, while the word *ʿarab* was used in its wider sense to mean those who spoke Arabic and claimed Arab descent. However, from Abbasid times (mid-eighth century) the word Arab reverted to its original meaning to refer to the Bedouin, who had more faithfully preserved their original language and customs.[761] More recently (in the past two decades) researchers like Macdonald and Jallad, have put forward the possibility

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[756] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*, 29
[757] Peter A. Webb, "Creating Arab Origins: Muslim Constructions of Al-Jāhiliyya and Arab History" (Doctorate, University of London, 2014), 261.
[758] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 11-53.
[759] Greg Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 69.
[760] Ibid.
[761] Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, Reiss.2002 ed. (Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 7.

that the word *ʿarab* may be an *ethnicon*.[762] Webb details how the meaning of the word *ʿarab*

progressed starting from *al-ʿAyn* of al-Khalīl bin Ahmad (d. after 175/791) and underwent

paradigmatic changes during the 3rd/9th to 4th/10th centuries.[763] Lane, while giving the

different meanings of *ʿarab* mentions that *aʿrāb* is used for those Arabs that dwell in the

desert and are nomads, that is they roam in search of water and herbage.[764] From the same

root, Lane gives, among others, the following meanings for the verb *tʿarraba*: he who

assimilated himself to the Arabs, that is he was not of genuine Arab descent but spoke their

language, and adopted their manners and appearance. He cites similar meanings for the

noun *mustaʿribah*. Interestingly the verb *tʿarraba* also means to go back and settle in the

desert.[765]

The word *bādiyah* (desert, steppe or open land situated far from human settlements, from

the Arabic root *b-d-w* from which the word "Bedouin" is coined) refers to the physical

spaces where the Bedouin lived: hence, "living in the *bādiyah* [implies] the areas outside

fortified cities, especially steppes and deserts" – in other words, they were a nomadic Arab

people of the steppes and deserts.[766]

The word Bedouin is derived from the plural of the Arabic word *badawī* (belonging to the

badw; person of the desert or open plain), i.e. *badawīyyīn*. Like the word *bādiyah*, other

related terms such as *badw*, *badawī* are also extracted from the root *b-d-w*, which revolves

around the meaning of to become manifest and visible.[767] The verb *badā* means to move to

the *bādiyah*. Many derivatives of the root *b-d-w* are in relation to the nomadic way of life.

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[762] Macdonald, "Arabs, Arabias and Arabic before Late Antiquity," , 277-332. The word is alternatively spelt as *ethnikon*.

[763] Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 183.

[764] Edward William Lane and Stanley Lane-Poole, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2003), 3039.

[765] Ibid.

[766] Khan, *Bedouin and ʿAbbāsid Cultural Identities: The Arabic Majnūn Laylā Story*, 4

[767] The word *bādiya* denotes a waterless, exposed open land. For more details see Robert Wenning, "Towards "Early Petra": An Overview on the Early History of the Nabataeans in its Context" Logos Verlag Berlin GmbH, 2-4 December 2011, 2012).

Khalīl in his book *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, uses the words *al-badw* and *al-bādiyah* as antonyms of *al-hadar and al-hādirah* (lands with long-term settlements).[768] It is pertinent to note that the term *bādiyah* does not mean something which contains no settlements, in fact according to Ibn Hawqal (d. after 367/978), it may even contain fixed settlements within tribal territories.[769]

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[768] Stefan Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," *Der Islam* 92, no. 1 (2015), 92-94.
[769] Ibid.

Appendix 3: Tribal kinship

Sometimes for political gains, some tribes completely switched descent, as is recorded in the case of a few tribes of ʿAsīr, who sometime before the tenth century stopped being *Qahtānī*s and claimed to be of *Nizārī* (northern) descent.[770] Theories of ethnogenesis, like those developed by Weber, suggest that tribes were bound together on an assumed common ancestry and that kinship was symbolic and not biological.[771] At times kinship affiliations did occur and people who had been admitted as *mawlā*s (clients), over a few generations could be accepted as full members of a tribe.[772] According to the Islamic law of *walāʾ* (relationship resulting from the manumission of a slave), a manumitter and his freedman were bound to support each other. It is a complex law, but what is relevant for this study is that over generations many clients and their children also became part of the tribes of their manumitters, increasing the strength of a tribe. Not all clients were accepted as full tribal members and even certain lesser tribes were ridiculed and not accepted as true tribes, that is those of pure Bedouin stock.[773] Al-Azharī counts the non-Arab clients of a tribe as Bedouin if they followed a Bedouin lifestyle.[774]

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[770] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*, 26
[771] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 1-20. For more on Arab ethnogenesis see Aziz Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 662.
[772] Patricia Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law: The Origins of the Islamic Patronate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 49-56.
[773] Ibid.
[774] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 107

Appendix 4: Ancient Bedouin religions

A multitude of inscriptions record the names of the various deities revered by pre-Islamic Arabs, of which many names have survived in Islamic traditions and texts, such as 'The book of Idols' (*Kitāb al-Asnām*) by Ibn al-Kalbī. These deities represented forces important to them but who were beyond their control.[775] Each tribe or area had their own preferred deity, while a few deities were popular among several tribes and over a vast geographical area.[776] The more sophisticated societies had many deities, such as the people of southern Arabia who had a pantheon of over a hundred deities.[777] Al-Azmeh has said that in the steppe or the deserts, the deities were localised as opposed to the rich cities like Palmyra, which had many deities, many of whom were adopted from other cultures.[778] Ibn al-Kalbī states that any person not able to build a temple or an idol would take a stone and circumambulate it.[779] The stones were not deities themselves but rather their dwelling places or the focus of the rituals of a tribal cult.[780] The more famous shrines, such as that of the *Kaʿbah* in Mecca, attracted tribes from afar. Stars and planets were believed to bring *nahs* (misfortune) and *saʿd* (fortune) and some heavenly bodies were also worshipped.[781]

They also believed in spirits, ghouls, and other supernatural beings.[782] Many ailments and diseases were attributed to these spirits, leading to an intertwining of magic and medicine.[783] The Bedouin also had their own medicines as cures and preventive medicine.

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[775] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 140
[776] Ahmad Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 3-4.; Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols: Being a Translation from the Arabic of the Kitāb Al-Asnām*, Vol. 14 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).
[777] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 140
[778] Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People*, 662
[779] Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols: Being a Translation from the Arabic of the Kitāb Al-Asnām*, 4
[780] Lawrence Conrad, "The Arabs," in *The Cambridge Ancient History: Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, AD 425–600*, eds. Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins and Michael Whitby, Vol. 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 678-700.
[781] Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People*, 662
[782] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 144-145
[783] Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia*, 71-72

Divination included consulting *kuhhān* (pl. of *kāhin*; diviner or soothsayer), drawing lots in front of idols and reading omens such as the flight of birds.[784]

Pre-Islamic inscriptions record, among other things, the fulfilments of rites and sacrifices, prayers for wellbeing, expressions of longing and reunion with someone, prayers for curing of illnesses and expressions of grief for deceased relatives.[785] Knauf believed that the main bridge between the Bedouin and the settled traders seemed to be religion, with the ruling family assuming 'a leading position in the spiritual realm'.[786]

Offerings were made to these deities to establish a link between the person making an offering and the divine. This could consist of anything such as animals, crops, food, plaques, edifices, and other manufactured objects. Sacrifices were made in the sanctuaries or *haram*s and *hawta*s[787] or even at stone altars built in temples.[788] Offerings were made to ask favour of the gods or prevent their wrath. Sacred areas, such as *haram*s, had their own guardians, priests or seers. Pilgrims followed certain rules while visiting them such as following a dress code and abstaining from hunting and suspension of hostilities.[789] Some sacred areas had specific times in the cultic calendar, in which tribes from afar would come to worship.[790]

Peripheral political powers played an important role in the spread of Christianity and Judaism in Arabia.[791] Christianity made major advances into Arabia between the 4th and 6th centuries CE. It was actively promoted by the Byzantine Empire.[792] It spread widely among

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[784] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 150-155
[785] Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia*, 5-26, 65-66
[786] M. C. A. Macdonald, "Was the Nabataean Kingdom a "Bedouin State"?" *Zeitschrift Des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins (1953-)* 107 (1991), 102-119.
[787] A word used in southern Arabia for protected enclosures, considered holy.
[788] Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia*, 26-30
[789] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 161-166
[790] Al-Jallad, *The Religion and Rituals of the Nomads of Pre-Islamic Arabia*, 41-46
[791] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700
[792] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*

the inhabitants of northern Arabia.[793] The Jafnids (Ghassānids) were Christian Monophysites, while many people inside the sphere of the Nasrid (Lakhmid) rulers of al-Hīra, who remained largely pagan, were East Syriac Christians, now known as Nestorians.[794] They were supported by the Sasanians, who also supported the Himyarites, who propagated Judaism in Yemen.[795] A possible indicator of 'civilised' settlements was the building of churches, martyria and monasteries in Syria, northern Arabia and Mesopotamia. These edifices helped to rally people around the Christian faith and became important centres of communication and community.[796] Monks were active in converting 'Saracens' to Christianity. Conversion to Christianity also meant political loyalty and military service for the Roman state.

 Arabia also had Jewish communities that entered the Peninsula after 67 CE.[797] Inscriptions show that Yemen moved away from polytheism to either Judaism or Christianity. The Himyar, in the south of Arabia, had converted to Judaism. Their inscriptions show either that they practised Judaism or a bare form of monotheism. No inscription after 380 CE is explicitly 'pagan', but polytheism must have survived outside the elite circles. Yathrib (later Medina) had a large and powerful Jewish community.[798] Southern Arabia had Christians too. At the time of Abraha, Christianity became a state religion. Najran (in modern-day southern Saudi Arabia) was home to many Christians - along with pagans and Jews - where in the sixth century they were massacred by the Himyar[799], an event which is also mentioned in the Qurʾān.[800] There were other monotheists who were known as *hanīfs*[801]

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[793] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 147-150
[794] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 79-80
[795] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700
[796] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, 314
[797] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 80
[798] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700
[799] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, 364
[800] (85:4 – 5). They are known as the companions of the trench in the Qurʾān.
[801] Incidentally, in Islamic texts, Islam and sharia are also known as al-*hanīfiyyah*.

who worshipped a higher god. Later Islamic works ascribe them as remnants of Prophet

Abraham's religion because the Qurʾān associates it as thus.[802]

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[802] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700

Appendix 5: Qurʾānic Verses that chastise the Bedouin for lack of faith.

1. The Bedouin are the worst in unbelief and hypocrisy, and most likely not to know the limits of what [laws] Allah has revealed to His Messenger. And Allah is All-knowing, All-wise. And among the Bedouin are those who look upon what they spend as a fine, and await disasters for you: on them be the disaster of evil. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing (all things). (9:97-98)

2. And those around you from the Bedouin are hypocrites, as well as from the people of Medina. They are obstinate in hypocrisy. You [O Muhammad] know them not. We know them. We will punish them twice [in this world], then shall they be sent to a great punishment. (9:101)

3. It did not behove the people of Medina and those surrounding them from the Bedouin that they remain behind after [the departure of] the Messenger of Allah or that they prefer themselves over his self. That is because they are not afflicted by thirst or fatigue or hunger in the cause of Allah, nor do they tread on any ground that enrages the disbelievers, nor do they inflict upon an enemy any infliction but that is registered for them as a righteous deed. Indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of the doers of good. (9:120)

4. The Bedouin say, "We have believed (we are *muʾmin*s)." Say, "You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], 'We have submitted (we are Muslims),' for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you of anything from your deeds. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (49:14)

Qurʾānic Verse which states that there were believers from among the Bedouin.

1. And among the Bedouin are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and consider what they spend as a means of nearness to Allah and of [obtaining]

invocations of the Messenger. Indeed, it is a means of nearness for them. Allah will admit them to His mercy. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (9:99)

Appendix 6: The Bedouin in the eyes of post-Islamic Arabs

The relationship between sedentary Arabs and the Bedouin was complicated and subject to change across different locations and over time. Modern scholarship questions the notion that the Arabs originated as Bedouin.[803] The romanticisation of the 'Bedouin' Arab identity started in the late antique period and further developed after the seventh century.[804] At the time of the advent of Islam[805], although the Bedouin of Medina and its outskirts were looked upon with suspicion, they came to represent the custodians of Arab values, tradition and language.[806] Even when looking down upon them condescendingly, the Bedouin were and are still seen by Arabs as the original desert Arabs, the progenitors of all Arabs.[807] Islam, according to Lawrence, needed to maintain a connection between civilised (by which he means the sedentary population) and nomad, just as it needed to maintain a connection between literacy and orality.[808]

Pre-Islamic Meccan families used to send their children to learn with the Bedouin tribes, living around Mecca.[809] This practice continued in the noble families at the time of the Umayyads so that their children would learn pure Arabic and understand Bedouin lifestyle. This shows that the 'pure Arab' embodied in the Bedouin was held in high esteem at the time of the Umayyads.[810]

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[803] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 1

[804] Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, 162

[805] See Chapter 2 for more on the relations between early Islam and the Bedouin, including their mention in the Qurʾān.

[806] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," , 90

[807] Ibid.

[808] Bruce B. Lawrence, "Islamicate Cosmopolitanism from North Africa to Southeast Asia," in *Challenging Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Joshua Gedacht and R. Michael Feener (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 30-52.

[809] Khan, *Bedouin and ʿAbbāsid Cultural Identities: The Arabic Majnūn Laylā Story*

[810] Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, 162

Appendix 7: Sedentarisation in the garrison towns of Basra and Kufa

According to Bulliet one of the most well-documented sedentarisation records of nomadic peoples concerns the Arab tribes settling at Basra and Kufa in the seventh century.[811] These were the two main garrison towns founded in the newly conquered Sasanian lands and therefore saw the bulk of Arab migration from all parts of Arabia. Their organisation was based on tribal patterns prevailing in society, which meant that each tribal group had their own tribal leader. The difference between the two was that the tribal population of Kufa was very heterogeneous and dominated by southern Arabs or those who claimed descent from Yamanī[812] tribal groups, as opposed to Basra. This according to Daftary was one of the chief factors that made Kufa an important recruiting ground for the Shīʿah.[813]

Many scholars, like Watt (d. 2006), have suggested that nomadic tribespeople in garrison towns like Kufa were feeling insecure during the first 'civil war', which led them to look for salvation through different channels. In the case of the group which went on to be called the Shīʿah, they found the charismata of infallibility in ʿAlī. Yamanī tribespeople were already exposed to the idea of divine kingship and the supernatural qualities of their kings and as a result, they rallied behind ʿAlī, the son-in-law of the Prophet and the most prominent member of his family.[814]

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[811] Richard Bulliet, "Sedentarization of Nomads in the Seventh Century: The Arabs in Basra and Kufa," in *When Nomads Settle*, ed. Philip Salzman (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), 35-47.
[812] This is the spelling chosen for tribes, claiming to be from Yemen.
[813] Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40-48.
[814] Ibid.

Appendix 8: A note on the *mawālī*

The *mawālī* were drawn to Shīʿī causes because of their anti-Umayyad leanings. They had an affinity to accept the imams from the *ahl al-bayt* (people of the house of the Prophet) because of their religiopolitical traditions of divine kingship and hereditary leadership similar to that of the Yamanī Arabs.[815] After the success of the Abbasid revolution (132/750), the *mawālī* had achieved some of their pressing demands, and therefore radical Shīʿīsm ceased to be identified exclusively with the *mawālī*, though it continued to draw marginalised and discontented groups, including the Bedouin.[816]

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[815] Ibid.
[816] Ibid.

Appendix 9: Analysing Crone's views on the Bedouin during early Abbasid rule

The Umayyads had promoted Arab tribes and, in turn, drew support from them. This contrasted with the Abbasids who turned towards other ethnic groups such as the Persians.[817] However, Crone shows that it is highly probable that the *abnāʾ* who supported the Abbasid revolution were a combination of the descendants of Bedouin, other Arabs along with non-Arabs.[818]

In her book 'Slaves on Horses', Crone argues how the development of the early caliphal state marginalised the tribes and replaced them with military administrative units based in the newly populated garrison towns.[819] However, this explanation has been opposed by later scholars like Ulrich, Tapper and Orthmann, who have stated that states did not replace tribes, as these ancient tribes survived and remained relevant until hundreds of years after the early Islamic state and continued to play a role in the cities, towns and steppes. Ulrich argues that the Abbasids faced many revolts from these tribes and tried various strategies such as appointing their own leaders and adopting a divide-and-rule strategy.[820] Crone herself states in a later paper that it is not necessary to view religion as an alternative to tribal kinship loyalties and that Islam itself did not set out to destroy tribes, but only to use them as 'building blocks'.[821]

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[817] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 243. Some Arab tribesmen continued to be retained as governors, generals, and officials by the Abbasids.

[818] Patricia Crone, "The 'Abbāsid Abnā' and Sāsānid Cavalrymen," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 8, no. 1 (1998), 1-19.

[819] Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 32.

[820] Brian Ulrich, *Arabs in the Early Islamic Empire: Exploring Al-Azd Tribal Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 4.

[821] Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," , 374-375

Appendix 10: A note on the later Fatimids according to the Bohras

After the demise of the 18th Imam al-Mustansir bi-Allāh (d. 487/1094), the Fatimid *da'wah* split into two branches, the Nizārīyyah (those who believed in the imamate of his most likely eldest son Nizār (d. 488/1095)) and the Musta'līyyah (those who believed in the imamate of Abū al-Qāsim al-Musta'lī bi-Allāh (d. 495/1101)). Al-Musta'lī assumed office as the imam-caliph while Nizār was killed.

The next major split happened after the assassination of the 20th Imam al-Āmir bi-Āhkām Allāh (d. 524-6/1130-32[822]). According to the Tayyibīs, al-Āmir had appointed his infant son, al-Tayyib, proclaiming him his heir at the time of his birth in 524/1130. This was widely circulated through official letters sent to all the provinces, including Yemen. Al-Āmir appointed his cousin 'Abd al-Majīd (d. 544/1149) as a regent and caretaker for his son al-Tayyib. However, 'Abd al-Majīd claimed the imamate for himself and became the ruler of the Empire, assuming the title of al-Hāfiz li-Dīn Allāh.[823] The Tayyibīs believe that al-Tayyib was taken into seclusion by his father's trusted *dā'ī*s and that the line of imams continues in his progeny to date.[824] Al-Hurrah al-Malikah (Queen Arwa; d. 532/1138), the trusted *hujjah* (a high rank in the *da'wah* hierarchy) of the 20th Imam in Yemen, then appointed a *dā'ī*[825] to stand in the stead of the hidden imam and uphold the affairs of the 21st Imam's *da'wah*. This *dā'ī* was known as the *al-dā'ī al-mutlaq* ('the unfettered' or 'unrestricted missionary') or the *dā'ī al-satr* ('*dā'ī* of seclusion'). He is believed by the Tayyibīs, who are now mostly known as Bohras, to hold the authority of the concealed imam. They believe that the chain of imamate continues in the progeny of the 21st Imam, albeit in seclusion, and each imam is represented by his *dā'ī*. This chain of *dā'ī*s continues

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[822] There are two different years given for his death.
[823] Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 172-211, 238-248
[824] For more information on the doctrine of the hidden imam see Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn, *The Fatimids and their Successors in Yaman: The History of an Islamic Community*, ed. Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid, Vol. 4 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 85-92.
[825] The first *al-dā'ī al-mutlaq* was Sayyidunā al-Dhu'ayb bin Mūsā al-Wadi'ī.

until contemporary times[826] Today there are three[827] major Bohra sects, the largest being

the Dawoodis[828], followed by the Sulaymānīs and then the ʿAlawīs[829], each following their

own *dāʿī*.[830]

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[826] For more on the Dawoodi Bohra perspective on the uninterrupted chain of *dāʿī*s see the works of the 51st Dawoodi Bohra *al-dāʿī al-mutlaq* Syedna Taher Saifuddin especially his first epistle. Syedna Taher Saifuddin, *Dawʾ Nūr Al-Haqq Al-Mubīn*, 1st ed. (Mumbai: Dawat-e-Hadiyah, 1935).

[827] There are a few other Bohra sects as well, offshoots of these major sects.

[828] This is the preferred spelling used by community members.

[829] The preferred spelling used by the community is Alavi.

[830] For more on the position of the *al-dāʿī al-mutlaq* and the challenge to the succession of the 53rd Dawoodi Bohra *dāʿī*, Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin in the Bombay High Court see Jonah Blank, "The Dāʾūdī Bohras (Mustaʿlī Ismāʿīlī Shīʿa): Using Modernity to Institutionalise a Fāṭimid Tradition," in *Handbook of Islamic Sects and Movements*, eds. Muhammad Afzal Upal and Carole M. Cusack (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 255-278.

Appendix 11: The role of climate change in early Bedouin migration

After the first Islamic conquests, between the 7th and 10th centuries CE, it was the severe aridification of the Arabian Peninsula which caused a surge in northward migration.[831] Waves of migrations from the Arabian Peninsula northwards during the eleventh century may also be linked to other forms of climate change. According to Rapoport, a cold spell from 950 to 1100 resulted in crop failures throughout the eastern Mediterranean. This may have facilitated the Bedouin to take over cultivated lands abandoned by settled people or may have forced settled farmers to adopt pastoralism. Nomadic penetration and conquests were followed by waves of new migrants. Their sedentarisation, and intermarriage with the indigenous populations, who then integrated with the Arabs, led to further religious and cultural assimilations.[832]

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[831] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 28

[832] Yossef Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, Vol. 19 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018), 233-234.; Astrid Meier and Tariq Tell, "The World the Bedouin Lived in: Climate, Migration and Politics in the Early Modern Arab East," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58, no. 1 (2015), 21-55.; S. Lüning et al., "The Medieval Climate Anomaly in the Mediterranean Region," *Paleoceanography and Paleoclimatology* 34, no. 10 (2019), 1625-1649.; Yochanan Kushnir and Mordechai Stein, "Medieval Climate in the Eastern Mediterranean: Instability and Evidence of Solar Forcing," *Atmosphere* 10, no. 1 (2019).

Appendix 12: Further examination of the ancient Bedouin

Geographical scope of the ancient Bedouin[833]

The Arabian Peninsula and the lands on its northern borders contain many different types of deserts along with mountains and valleys. The deserts, although interconnected, are vast and almost impenetrable, making communication very difficult. As a result, the inhabitants of the different parts of this vast Arabian land mass had little contact with each other.[834] The most important commodity in these arid lands was water. By contrast, the Fertile Crescent, irrigated by rivers and with comparatively more rainfall than in the deserts of Arabia, provided opportunities for agriculture and animal husbandry. At the extreme tip of southwestern Arabia, the mountains of Yemen are blessed with a suitable climate and abundant rainfall, thus being called *Arabia Felix* ('Happy' or 'Blessed Arabia') by Graeco-Roman authors, as opposed to *Arabia Deserta.* Yemen was home to irrigational innovations and dams, the most famous being the *Sadd Maʾrib*. Between the Fertile Crescent and Yemen, the deserts were dotted with oases, where life could be sustained.[835] Bedouin Arabia was the area of the Arabian Peninsula where customs based on camel nomadism prevailed, especially in the north, west, and centre of the Peninsula.[836]

As has been stated earlier, modern historians generally consider Arabs to have started as a distinct group in the northern part of what is known as Arabia today. In the early centuries CE, the language of the nomads, i.e. the northern Arabs started to impact the languages spoken by those in the south, gradually developing into an Arabic lingua franca which we today know as Arabic. Nomadic Arabs started playing larger roles, not only as mercenaries

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[833] See Appendix 1 for more on Bedouin migrations.
[834] Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 15
[835] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, 4, 93
[836] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*, 147-154

working for local rulers, but they increasingly became power brokers, influencing the settled peoples of the south.[837]

Nomads, semi-nomads or pastoralists?

Nomads may be defined as people who move in groups, cyclically or seasonally and who practice pastoralism. They may be seen as socially and geopolitically different from the sedentary peoples. Additionally, socioeconomic factors and certain values characterise nomadism.[838]

Bedouin were and are Arab nomads. There have been many opinions about how the Bedouin may be defined. As scholarly understanding grows, viewing the Bedouin as only those who live in tents and are permanently on the move has now been revised. Arab tribes may have started off as true camel-riding nomads fighting and raiding[839] other tribes, but they also had camels for whom they had to seek pasture and follow certain routes depending on the time of the year. As a result, they did not wander randomly, but sought and protected pastural lands and water. Some were pastoralists, raising not only camels but also sheep and goats. They also traded with sedentary populations and became guides and guards for caravans.[840]

The term semi-nomad is a modern term but may be applied to all Bedouin in varying degrees. It is now understood that there were close connections between nomads and the sedentary populations, both economically and socially. These nomads did not only follow pastoralism but also carried out basic agricultural activities.[841] As early as the fifth

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[837] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*, 60-66
[838] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," 90-92
[839] Known sometimes as *ghazw.*
[840] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 96-97
[841] Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, 191

millennium BCE, fishing was combined with livestock husbandry, showing the diversity of nomadic livelihood.[842]

Further, nomadic tribes included people living in villages and controlled or claimed as their own territory areas, routes, waterholes, and pastures. Even, the well-settled Nabataeans, for example, were seen as nomads by the Greeks.[843] Shahid states that the Jafnids/Ghassān[844] became completely sedentary in Late Antiquity, while Webb calls the Ghassān and Lakhm ex-nomads.[845] By contrast Fisher argues that sedentarisation is a long-term process and is not irreversible. However, Fisher presumes that it is unlikely that the Jafnids remained 'wholly nomads', which can be evidenced by their buildings.[846] For those living at the fringes of the Roman and Persian Empires, there would be pressure to become settled, although it is likely that these nomadic tribes never broke their association with the desert completely.[847]

Arab nomadism was not homogeneous, varying from part-time settled nomads to nomads who never settled in any form of permanent dwellings.[848] This means that the *badw-hadar*[849] dichotomy is not an opposition, but rather a duality.[850]

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[842] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 23

[843] Wenning, "Towards "Early Petra": An Overview on the Early History of the Nabataeans in its Context"

[844] The Ghassānids are also referred to as Jafnids.

[845] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 78

[846] Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity*, 110

[847] The Palmyereans, are an example of a city-state in Roman times who also engaged with the oasis and the desert.

[848] Leder, "Towards a Historical Semantic of the Bedouin, Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries: A Survey," 104.

[849] See chapter 1 for a more detailed discussion. For pre-modern distinction between the *hadar* and *badw*, roughly understood as settlements and open plains respectively, see: Abdulaziz H. Al Fahad, "Raiders and Traders: A Poet's Lament on the End of the Bedouin Heroic Age," in *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious Change*, eds. Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 238-241.

[850] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*, 25-27

Blood ties and tribal genealogies

According to Macintosh-Smith a *shaʿb* (people) took its identity from a place and was generally united in its allegiance to a single chief deity. On the other hand, a *qabīlah* (tribe) shared its idea of real or assumed kinship.[851] Tribal kinship has always been important to traditional Arab society. Individuals were most often aware of their tribal affiliations and were proud of the achievements and glories of their tribes. Traditional Arab genealogical sources have grouped the Arabs into two broad groupings: the northern and southern. The former traced their roots to *ʿAdnān* and the latter traced their roots to *Qahtān*, which were then divided into tribes and subtribes, although modern anthropology casts doubt on these tribal divisions.[852]

Common descent was an important concept for the cohesion of a tribal group although practically, it may have been difficult to keep a tribal group together because it entailed being able to defend its pastoral rights and water holes as well as its flocks and herds. Lindner says that a nomadic tribe 'served, first and foremost, a political purpose: the protection and enhancement of the position of its tribesmen in the face of the wider world'.[853] According to Lindner, factors of common interests need more emphasis in understanding a tribe than blood relationships. Tribes could suddenly undertake rapid numerical increases or decay and disappear.[854]

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[851] Ibid. An example of how kinship ties are flexible is given in Majied Robinson, *Marriage in the Tribe of Muhammad* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 19.
[852] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700
[853] Rudi Paul Lindner, "What was a Nomadic Tribe?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 4 (Oct, 1982), 698-699.
[854] Ibid. For more on tribal kinship see Appendix 3.

Ancient Bedouin and organised forms of government

Since the ancient Bedouin lived far away from cities and towns in the vastness of the deserts of Arabia, boundaries meant little to them. Boundaries for them meant tribal territories that needed to be strongly protected, as they came with rights to water and pasture.[855] Therefore, geographical boundaries served as natural frontiers between Arabia and its northern neighbours. These people included the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks and the Romans. Within Arabia, often other distinguishing features were used to identify tribal lands. In recent times it has been known that these frontiers between Arabia and other empires or internal borders between two tribes were permeable, allowing for socio-political exchange. These frontiers and borders were also fluid and were prone to change.[856] Relations with these frontier Bedouin tribes in the north of the Arabian Peninsula have been recorded by the Assyrians, Greeks, Romans and Persians.[857]

As Bedouin society developed, their involvement, both politically and economically, evolved and entwined with the empires that surrounded them.[858] Crone discusses how tribes helped to form and maintain other states, apart from evolving and forming their own states.[859]

Nevertheless, the common belief that since these tribes were nomadic, the relationship was between organised states and loosely governed peoples, is incorrect. A state may be identified as an agency, within a specified area, for the maintenance of internal order and protection from external forces, which has the right to use force. Accordingly, recent studies

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[855] Ralph W. Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography*, Vol. 85 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1995), 43.
[856] See part one of the Conclusion.
[857] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*; Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," , 363
[858] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*, 151
[859] Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," 365-371

have shown that some of these Bedouin tribes went on to establish sophisticated states, like the Nabataeans, while remaining nomadic at their core.[860] Knauf has written extensively on the Bedouin, developing theories regarding the development of Bedouin life and 'Bedouin states'. He suggests that the Nabataeans remained Bedouin throughout their history.[861] However, some historians have doubted this, pointing to the fact that the word 'Nabataean' itself was used to describe someone who was not an Arab, and therefore not nomadic.[862] Even so, political rule for most tribes was limited to their tribal unit, however large it was, and they were generally marginalised from political rule that was concentrated in the cities of the *hadar*.[863]

The Bedouin, nevertheless, did serve as important buffer states or contractual mercenaries for various states, such as for the Roman and the Persian states.[864] Earlier, the Assyrians tried to integrate nomadic Arabs into their imperial system. They were used to maintain military reserves, man checkpoints, maintain security and undertake the transportation of goods.[865] Various inscriptions show that the Romans raised army units from nomadic tribes on the edges of their provinces of Syria and Arabia who were put under the command of nomad leaders. According to Fisher, it is also possible that military units were raised from the Bedouin by the Herodians[866] and Nabataeans.[867] The Nabataeans were not counted as true Arabs by the early post-Islamic Arabs.[868]

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[860] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, 5-6; Crone, "Tribes and States in the Middle East," 363
[861] Macdonald, "Was the Nabataean Kingdom a "Bedouin State"?" , 102-119
[862] Mackintosh-Smith, *Arabs: A 3,000-Year History of Peoples, Tribes and Empires*
[863] Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography*, 43
[864] Robert G. Hoyland, "Epigraphy and the Emergence of Arab Identity," in *From Al-Andalus to Khurasan*, Vol. 66 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 217-242.
[865] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, 61
[866] A group of Jews who supported Herod.
[867] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*
[868] Ulrich, *Arabs in the Early Islamic Empire: Exploring Al-Azd Tribal Identity*, 76-77. This is attested to in one of the poems of al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728 or 112/730) who mocks the Azd tribe as having lips and noses akin to the Nabataeans, rather than the Arabs, and having lost their Bedouin ways.

In the early sixth century, nomadic tribes of northern and central Arabia attained more prominence and importance because of the renewal of war between Byzantium and Persia. New nomadic allies were sought by the Romans even further south.[869]

The Jafnids possessed a political and military power recognised by the Byzantine Empire. Their power was over other Arab tribes which were either sedentary or nomadic or had a component of both.[870] Fisher has an interesting observation regarding the reliance on the tribes of Greater Syria by Muslim states, when he says that it is highly probable that the way they dealt with these tribes was not fundamentally different from the way that the Jafnids dealt with them, although the scale was different, with the Umayyads being heads of a state while the Jafnids mainly played a military role for the Romans.[871]

The Lakhmids[872], who were Sasanian allies, held influence right up to Mecca. The Sasanians also temporarily promoted the tribe of Banū Hanīfah who wandered the deserts south of their borders.[873] Hodgson reports an interesting fact regarding Khosrow I (Anushirvān) (d. 579) that he recruited men for his army from those Arab tribes who were not seen as a political threat. However, a few years after his death they started interfering with Sasanian succession. It is attested that the tribal confederation of Kinda in the southern parts of the Arabian Peninsula, was contracted by the Himyaraites in the fifth and early sixth centuries CE and subsequently by the Byzantine Empire.[874]

Similarly, as has been elucidated earlier, most Bedouin tribes maintained multi-levelled relations with the sedentary Arab populations as well.[875] Gradually Bedouin tribes started

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[869] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, 11-89
[870] Ibid.
[871] Ibid.
[872] Recent scholarship also uses the term: Nasrids. They are known as the *manādhirah* in Arabic.
[873] Conrad, "The Arabs," in , 678-700
[874] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*, 153
[875] Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*

playing an even greater role in the surrounding lands of Syria, Iraq and Yemen. This was reflected, among other things in the language spoken in those lands. By the sixth century CE, Arabic was spoken in most of Yemen, while there were many Arabic speakers in Syria and Iraq as well.[876]

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[876] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam Conscience and History in a World Civilization. Volume One, the Classical Age of Islam*, 151-152

Appendix 13: Bedouin and the the First Abbasid State (750-850 CE)

During the early years of Abbasid rule, the Bedouin of central Arabia rarely interfered in the lives of the sedentary population except for occasionally providing refuge to rebels and fighting alongside them against the Abbasids.[877] Many Shīʿite rebellions were supported by Bedouin tribesmen. One of the first pro-Shīʿite, anti-Abbasid rebellions took place at the time of al-Mansūr[878] (d. 158/775). It gathered support from Bedouin tribes, especially the Juhaynah and Sulaym tribes, but they did not seem to have contributed much to the ensuing battle. It was centred in Medina and led by Muhammad bin ʿAbd Allāh (d. 145/762), known as al-Nafs al-Zakīyyah. Subsequently, the fourth Abbasid Caliph al-Hādī (d.170/786) who was known for his anti-ʿAlid stance, crushed a rebellion led by Husayn bin ʿAlī (d. 169/786) who sought support from the slaves of Mecca and the Bedouin of the surrounding areas.[879] Further, a Zaydī Shīʿite rebellion in Kufa in 200/815 found support among the Bedouin of northern Arabia and the desert fringes of Iraq.[880]

Bedouin movements became increasingly associated with various Shīʿī sects but there were other rebellions as well.[881] The Zanj rebellion (255/869 to 270/883), which centred around Basra, was initiated by ʿAlī bin Muhammad (d. 270/883). This rebellion was not only supported by black slaves but also by the Bedouin living, among others, around Basra. Talhami argues that it was the Bedouin who contributed most to this rebellion.[882] Though the Zanj rebellion was eventually crushed, it led to the rise of further unrest in the Sawād[883], in the form of the Carmathian movement while the government was preoccupied with the

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[877] Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (Oxon: Taylor and Francis, 2016), 1-238.
[878] Popularly known as Abū al-Dawānīq.
[879] Ibid. He was from the progeny of Imam al-Hasan bin ʿAlī. He was killed at Fakhkh near Mecca.
[880] Marshall W. Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in *A History of the Crusades, Volume 1: The First Hundred Years* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2016), 82-83.
[881] Ibid.
[882] Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 3 (1977), 455.
[883] The fertile lands of southern Iraq.

Zanj. A group of Carmathians is already attested as participating in the Zanj rebellion.[884]

Thus, a larger Bedouin movement was slowly developing in the second half of the third

century AH which emerged as the Carmathian movement.[885]

Bedouin remnants after sedentarisation

The garrison towns saw the intermarriage of tribespeople and the *mawālī* and by the early

$2^{nd}/8^{th}$ century, there was little to distinguish between the two.[886] Urbanisation increased at

a rapid pace and nomadic tribes soon became largely urbanised or sedentarised. This is also

reflected in the *nisbah* (affiliation) to tribes, which dropped sharply during the $3^{rd}/9^{th}$

century, a possible reason also being to keep a distance from tribes who raided Hajj

caravans.[887] However, Bedouin identity remained relevant in the garrison towns where

Bedouin traditions were actively kept alive.[888]

After rapid tribal migration, the number of nomadic pastoralists dropped.[889] Only, those

who retained their nomadic transhumant way of life were henceforth identified as Bedouin.

These Bedouin proved difficult to govern, let alone control. For example, in the $3^{rd}/9^{th}$

century, many Bedouin tribes such as the Banū Sulaym and Banū Asad resorted to raiding

caravans, which disrupted the Hajj and posed problems for the legitimacy of central

authority.[890] This was most probably after caliphal spending stopped around the pilgrimage

sites. Other reasons for Bedouin disaffection at that time were the ineffectiveness of the

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[884] David Waines, "The Third Century Internal Crisis of the Abbasids," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 20, no. 3 (1977), 303-304. Al-Tabarī (d. 310/923) reported that Hamdān Qarmat (active until 286/899), one of the leaders of the Carmathian movement, actually met the leader of the Zanj rebellion, ʿAlī bin Muhammad.

[885] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in , 81-98; Waines, "The Third Century Internal Crisis of the Abbasids," , 282-306

[886] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 244-246.

[887] Ibid.

[888] Ulrich, *Arabs in the Early Islamic Empire: Exploring Al-Azd Tribal Identity*, 24; Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in , 81-98

[889] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 26.

[890] For more such attacks see Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 276

salary system in the troops and the introduction of other elements into the armies. This meant that sources of income for the Bedouin had diminished and access to political power at the caliphal level decreased. However, Abbasid territorial claims at that time shrank to encompass only cultivated areas.[891] Bedouin attacks became bolder and also spread northwards towards Iraq, with the tribe of Banū Shaybān attacking Iraq itself in 286/899.[892]

An example of a strong Bedouin tribe was the ʿIjl tribe[893], who, under their leader Abū Dulaf al-ʿIjlī (d. 225 or 226/circa 841) played an important role in al-Maʾmūn's (d. 218/833) war against his brother al-Amīn (d. 198/813). This war was seen by Baldwin as one between the sedentary population of Iraq and the Bedouin, with the Bedouin tribes supporting al-Amīn.[894]

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[891] They also promoted urban culture and chose it over Bedouin culture and traditions. See Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," , 27

[892] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam*, 276.

[893] They had settled in Lower Mesopotamia since pre-Islamic times.

[894] Baldwin, "The Caliphate and the Arab States," in 82-83

Appendix 14: Understanding Bedouin identity, an examination of Rappoport's views

Writing about tribes residing in Egypt in the later Mamluk period, Rapoport proposes to dissociate tribalism and Bedouin identity from pastoral nomadism, which may equally mirror his view for earlier periods. Rapoport presumes that the word ʿurbān used in Mamluk sources is a reference to Arab tribes and not necessarily to Bedouin who subscribed to a nomadic lifestyle. He states that the word ʿurbān, being a plural of the word ʿarab, could be a reference to any Arab, be it a nomadic or settled Arab.[895] He further says that the word badw may in certain contexts refer to rural communities who were not necessarily transhumant, for which he cites Ibn Khaldūn's al-Muqadimmah as evidence, who defines badw as those who either live from the cultivation of the land (al-falh) or those who make their living by raising livestock.

In addition to Ibn Khaldūn's al-Muqadimmah, Rapoport builds his arguments from various other sources, such as al-Nābulusī's, Taʾrīkh al-Fayyūm, in which al-Nābulusī had stated that most of the people in Fayyum at the time of his writing were tribal Arabs (whom he also describes as badw) and very few were hadar.[896] Rapoport infers that the dichotomy of badw and hadar in al-Nābulusī's book is between Muslims who are seen as badw and Christians who are seen as hadar, i.e. those with no tribal affiliations. He also concludes that conversion to Islam was accompanied by an assumption of tribal identity.[897] Apart from his 2004 paper, Rapoport has also formulated this thesis in later works which deal with al-Nābulusī's Taʾrīkh al-Fayyūm. For example, in his 2018 book co-written with Ido Shahar, Rapoport states that al-Nābulusī used the terms badw and Arab referring to the same group

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[895] Rapoport quotes from the lexicon of al-Azharī, which this study also has dealt with in Chapter 1.

[896] The word badw means desert or steppe and may also refer to people living in such environments. The word hadar means land with a long-term settlement and may also refer to the people living in such a settlement.

[897] Yossef Rapoport, "Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt," Msr, no. VIII.2, 2004 (2004), 1-22.

of people, to indicate groups outside the control of the state who were to some extent politically independent.[898]

In general, Rapoport's main argument is that it would be incorrect to think that all Arab tribesmen mentioned in Mamluk sources led a sedentary lifestyle as much as it is incorrect to assume that all of them were nomads. His works suggest that the actual number of truly nomadic groups are fewer than the numbers given in al-Nābulusī's book, which seems to be correct.[899] He also argues that the claim to Arab descent should be understood as an effort to determine the present rather than a factual representation of the past, and that the assumption of Bedouin identity by peasants was a method of self-projection.[900] He believes that recent studies acknowledge that not all references to Arab tribes are to pastoral nomads, though, in the field of medieval Islamic history the Bedouin and the peasants are still viewed as distinct categories.[901] Similarly, Brett states that during the 8th century CE a nomadic Bedouin population came into existence on the desert margins of the valley and Delta and by the 9th century CE they were threatening the settled population. Conversely, he also states that many poorer Bedouin gave up their nomadic lifestyle and had been reduced to farming and thus became sedentary. This, according to Brett was a constant feature of the Bedouin.[902] Though the above views by Rapoport and Brett seem to be the correct logical position, I would like to further suggest that:

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[898] Yossef Rapoport and Ido Shahar, *The Villages of the Fayyum: A Thirteenth-Century Register of Rural, Islamic Egypt*, Vol. 18 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018), 14-15, 42-43.; Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 171-186, 202

[899] Ibid.

[900] Rapoport, "Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt," , 1-22; Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 172.

[901] Rapoport and Shahar, *The Villages of the Fayyum: A Thirteenth-Century Register of Rural, Islamic Egypt*, 42-48; Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 171-186, 202

[902] Michael Brett, "Population and Conversion to Islam in Egypt in the Mediaeval Period," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett, 1st ed. (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019b), 47-71.

1. Rapoport may have misread Ibn Khaldūn regarding his usage of the word *badw*.[903] A reading of Ibn Khaldūn's *al-Muqadimmah* does not seem to say that *badw* are all those who make their living either by cultivation or by raising livestock. What Ibn Khaldūn seems to state is that there are certain *badw* who may take up agriculture. This is borne out from his obvious use of the dichotomy between the sedentary people and the Bedouin, with the camel breeders being the most extreme group of the Bedouin.[904] In this respect, it is interesting that Goitein reads the word *badw* used by Ibn Khaldūn as 'outsiders' in which he includes the peasants (*fallāh*s) and the Bedouin nomads; he explains that the word *badw* should not be translated as 'Bedouins' but as 'those living outside towns'.[905] This may be a correct understanding of the word *bawd* as used by Ibn Khaldūn.

2. The word *ʿurbān* is still used to refer to the Bedouin and has been understood as such by historians such as Brett.[906]

3. Rapoport discusses the conversion of Christians to Islam in rural Egypt.[907] However, I would like to add that Coptic Christians may have assumed tribal identities in Egypt increasing tribal numbers which, somewhat, resembled what resulted from a manumitter-freedman relationship according to the Islamic law of *walāʾ* (clientship)

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[903] See Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 172; Rapoport, "Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt," , 4

[904] ʿAbd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, ed. N. J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal and Bruce B. Lawrence, First Princeton Classics edition, 2015 ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 163-166.

[905] Shelomo Dov Goitein and Paula Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. I, Economic Foundations: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 75.; Shelomo Dov Goitein and Paula Sanders, *A Mediterranean Society: Vol. V, the Individual: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Vol. 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 565.

[906] Michael Brett, "Part VI: The Fatimids and the Crusades," in *The Fatimids and Egypt*, ed. Michael Brett (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2019a), 193-237.; Brett, "Population and Conversion to Islam in Egypt in the Mediaeval Period," in , 47-71

[907] Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 231-233

where over generations freedmen were admitted as full members of a tribe.[908] It must also be remembered that non-Arab clients were considered by some authors as Bedouin if they followed a Bedouin lifestyle.[909] This is in line with the earlier statement that tribal genealogies were quite fluid, allowing for identities to be assumed.[910] An interesting example of regulation of tribal genealogy is an edict issued in 414/1022 by the Fatimid Imam[911] restricting the entry of rural outlaws to tribes by confining tribal membership to official registers, as integration into a tribe would have shielded them from official prosecution.[912]

4. Bedouin tribesmen seem to have intermarried and intermixed with the local Copts and earlier settled Arabs, as attested elsewhere, thus increasing their numbers.[913]

5. Apart from the wholly transhumant Bedouin tribes in Egypt, at the time of the Mamluks, various sources confirm that settled or semi-settled Arabs may have also projected themselves to be members of such tribes because they subscribed to similar value systems and beliefs, thus increasing the numbers of Bedouin nomads.[914]

6. As a result, those who claimed to be Bedouin, assuming Bedouin identity and subscribing to a Bedouin lifestyle may be viewed as Bedouin, even though they may not be 'Arabs'.

7. After conquering Egypt, ʿAmr bin al-ʿĀs had used many Yamanī tribes to secure Islamic Egypt's borders. Many members of these tribes lived a non-sedentary lifestyle in portable homes in the Eastern Desert. This does not preclude the fact that many

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[908] Ibid.

[909] G. W. Murray, *Sons of Ishmael: A Study of the Egyptian Bedouin* (London: Routledge, 1935), 1. Al-Azhari also seems to think so. See also Chapter 1.

[910] See also Chapter 1.

[911] Most probably the Fatimid Imam al-Zāhir.

[912] Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of Al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*, 233-243

[913] Faiq Amin Mukhlis, "Studies and Comparison of the Cycles of the Banū Hilāl Romance" (PhD, University of London, 1964), .

[914] Brett, "Population and Conversion to Islam in Egypt in the Mediaeval Period," in , 47-71

members also lived in permanent settlements, where they farmed, practised periodic nomadic pastoralism, and worked in the gold mines of the desert, without losing much of their nomadic identity.[915] Arab tribes who chose to maintain a Bedouin lifestyle, supported themselves by raising livestock or raiding other tribes and caravans.[916]

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[915] Ahmad Husayn Al-Namki, *Al-Dawlah Al-Fātimīyyah Wa Madhāhir Al-Hayāt Al-Siyāsīyyah Wal-Hadārīyyah Fī Sahrāʾ Misr Al-Sharqīyyah* (Cairo: Maktabat Madbouli, 2017), 194-235.

[916] Mamduh Abd al-Rahman Al-Reeti, *Dawr Al-Qabāʾil Al-ʿArabīyyah Fī Misr Mundh Al-Fath Al-Islāmī Hattā Qiyām Al-Dawlah Al-Fatimīyyah*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabat Madbouli, 1996), 171-211.

Appendix 15: Rise of the Turks and downfall of the Bedouin

The Seljuq onslaught of Mesopotamia and the Levant, starting from the 1060s, brought about profound geopolitical and demographical changes. Their attacks against the Bedouin emirates were abrupt and grave and erased them from the Fertile Crescent (1080s-1090, with minor local resistance until the 1130s-1140s and especially by the Mazyadite emirate of Hillah till 1160s). All Bedouin political institutions were wiped out and their elite were eradicated or deprived of power and were reduced to localised tribal communities.[917] Muslim bin Quraysh[918], the ʿUqaylid chief of Mosul, stood out among the Bedouin chiefs of the era. Muslim had initially acknowledged the imamate of al-Mustansir, but in 458/1066 had also accepted an alliance from the Seljuq Alp Arsalān.[919] In the aftermath of the Turkoman general of the Seljuqs, Afshīn's (d. circa 1077) carnage in the Levant, many people turned towards Mosul, which was administered by Muslim. He was asked by the local population of Aleppo and the tribe of Kilāb to take over Aleppo. After much diplomacy, he finally took possession of Aleppo in 473/1080 and brought the Mirdāsid dynasty to an end. He advanced to lay siege to Damascus and was promised help by the Fatimids. The Fatimids wanted to recapture Damascus and counter Seljuq power in Syria. This attempt, however, was unsuccessful. Even though he was promised help by Badr al-Jamālī, competing Bedouin chieftains, including the two Mirdāsid chiefs, Shabīb and Waththāb managed to deny Muslim from capturing Damascus and forming a Bedouin state in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia.[920] In 477/1084 Antioch was captured by the Seljuqs. Muslim demanded from the new Seljuq governor the tribute he was previously being paid

[917] Michael Brett, *The Fatimid Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 240-242, 256.
[918] Some sources name him as Muslim bin Qirwāsh.
[919] Anne-Marie Eddé, "Bilād Al-Shām, from the Fāṭimid Conquest to the Fall of the Ayyūbids (359–658/970–1260)," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: The Western Islamic World, Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Maribel Fierro, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 173.
[920] Suhayl Zakkar, "The Emirate of Aleppo: 392/1002 - 487/1094" (PhD, University of London, 1969), 208-225.

by the Byzantine governor. When the Seljuq governor refused, Muslim marched to Antioch but was killed in 478/1085 while trying to capture Antioch.[921]

This study ends with the advent of the Seljuq onslaught on the Levant, which is before what is commonly known as the First Crusade (1096-1099). Because of the increase in the number of agents operating in the Middle East during this period, and because the Fatimid Empire, itself was undergoing major internal political changes at the hands of its viziers, this period warrants an independent study.

With the onset of Frankish kingdoms in the Holy Lands, along with the entry of inter alia the Nizārīs of Alāmūt, Bedouin services, mostly as auxiliary troops and guides, were sought after by all parties, including the Franks. In the Fatimid army, they were employed mostly as light cavalry.[922] However, the Bedouin had lost their former military and political authority. As their power declined, they became politically irrelevant and were reduced to a purely nomadic lifestyle, which continued for decades.[923] The weakening of the Bedouin Arabs coincided with the weakening of the Fatimid Empire as both got inundated with non-Arabs.

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[921] Al-Zanki, Jamal M. H. A, "The Emirate of Damascus in the Early Crusading Period 488-549/1095-1154" (PhD, University of St. Andrews, 1990), 6.
[922] Brett, *The Fatimid Empire*, 240, 242, 278
[923] Franz, "The Bedouin in History Or Bedouin History," 31-32