Umma and Identity in Early Islamic Persia

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation analyzes local and regional histories written during the 10th to 13th centuries in areas that were historically a part of the Persian Empire. These texts are written in Persian or Arabic or both. Some sources were originally in Arabic and later translated into Persian. The main Persian language local histories that I will address in this dissertation include the Tārīkh-i Sīstān, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, Tārīkh-i Bayhaq, and Tārīkh-i Qum.

This project attempts to answer how and why Persian local and regional histories assert a privileged connection with the Prophet Muḥammad. I examine the ways in which Persian local and regional histories assert legitimacy, authority, and privileged access to Muḥammad, the prophetic experience, and a blessed role in the Islamic umma.
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Dedication

For my parents
Apparatus

Dates are given according to the Hijri calendar and then the Gregorian calendar (e.g., 613/1217). When the Hijri dating is certain but the precise Gregorian equivalent unclear, I have listed the corresponding range of years in the Common Era (e.g., 613/1216-1217). For example, entries appear as “613/1217” or “7th/13th century.”

Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

Documentation for notes and bibliography follows the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition.

A Note on the Transliteration

I include diacritical marks for words transliterated from Arabic or Persian that are in the title of a work or a quoted phrase. Place names appear without transliteration (e.g., Tabaristan, Bukhara). Therefore, the title of the work Tārīkh-i Bukhārā includes diacritical marks, as does historical personage al-Bukharī, but Bukhara as a place does not.

Commonly used technical terms appear without transliteration. With the exception of Shi‘i, Shi‘ism, Sunni, Sunnism, and Imam, the terms are italicized (e.g., Allah, ulama, umma, hadith, isnad, matn, muhaddith, baraka, fiqh, sahīh, aḥkām, khabar, shaykh, qadi, Shu‘a‘īya, sunna, madrasa, Mahdi, Sura, dinar).

Anglicized derivatives of Arabic words also appear without transliteration (e.g., Alid, Imam, Buyids, Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, Sufi, Sasanian, Umayyad, Abbasid, Ghurid, Saffarid, Daylami, Zaydi, Isma‘ili, Ash‘ari, Qur‘an, Fatimid, Mamluk, Safavid, Hanafi, Ziyarid, Talibi, Alawi, Amir, bazaar, shah).

I have included diacritical marks on less commonly used technical terms (e.g., madhhab, madhāhib, tabaqāt, awqāf, ziyārat, abdāl, faḍāil, sharif, Ṣaḥīḥayn, ‘umarā, ija‘za, a‘yān, mi‘raj, tafsīr, riwāyah, rāwi, dā‘ī, khawārij, tariqā, miḥna, mawla, awliya, mashhād, khāngāh).

Proper names of people and the names by which they are known are supplied with diacritical marks (e.g. Faṭima, Faṭima al-Ma‘ṣūma). Where I have used diacritical marks, I have followed the transliteration guide of the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES). The following markers indicate the hamza and the ayn, respectively: ' and `.
Chapter 1: Umma and Identity in Early Islamic Persia

“None among my Companions dies in a land except that he will be resurrected as a leader and a light for those people on the Day of Resurrection.”

Prophets, saints, Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, and the immortal shape-shifter Khiḍr appear in Persian and Arab local and regional histories. The mysterious Khiḍr, teacher of prophets, appears in a dream in the biographical literature. Muhammad, the Tārīkh-i Bukhārā tells us, announces that on the Judgment Day angels and martyrs will adorn the city of Bukhara in Khurasan, which will be resplendent with rubies and coral and will be the most exalted of all cities. Descendants of a Companion of the Prophet Muhammad live and teach hadith in the city of Bayhaq in Khurasan. Such historical narratives of cities and regions, from Bayhaq to Tabaristan to Bukhara, written primarily from the 10th to 13th centuries, serve to bind specific cities to pivotal moments and characters in Islamic history.

This dissertation examines local and regional histories of the early Islamic world, focusing on pre-Mongol histories written in the Persian realms. These texts were written primarily during the 10th to 13th centuries in areas that were historically a part of the Persian Empire. The focus of this study, broadly construed, is the politics of piety in

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early Islamic Persia. A constellation of realities falls under the term piety, each of which is addressed in its own context. These include dream narratives about seeing Muhammad, Khīḍr, pious local characters, and abdāl, which function as legitimating narratives and a form of non-biological heirship\(^2\) and investments of power (chapter 3). There are also claims of heirship or association with the Prophet vis-à-vis Sahaba, Tabiʿun, Sayyids, and their traditions; these ties imbue locations with a biological and genealogical counterpart to affirmations of authority through dreams (chapter 4).

Additionally, sacred etymologies involving Muḥammad, Gabriel, Noah, Iblīs, or Qurʿanic moments, and narratives about the tombs of saints and other important Muslims located in the city or region form another constellation of realities that constitutes the politics of piety (chapter 5). All these claims are imbued with deep religious resonance, and yet they diverge from what was ostensibly normative religious theory and practice of the dominant historical record.

This project asks a pointed historiographical question: Why do Persian local and regional histories assert a privileged connection with the Prophet, and what are the ways in which they do this? In other words, what are the ways in which Persian local and regional histories assert legitimacy, authority, and privileged access to Muḥammad, the prophetic experience, and a blessed role in the Islamic umma? This privileged connection to the Prophet occurs in various forms: Muḥammad and other prophets visit the city in waking life or in dreams, hadith transmitters live and teach in the city as living virtues or merits (faqāṭil) and custodians of the faith, Companions, Successors to the Companions (Sahaba and Tabiʿun), and Imams are associated with the city, and

\(^2\) I borrow the phrase “heirship to the Prophet” from the work of Michael Cooperson. For a study of different forms of heirship to the Prophet, see Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of The Prophets in The Age of al-Maʾmūn* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), xiii.
descendants of the Prophet live and die in the region. These Persian local histories claim their territory as sanctified and hallowed ground.

Moreover, the ways in which the texts claim their territory as sanctified and hallowed ground are simultaneously highly localized and yet resonate with overarching notions of the Muslim umma. In other words, these texts evidence the dynamic of Persian local histories making the global – the Muslim umma – local and regionally differentiated with highly localized dimensions. These local histories are an avenue through which we can understand the formation of Muslim identity in early Islamic Persia. This project engages the genre of local histories, focusing on Persian texts but engaging Arab sources from a comparative perspective. My primary sources include *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, Tārīkh-i Bayhaq, Tārīkh-i Qum, Tārīkh-Sīstān, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan*, *Tārīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, and to a lesser extent *Futūḥ Misr wa-akhbāruḥā*. The first five texts are Persian local and regional histories. The final two are from Islamic Spain and Egypt, respectively. This study views these texts in light of the genres of commemorative literature and the dynamics, both rhetorical and physical, of the sacralization of space in medieval Persia.

This project examines the nexus between various modes of piety and the subsequent authority it conferred on individuals, social groups, regions, cities, and specific cites in historical literature from early Islamic Persia. This study incorporates both historiographical research and social history. The authors of Persian local histories employed various modalities of piety and literary devices in portraying the virtues of their cities. This in turn bound the city to key moments and characters in Islamic history. By embedding the city deep into the fabric of Islamic history and its continued
development, the authors of these city histories fostered a sense of regionally specific and differentiated Persian Islamic identity along the twin bases of piety and authority.

The primary aims of this study are, firstly, to trace the contours of how the authors of Persian local histories employed rhetorical strategies for legitimation to articulate a spatio-communal Muslim Persian identity along the twin bases of piety and authority. These local histories should be seen as part of the dynamic of how Persian local histories attempted to make the global – the notional global Muslim umma – local by simultaneously asserting a strongly local identity while tying the city to critical moments and characters in Islamic sacred history. This chapter outlines broad patterns that characterize Persian local and regional histories, and subsequent chapters focus on the strategies of legitimation and claims for authority that they contain. Dovetailing with this aim is the second major goal, which is to provide the historical context and offer some hypotheses about why the articulation of a Perso-Muslim identity occurred in Persian local histories in the forms that they did. The factors that may have contributed to the development of these Persian characteristics include the fragmentation of central caliphal authority, agitation for local autonomy, and the decentralization of religious and political authority.

Of the local and regional histories examined in this dissertation, the Persian texts are from Persian speaking regions that were historically part of the Persian Empire. Texts written in these regions are written in Persian or Arabic and, quite commonly, both. Some sources were originally in Arabic and then translated into Persian within a few centuries of their original composition. For some of these texts the original Arabic version is no longer extant. The city histories are generally the Tarikh of a place.
Labeling a text as Iranian or Persian or Arab or Arabic is a geographical and not exclusively linguistic definition. Arab or Arabic texts refer to the urban histories of Arab lands. These are often written in Arabic and are not the focus of this dissertation.

The aim of this project is not to provide a historical narrative but rather to determine and elucidate patterns in local histories over time and place, and to ground this study in a historical framework while incorporating functionally skeptical methodologies from Islamic studies.

**Historical background**

During the 10th to 13th centuries, extensive demographic and cultural shifts took place in Persia: the country became majority Muslim by around 390/1000\(^3\), the center of intellectual and political gravity within Islam moved eastward into Persia from its former

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\(^3\) For this rate of conversion and argument that Persia had become majority Muslim by around the year 1000 CE, see: Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Richard W. Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Richard W. Bulliet, “A Quantitative Approach to Medieval Muslim Biographical Dictionaries,” *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* XIII, Part II (April 1970): 195-211. Bulliet creates timetables and conversion charts or 6 areas – Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Tunisia, Syria, and Spain – using Iran as his departure point, charting them against historical developments, such as the formation of independent dynasties and the establishment of religious institutions. Bulliet proposes this dating for majority conversion, at least for Iran, with the evaluation that the majority of the population had converted to Islam and conversion had tapered off around the year 1000 CE. In revisiting his earlier studies, Bulliet notes that issues concerning onomastic data can be tricky, in that there are Christians and Jews with Arabic names and Muslims with non-Arabic names; however, most of these occur after 900 CE. At around this same time Iranian Muslims again begin to have Persian names. See Richard W. Bulliet, “Conversion Stories in Early Islam,” in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands: Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 128, 131. In his assessment of Bulliet’s work on the rate of conversion to Islam in medieval Iran, Michael Morony offered a critical review and partial endorsement of Bulliet’s work on conversion. Despite his critical reassessment, Morony argued Bulliet’s “influential hypothesis on the process of conversion in Iran is innovative, speculative, provocative, and intriguing,” and “his results are also highly plausible, attractive, and tidy.” Michael Morony, “The Age of Conversions: A Reassessment,” in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands: Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 138.
basis in Arab territories, and a major revival occurred in Persian cultural and literary production. The populace reached a critical point of conversion, in which conversion extended past the cities and into the rural areas, in most areas by the mid-4th/10th century. Rapidly growing cities were focal points of intellectual, religious, and cultural activity. This period also coincides with the rise of local dynasties in Khurasan, or eastern Persia. There would have been a massive if gradual shift in Persian identity in the centuries after the initial conquests as Persians changed their names to Muslim names, social and religious institutions such as the madrasa developed and spread, and Sufis, ascetics, qalandars and other mystical groups proliferated. Persians – Sa’di and Ferdowsi amongst others – could write in the blossoming Persian language without their Muslim identity necessarily being called into question.

The first local histories emerged in the 3/9th and 4/10th centuries. Local biographical dictionaries existed as early as the second half of the 3/9th century and became an important genre as the “great era of Muslim biographical dictionary compilation began in the late tenth century.” The 4/10th century is a critical period for this dissertation because it is the era when local histories emerged and when authors began to write history not just in Arabic but also in Persian. The development of local historical writing in Persia was, up to the 4th/10th century, primarily in Arabic, after which material in the Persian language developed and achieved general acceptance in the 5/11th century. Local Persian dynasties sponsored and produced historical writing in the 4th/10th century, and these included the Daylami and Kurdish dynasties, which patronized historical writing in the 4th/10th century in order to legitimize their presence in the context

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5 Bulliet, “Conversion Stories in Early Islam,” 125.
of Islamic history. There was the increasing use of Persian language in writing in the 5th/11th century, including Persian translations of works originally written in Arabic, which dates to the era of the Ghaznavids. However, not all of the texts addressed in this study were produced for the courts.

The main Persian language local histories addressed in this dissertation include the Tārīkh-i Sīstān, Tārīkh-i Ţabaristān, Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, Tārīkh-i Bayhaq, and Tārīkh-i Qum. Tārīkh-i Sīstān is an anonymous text, the date of which is disputed. Bosworth dates this anonymous history of Sistan to the 5th/11th century, when it was likely finished during the middle years of the reign of Taj al-Dīn Abū al-Fażl Nasr b. Aḥmad (d. 465/1073). Tārīkh-i Ţabaristān is a 13th century text by Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Hasan ibn Isfandiyār, known as Ibn Isfandiyār (d. after 613/1217). Tārīkh-i Bukhārā is another local Persian city history. It is a Persian translation of the Arabic original by Narshakhī, and the Persian text is simultaneously an abridgement of the original Arabic and an extension of it with new material. Tārīkh-i Bukhārā was originally written in Arabic by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Zakarīyā ibn Khaṭṭāb ibn Sharīk al-Narshakhī (276-347/ 889-980 – 958), from the village of Narshakh in the vicinity of Bukhara, who dedicated it to the Samanid amir Nūḥ ibn Nasr in 332/943 or 4. The book

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was translated into Persian by Abū Nasr Ahmad al-Qubāvī in 522/1128-9, and al-Qubāvī extended the history covered to the year 365/975. The Persian translation was then abridged in 574/1178-9 by Muḥammad ibn Zufar ibn Ḥumar, who also added to the work from other texts.9 Tārīkh-i Bayhaq is a mid-12th century local history. The author of the Tārīkh-i Bayhaq is Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Abī al-Qāsim Zayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (499-565/1105-1169), primarily known as Ibn Funduq but also Fārid-i Khurasan and Dhahir al-Dīn.10 Tārīkh-i Bayhaq was composed in 563/1167-1168 during the rule of Muʿayyid al-Dawla Āy Āba (d. 659/1174).11 The work has no dedicatee.12 Tārīkh-i Qum by Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Qumī (d. 1015 or 1016) was composed originally in Arabic in 378/988 by Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Qumī and was translated into Persian in 805-06/1403 by Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Malik Qumī; only the later Persian translation now exists.

This study focuses on pre-Mongol Persian local histories for four main reasons. Firstly, restricting research to pre-Mongol texts affords some sense of temporal continuity between the texts. Thus, while texts such as Rawzāt al-jannāt fi awsaż-i madiżat-i Ḥarāt by Muʿīn al-Dīn Muḥammad Zamchī Isfīzārī (d. 897/1491-92) and Tārīkh-i Ru’yān by Awliyā Allah Āmulī (fl. 764/1362) are relevant in their format, they are excluded from this study for temporal reasons. Secondly, the bulk of early local histories, especially


12 For a summary of scholarship on Tārīkh-i Bayhaq, see Pourshariati, “Local Historiography,” 140-143.
from Khurasan, were written before the Mongol invasions, and the availability of sources in part defines the texts and era on which this study focuses. Thirdly, since this project investigates umma and identity in early Islamic Persia, the optimal source material are texts from the early period when this Persian identity was being articulated, and these early articulations of local history and identity are generally pre-Mongol. The fourth reason that directly flows from the third is that in the centuries after Persia had become majority Muslim by around the year 1000, the Persian-Muslim identities had changed, and as a consequence so too had the literature. Pre-Mongol city histories are generally focused on learned men, hadith teachers, and hadith transmission as it related to the city. Ulama are the pre-eminent religious figures. However, over the centuries the ulama were displaced as the pre-eminent religious figures in favor of saints and Sufis, and the literature reflects this shift. While this transition from ulama-and-hadith-centered city histories in the pre-Mongol period to the later literature – in which the ulama were displaced in favor of saints and Sufis, both in the literature and in social history– is interesting, this study focuses on pre-Mongol texts to elucidate the nature of umma and identity in early Islamic Iran. Thus, for reasons of temporal cohesion, available material, and as representative texts that articulate a sense of history and identity in early Islamic Persia, the sources are pre-Mongol local and regional histories.

The intuitive explanation that these distinctive characteristics in the form and content of Persian local histories manifest a late converting area’s anxiety regarding Islamic legitimacy cannot be a sufficient explanation. Conquests of the former Persian Empire occurred at various times, but many conquests occurred early. For example, Arab

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conquest of Fars occurred in the mid-7th century. Armies during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (Umar I, r. 13/634-23/644) and ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān (23-35/644-55) made incursions into Fars, and the conquest was ultimately successful when the army under the command of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir besieged and captured the city of Istakhr in 28/648-9.14

Whether the issue was conquest or conversion is itself a knotty one. The conquests in general occurred early. What conversion actually meant in the earliest centuries following the conquests is most convincingly described as a social movement and a social conversion. As Bulliet describes it, “conversion to Islam in the early Islamic period was more a matter of social behavior than of religious belief,”15 in which an individual left one religious community to join another one that was initially primarily Arab in terms of race and customs. Conversion came first and learning doctrine followed, as “a convert first became a member of the Muslim community and later discovered, or tried to discover, what it meant to be a Muslim.”16

Moreover, the texts such as the Tārīkh-i Qum describe explicitly non-Islamic qualities such as Zoroastrian fire-temples (āteshkade-ha)17 in addition to the explicitly Islamic qualities of the area, such as the relations of various Alid descendents of the Prophet.18 Thus, it is not exclusively a Muslim identity that these sources articulate.


16 Ibid., 131.


18 There are also virtues of indeterminate origin – such as virtues of the fruits, trees, rivers, and natural bounties – that could just as well resonate with Islamic conceptions of geographies of heaven as indigenous Iranian notions of virtuous bounty. Alids are descendants of ʿAlī ʿb. Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet Muhammad’s paternal first cousin and son-in-law.
Rather, the identity is simultaneously local and geographically specific while also being Muslim. Acknowledging the ancient heritage of Zoroastrian fire-temples (āteshkade-ha) in Qum alongside staunchly Islamic qualities of a city, such as Imams and Alid Sayyids affiliated with the city, allows for a continuation of Persian piety from the pre-Islamic to the Islamic period. Other sources incorporate literary devices that signal forms of legitimacy and heirship to the Prophet, such as remembering or recasting Persians’ pre-Islamic past and early ties to Islam and Arabs in ways that embed the Persians deep into prophetic and Qur’anic heritage. Such mechanisms also allow for a Persian pre-Islamic piety to be transferred into the Islamic period. These texts articulate, in their locally differentiated ways, Perso-Islamic identities that were simultaneously deeply local and Muslim.

The aim of this study is to draw attention to a common thread that weaves through these texts: a preoccupation with issues of Prophetic authority, piety and legitimacy. The writing in Persian local histories took the form it did because the concerns – about Persian Muslim identity, local identity, religious legitimacy, and a region’s role and place in the broader and somewhat notional umma – were pressing concerns that shaped the texts.

The issues of legitimacy and authority become particularly pressing because some of the texts under consideration here, such as Ṭārīkh-i Ṭabaristan and Ṭārīkh-i Qum, display a fierce localism. Moreover, the regions displayed resistance to caliphal fiscal and administrative control. In these narratives the implicit relationship between religious autonomy and administrative and fiscal freedom is made explicit: religious authority and pious heritage are coupled with a fierce localism and assertion of fiscal and political
independence. The dual focus on Tabaristan’s fierce independence and its propensity to resist control by caliphal forces stresses the dynamics of Tabaristan in relation to the caliphal center in Baghdad. *Tārīkh-i Tabaristan’s* and *Tārīkh-i Qum’s* treatment of Sahaba, Tabiʿun, and Sayyids evidence the authors negotiating the dynamic in the literary sphere of making what is global – belonging to the Muslim *umma* – local and Persian without erasing or suppressing a fierce localism.

This is not to suggest some sort of conspiratorial agreement between the authors of these texts.19 This is also not to denigrate genuine religious feelings that fostered the climate of piety in the early Islamic world.20 Persians did not have or make a greater or lesser claim on global Islam and legitimacy. Rather, this commonality of focus and form in local histories written in Persia indicates that these issues of a spatio-communal identity were pressing matters in Persia during the 4th/10th to 7th/13th centuries. The site of historical inquiry for this project is the pre-Mongol Persian world of the 4th/10th to 7th/13th centuries, during the years when the Persian population reached a critical level of

19 Although Jacob Lassner has made some fascinating arguments about the propagandist nature of early Abbasid historical writing, that genre is both far removed from the texts I examine here, and the intriguing idea of propagandist writing becomes more troubling when we examine the logistics of such an enterprise. Jacob Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory: An Inquiry Into the Art of ʿAbbāsid Apologetics* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1986).

20 The pietistic virtues that bind Persian cities to critical moments in Islamic history and therefore to prophetic and religious authority incorporate both modes of piety that are tied to Islamic institutions or organizations as well as extra-institutional elements of piety. The former include *awqāf* (charitable foundations), localized hadith collections and local *hadith* transmitters, as well as *ulama* (religious scholars) and pious exemplars, both deceased and living; the latter are constituted by dreams and visions of Muhammad, Khidr, and other prophets, and *ziyārat* (pilgrimage) sites such as graves and tombs of pre-Islamic prophets, religious notables, and holy men, such as ascetics and saints. However, I argue that, in terms of dreams, the fact that they are devices for legitimation is more important that the idea transmitted in the *hadith* that dreams are a continuation of prophecy primarily through seeing the Prophet in dreams. I will demonstrate that in at least some local histories dreams legitimate a local character (such as a pious exemplar in Bukhara) or action (such as the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus), even though the *hadith* tradition lays greater focus on dreams about the Prophet. These local histories show that it is not really the Prophet that legitimates, but that dreams are a device (which may or may not include the Prophet) that signals legitimacy.
conversion to Islam, which occasioned the articulation of a distinctly Persian-Muslim identity within the broader Islamic *umma*. This study aims to show how these texts evidence the dynamic of how these authors were part of a broader cultural and intellectual process of making the global – the entire Muslim *umma*, or community – local and distinctly Persian.

What it meant to have a Persian-Muslim identity obviously differed greatly over time and place. Many different identities – tribal, ethnic, and within the broadly religious, those affiliations by *madhhab*, *tariqa*, and various Shi‘i, proto-Shi‘i, and pro-Alid groups – were aggregated under this broad umbrella of Muslim. Therefore, Persian-Muslim identity differed greatly over time and place. Persian local histories will elucidate some regional iterations of this Perso-Muslim identity. Madelung and more recently Newman argued that the majority of Muslims in Persia during the 10th through 13th centuries were Sunni. Though Twelver Shi‘ism was solidly established in large parts of pre-Mongol Iran, Twelver Shi‘ism was a small minority in an overall Sunni country. Cities like Qum, where Twelver Shi‘ism was the dominant religious force, were in the minority. Madelung points out that even Mashhad, which houses the sacred tomb sanctuary of the 8th Shi‘i Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍa, was a largely Sunni town at the beginning of the Safavid era. It is the goal of this study to bring to light some examples,

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21 Andrew J. Newman, *The Formative Period of Twelver Shi‘ism: Hadith as a Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), chapter 3. Though Sunnis were the majority, Newman argues that “Zaydiyah were the first organized Shi‘i grouping to make themselves felt in Iran (34).” Newman argues that this Zaydi Shi‘i presence in Iran resulted from the migration to Iran of *sayyids* descending from Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib and Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib following failed Zaydi revolts against the Abbasids. According to Madelung, the Hashimiyya was the first Shi‘i group in Iran. The Hashimiyya was a sectarian group that formed after the failure of al-Mukhtar’s Kufan Shi‘i revolt supporting ‘Alī b. ʿAbī Ṭālib’s son Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyya. Wilferd Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, N.Y.: Persian Heritage Foundation, 1988), 77.

based on studies of local histories and their literary self-representations, of iterations of this early Perso-Muslim identity.

Beneath the notional and idealized umma in all its multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-racial manifestations, Persian local histories evidence attempts to simultaneously articulate and formulate a spatio-communal identity unique to specific towns or cities. The focus on faḍāʾil in Persian local histories, and focus on the other connections of the particular city to Muhammad and prophetic authority that the local histories assert, articulate a sense of a localized Perso-Muslim spatio-communal identity.

In the case of تاریخ-تباریستان, this includes a strong emphasis on the region’s local Persian ruling families as well as its Alid heritage. In the case of تاریخ-قم, there is a simultaneous emphasis on the area’s Ashʿari Arab lineage and association with the Shiʿi Imams, and the violent refusal to capitulate to caliphal demands of fiscal and administrative subordination. In folk etymologies, the naming of Qum is deeply enmeshed in a Qur’anic framework and association with Muhammad, Gabriel, Noah, and Iblīs. For Bukhara, on the far fringe of the Islamic empire, we see a move to bypass attempts at genealogical affirmation and instead a claim to non-biological genealogies and investments of power by, for example, seeing a local pious exemplar and Muḥammad together in Bukhara in a dream. These local histories document a balancing act of the local and the universal – of the particularities of the region and the notion of the Muslim umma more broadly – that occurred in the self-representational literature of some cities on the geographical fringes of the empire. This cannot be simply explained by
coincidence. These histories are intentional texts, and their content and form were shaped by the authors’ agendas and guiding meta-narratives and frameworks.

**Persian local and regional histories**

What are the distinctive characteristics of Persian local and regional histories? Persian local histories claim a connection with divine authority – through Prophetic hadith, dream-visions of Muhammad, pre-Islamic prophets, Khidr, encounters with holy men, virtues of the ulama of the region, tombs or relics of religious figures, places of religious significance, and descendants of Companions or Successors (Sahaba and Tabi’un) of the Prophet – in an elaborate and developed format that ties the city or region to Prophetic authority.

Some of the notable characteristics of Persian faḍā’il and tārīkh texts is that they may include some or all of the following: an introduction in which the author states his reason for writing the text and a discussion of the didactic role of writing history and studying history, in which the author clearly sees himself participating; the etymology of the name of the city; Sahaba or notables who visited the city and the hadith they taught there; the natural virtues of the city and its environs, such as the climate, terrain, fruits, and marvels, as well as other holy or marvelous places, such as shrines and curiosities; and encounters the Prophet had with the city, such as through a dream of one of the city’s denizens. The dominant unit of measure in Persian texts is the city, and the authors articulate and construct a role for cities to play in the grander scheme of Islamic history. These elements of Persian local histories are integral to binding the regions to prophetic and religious authority. This dissertation will identify and examine the elements that the
authors of Persian histories employed to underscore the cities’ important binding ties to

authors of Persian histories employed to underscore the cities’ important binding ties to

crucial moments and characters in Islamic history and, therefore, to history more
generally.

An examination of the narratives, form, and rhetorical devices employed in the

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Persian local histories suggest that there were multiple modes that the authors of local

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histories employed to bind the city to prophetic authority and legitimacy. These modes

histories employed to bind the city to prophetic authority and legitimacy. These modes

of legitimation include the following: supra-biological or non-biological legitimation;

of legitimation include the following: supra-biological or non-biological legitimation;

biological legitimation through a common prophetic ancestor, however vague, tenuous,

biological legitimation through a common prophetic ancestor, however vague, tenuous,
or semi-mythical and problematic; Sahaba and Tabi’un; Family of the Prophet; ziyarät
or semi-mythical and problematic; Sahaba and Tabi’un; Family of the Prophet; ziyarät
and other sources of baraka; and hadith collections associated with the city.

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In brief, supra-biological or non-biological legitimation includes seeing the

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Prophet or pious characters in dreams, as well as ties to Khiḍr or mythical characters.

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This also includes sacred etymologies, such as those in the Tarikh-i Qum constructed

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around Muhammad, Iblis, and Gabriel. These supra-biological claims of descent or

around Muhammad, Iblis, and Gabriel. These supra-biological claims of descent or

association transcend human genealogy. Biological legitimation is typified by claims to a

association transcend human genealogy. Biological legitimation is typified by claims to a

common prophetic ancestor – such as Abraham’s son Isaac – however vague, tenuous, or

common prophetic ancestor – such as Abraham’s son Isaac – however vague, tenuous, or

semi-mythical and problematic (as is particularly evident when authors attempt to square

semi-mythical and problematic (as is particularly evident when authors attempt to square

this genealogy with the pre-Islamic Persian legends of their ancestors).23 There is a

this genealogy with the pre-Islamic Persian legends of their ancestors).23 There is a

strong emphasis on Sahaba and Tabi’un in Persian local histories as living virtues of the

strong emphasis on Sahaba and Tabi’un in Persian local histories as living virtues of the

city and custodians of the faith. There is also significant emphasis on the family of the

city and custodians of the faith. There is also significant emphasis on the family of the

Prophet, including both Shi’i Imams and other notable descendants, such as Faṭima of

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23 See genealogical claims of “Isaac as the Persians Ishmael” examined by Sarah Bowen Savant. Sarah

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Bowen Savant, “Isaac as the Persians’ Ishmael: Pride and the Pre-Islamic Past in Medieval Islam,”

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Qum – and ziyārat to their tombs – as well as the broader categories of sayyids and sharifs. Finally, local histories bind their cities to prophetic authority in the form of ziyārat sites, and other sources of baraka. This is pious veneration of individuals other than the Prophet’s descendants, and whose tomb, home, or former prayer cells are sources of baraka and where prayers are answered. These types of visitation and veneration all tie the Prophetic legacy to a specific place.

It is also through hadith that local histories also assert a connection with the Prophet. For the purposes of this study, the hadith cited in local histories do two important things. Firstly, these hadith attest to a robust localism and vibrancy of local hadith collections, because many of these traditions do not even include a full isnad, and are not included in what would become the canonical Sunni Šaḥīḥayn or the hadith collections that, in addition to the Šaḥīḥayn, are the alternatively 4, 5, or 6 books of canonical hadith; sometimes the author does not give the whole isnad for the tradition.

These other canonical collections are the Sunans of Abū Dawūd al-Sijistani (d. 275/889), al-Nasai (d.303/915), the Jāmiʿ of al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), and then either one of the

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24 The definition of who precisely, was part of the Ahl al-Bayt changed over time. Daftary argues that in the “formative period, though the imams who succeeded al-Husayn continued to come chiefly from amongst the ‘Alids, the Prophet’s family was still defined more broadly in its old tribal sense. It covered the various branches of the Banū Hāshim, the leading Quraysh clan, regardless of direct descent from the Prophet Muhammad himself. The Ahl al-Bayt, then, included the progeny of Muhammad through Fāṭima and ‘Alī as well as those of his two paternal uncles; not only the Tālibids, the descendants of Abu Ṭalib (d. ca. 619) through his sons ‘Alī and Jaʿfar (d. 8/629), but even the ‘Abbasids, the descendants of al-ʿAbbās (d. ca. 32/653) who had embraced Islam only in 8/630).” The narrowing of Ahl al-Bayt into a more restricted group came during the Abbasid era. “It was later, after the accession of the ‘Abbasids, that the Shiʿīs came to define the Ahl al-Bayt more restrictively to include only the descendants of the Prophet through Fāṭima, known as the Fātimids (covering both the Hasanids and Husaynids); while the bulk of non-Zaydi Shiʿīs had come to acknowledge chiefly the Husaynī Fātimids. The latter definition was the one adopted by the Twelver and Ismaʿillī Shiʿīs.” Farhad Daftary, Ismaʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 57-58.

25 The Šaḥīḥayn of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as well as the collections of al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dawūd al-Sijistani, al-Nasai, and Ibn Ibn Mājāh are all are arranged by subject. Frederick Mathewson Denny, An Introduction to Islam (New Jersey: Pearson, 2006), 166.
following 3: the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah (d. 273/887), the *Sunan* of al-Daraquṭnī (d. 385/995), or the *Muwatta* of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/796).²⁶

These local histories were written at the time of the rise of local dynasties in Khurasan. These dynasties included the Sunni Tahirids (fl. 3rd/9th century), Saffarids (fl. 3rd/9th century), Shiʿi Buyids (334–447/945–1055), Samanids (204–395/819-1005), and Ghaznavids (367–583/977-8–1187) during an era of significant assertion of local autonomy. During this era, “local chronography, biography, and prosopography would serve to anchor dynasties and institutions within the cultural and legal commonwealth of late Abbasid rule.”²⁷ As part and parcel of these localized identities and political and intellectual assertions of local autonomy, perhaps what was locally considered *sahih* was because it was taught by the local shaykh in the city, and therefore local collections were determined by what was taught by these local teachers.

These *hadith* are adduced in local and regional histories for their functions as pious connectors to the Prophet’s life and legacy. These *hadith* serve pietistic and legitimating functions, but they do not connect these cities to legal developments. Rather, they underscore the pious endeavors and learning undertaken in the city and, thereby, assert legitimacy based on piety and religious learning. A further direction for

²⁶ Jonathan Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Hadith Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 9. However, the *Ṣaḥiḥayn* eventually gained paramount importance as the canonical *hadith* texts. Contemporary with these developments in hadith, during the 2th/8th century, legal theories were developed, but their standards were not yet as rigorous as they would become in later centuries; it is from the 5th/11th century that there is a good deal of legal evidence, when many legal issues had to be solved and when and when many legal works were written. Wael B Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī usūl al-fiqh* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 130, 36.

the study of local hadith collections is to examine their matn to determine whether and how hadith transmitted in various cities reflected local interests.\(^\text{28}\)

The traditions included in these local histories do not always include their full isnads, and canonical acceptance is clearly not the point of their inclusion. The origin of the isnad may also reflect the local religious climate. In Tārīkh-i Qum – a region with strong ties to Kufa and portrayed as an Alid haven – a tradition about the Faṭīma, the daughter of the 7\(^{th}\) Shi‘i Imam, Mūsa b. Ja‘far, known as Mūsa al-Kādhim and the sister of the 8\(^{th}\) Shi‘i Imam, ‘Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā, is reportedly told by the 6\(^{th}\) Twelver Shi‘i Imam, Ja‘far al-SAdiq (b. 80/699-700 or 83/702-3 in Medina, and died in 148/765). The isnad jumps directly to Ja‘far al-SAdiq, and the point of this narrative is to highlight the religious significance of Qum for the Shi‘a and more broadly Alid communities.

By examining the various types of city histories and the hadith contained within them, we are able to see the vibrant and regionally differentiated understandings and expressions of early Islamic piety in the Muslim world. Presentations of Companions, Successors, and hadith and other connections to the Prophet in urban histories were avenues through which Muslims in early Islamic Iranian society between the 10\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\) centuries expressed identity, legitimacy, and piety. In these exercises in literary self-fashioning, the identification of Companions, Successors and various notables in Persicate city histories are examples of authors weaving together myth and history in the service of pietistic belief expressed in a tradition of the Prophet: “None among my

Companions dies in a land except that he will be resurrected as a leader and a light for those people on the Day of Resurrection."

This is not to say that this tendency to draw some kind of connection with Muhammad or religious authority is exclusive to Persian local histories. Indeed, multiple genres of texts draw some kind of connection, to a greater or lesser extent, with the prophet of Islam and Muslim tradition. For example, Ṭabarī’s chronicles begin with the dawn of time and voluminously trace the course of Islamic history, biographical dictionaries catalogue learned men who transmitted hadith, and local fāḍa’il collections from Sham cite Prophetic hadith praising the region. Rather, the form and content of Persian local histories, and the ways in which their authors bind the cities to key moments and characters in Islamic and cosmic history and to prophetic authority, allow us to indentify this as a distinctive characteristic of Persian city and local histories. Persians did not have or make a greater or lesser claim on global Islam and legitimacy. However, these texts do evidence the dynamic of the forms and methods by which these authors were part of a broader cultural and intellectual process of making the global – the entire Muslim umma – local and distinctly Persian.

The subject of local histories relates to the broader issue of umma and identity in early Islamic Iran because it engages the question of why the authors of local histories wrote in a style that differentiates them from their contemporaries active elsewhere. These early Persian local histories articulate a spatio-communal identity – incorporating physical virtues of the city, living ulama, hadith connected to the city, and notable individuals tied to the city in various ways – that rests on the twin pillars of piety and

\[29\] al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb 45 al-manāqib, Bāb 60, hadith 4239, p. 977.
authority. Muslims in the Persian cities during early centuries after the Islamic conquests saw themselves as part of the broader umma of the Islamic community, yet there is a Persian identity these texts evidence alongside the broader Muslim identity. The Persian component of identity that these local histories make a concerted effort to assert is not a Sasanian identity. It is a localized identity that, in some cases, addresses the pre-Islamic past, but also takes into account local language, dialects, and the sanctification of the particular city by inserting it into the broader Islamic narrative. In addition to belonging to the umma more broadly, the spatio-communal Perso-Muslim identity is one based on piety and authority that pervades the very Persian soil on which these Muslims live.

Central to this dissertation is an examination of Persian Muslim identity in the early Islamic period. Lapidus writes on Iranian Muslim and specifically Khurasanian identity during early centuries of Islam during the Umayyad and Abbasid period up to the 10th century and argues that the doctrine and symbolic importance of unity – despite the fact that it did not reflect the reality of increasing factionalization and the development of sectarian divisions – was critical for the Khurasanian identity.

In Lapidus’s words, “The doctrine of a single brotherhood, a single community, a single Caliphate descended from the Prophet served, whatever the realities, to suppress the awareness that Muslim consciousness was polarized between the need for complete unity and fear of a total collapse of society into hostile and warring factions.” Therefore, despite the reality of racial, political, administrative, and linguistic differences between the native population

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31 Ibid., 367.
of Khurasan and the conquering Arab invaders, an idealized identity of a united Muslim umma persisted and held powerful symbolic and conceptual power.

Another related mechanism with which we can understand a broader conception of identity in early Islamic Persia is through the literary self-portraits of local histories that reflect this impetus to preserve this nominal idealized identity of a united Muslim umma. By focusing to a large extent on the Sahaba and Tabiʿun, pious notables, saints and pious exemplars and their tombs, and sacred etymologies and dreams, local Persian histories articulate a local identity that is closely tied with the Companions who were embodiments of authority and reflected the early Islamic community united around Muhammad. It is through this focus on the cities’ and regions’ relationships with various Sahaba, Tabiʿun, pious notables, saints and pious exemplars – including the traditions they transmitted – their tombs, and sacred etymologies and dreams, that the authors of local histories tied the transmission of Prophetic authority to their own cities and regions.

Local histories are one lens through which to examine center-periphery relations in early Islamic Persia. Here Finbarr Barry Flood’s theoretical framework from his study of premodern cultural geography during the 8th to 13th centuries is applicable. Flood focuses on the material culture – “coins, frescoes, modes of dress, texts, manuscripts, monumental architecture, and the more abstract but no less revealing realm of onomastics, royal titulature, and ritual practice” – and the modes of Hindu-Muslim engagement during the conquest of Sind by Arab armies, during the Ghurid and Delhi sultanates.32 Flood reconceptualizes the “mechanisms of circulation (among them looting, gifting, and trade) through which specific classes of artifacts constructed and

mediated cultural boundaries, and the ways in which meaning and value were translated
and transfigured through mobility of both people and things.”

By focusing on the transportation and translation of objects – and their shifting meaning and values through
their reception – Flood documents the various ways in which geographical and political
peripheries interacted and negotiated power with the center.

The phenomenon of the decentralization of Abbasid power along the eastern
frontier of the empire entailed new modes of negotiating the shifting dynamics of power
beyond explicitly political or financial ones. Flood notes that gifts of Indian booty –
documented as early as the late 7th century but intensifying immensely under the Saffarids
and Arab amirs of Sind, who sent gifts of various Indian exotica to the Abbasids in
Baghdad – included looted Buddhist and Hindu icons. This was a gesture of “Making
immanent at the center distant (and sometimes notional) victories at the periphery.”

The ties between the center and the peripheries were dynamic and multidirectional, and
the transportation and translation of material culture documents this plasticity. The
genealogies, lore, hadith, and etymologies in Persian local histories that attempt to make
local the notional idea of the global Muslim umma, should likewise be understood as part
of these broader patterns of exchange of power and of objects between the center and the
periphery.

Of the various genres of historical, commemorative, or educative writing about a
place, the present focus is only on city or regional histories. Pilgrimage guides are not a

33 Ibid., 12.

34 Ibid., 20. “Making immanent at the center distant (and sometimes notional) victories at the periphery,
these gifts of exotic animals, precious raw materials, rare commodities, and looted curiosities linked the
ideal political center of the medieval Sunni world, Baghdad, with regional centers of authority in the east
(Sistan, Sind, Kabul, Ghazni) and the inchoate world of the dār al-harb that lay beyond.”
primary interest of this dissertation but will be a fruitful source for related future research, particularly on dreams. While such guidebooks highlight a city and region’s Islamic credentials and may include hadith, the ziyārat genre is not addressed in this study, primarily because it differs in focus and attitude from local city histories. Aside from falling beyond the thematic scope of this study, many ziyārat guides fall beyond the temporal scope as well.

The explicit focus of pilgrimage guides is to educate and lead pilgrims as they perform pilgrimages to various sites. Ziyārat guides developed to cater to the visitors who flocked to shrines and burial places of Companions, notables, saints and martyrs. Whereas Sunni guides focus more on the adab or etiquette, the institutionalization of Shi‘i pilgrimage by the 10th century meant that Shi‘i guidebooks would also detail the sacred rites (manāsik) of the ziyāra.35 Just as the development of this genre occurred at difference locations throughout the Islamic world, so too were there differing foci by place. Guides for some areas such as Sham did not proliferate until after the 10th/16th century, while in other areas, such as Egypt, kutub al-ziyārāt existed in Fatimid and Mamluk eras.36 Though the profusion of guides occurred later in Sham than elsewhere, the region is notable for the great volume of pilgrimage guide literature, which includes places associated with pre-Islamic figures common to the Abrahamic tradition.

The large annalistic works in multiple volumes are not addressed in this dissertation because the scope and aim of those works also differ from those of local


histories. The aim of such texts was to create an encyclopedic reservoir of the useful information about the place, including information about notables who lived or visited here. Such works include Ibn ‘Asákir’s (d. 571/1175) 70 volume Tārikh madīnat Dimashq and the 14-volume compendium that is the Tārikh Baghdād by Al-Khatīb al-Baghdadī (392–463/1002–1071). These works are often arranged in annalistic form, and are consequently closer in form and content to chronicles or universal histories in that they closely track caliphal history and the affairs of state.

In terms of theory of religion, this dissertation will not engage in a lengthy discussion of what constitutes religion or how to approach the study of religion and comparative religion more broadly.37 The aim of this study is to use historical writing as artifact to explore what constituted early Perso-Muslim identity in specific places during a critical period of the 10th through 13th centuries in terms of the formation and articulation of a Persian Muslim identity.

This study will briefly address, but not focus on, local histories that are closer to the ṭabaqāt format and include essentially only biographical notices. The reason for this is two-fold. Firstly, there has already been significant scholarship in this genre by Tarif Khalidi, Richard Bulliet, and Ann Lambton, amongst others. Secondly, because one of the aims of this dissertation is to discern literary patterns and modes of legitimation included in local histories, texts that consist almost exclusively of biographical notices are not best suited for this study. Thus, while a text such as the Tārikh Irbīl by Sharaf al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt Ibn al-Mustawfi (565-636/1170-1239) informs my work, it will not be the focus. Instead, a text such as Faḍa‘il-i Balkh, though it falls slightly out of my

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37 On such topics, see scholarship by Talal Asad, Jonathan Z. Smith, Clifford Geertz, amongst others.
temporal range, is better suited to this study because it is a text primarily in a biographical dictionary format that also contains a significant amount of other content – such as information about the physical *fada‘il*, or virtues, of the region – and not exclusively biographical notices.\(^{38}\)

The histories of Mazandaran (Tabaristan) are histories of a region and are primarily occupied with dynastic history. Though the boundaries of historical Mazandaran differ from those of present-day Mazandaran, medieval Mazandaran would have included Tabaristan, Ruyan, and Astarabad (formerly known as Gurgan), and was bounded on the north by the Caspian Sea.\(^{39}\) Melville has discussed how, though local historical production existed in the Caspian region, it is qualitatively different from the material that concerns this dissertation.\(^{40}\) Therefore, sources from Mazandaran are limited to Ibn Isfandiyār’s *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*.\(^{41}\)

Piety and authority – and how they are portrayed in local Persian histories – are twin central themes that run through this dissertation. The first point of departure for any discussion of piety is the idea that piety was one of the most – if not the most – precious

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\(^{38}\) *Fada‘il-i Balkh* was originally written in Arabic, and translated in Persian in the late 13th century; the Arabic original is lost.

\(^{39}\) V. Minorsky; R. Vasmer, “Māzandarān,” *EI2*.

\(^{40}\) Charles Melville, “The Caspian Provinces: A World Apart - Three Local Histories of Mazandaran,” *Iranian Studies* 33, no. 1/2 (Winter - Spring 2000): 88. On Caspian historiography and histories Melville writes: “the emphasis on dynastic history, which becomes even more exclusive with later authors such as Shams al-Din Lahiji, exemplifies the long-term political independence of the Caspian region, and the multiplicity of its rulers. Furthermore, all these works are histories of a province; there are no town chronicles. This explains the absence of real interest in urban topography and pious endowments such as are found in other works of "local" history, associated with centres such as Yazd, Isfahan, or Qum.”

commodities in early Islamic Persia. Piety – either having it or lacking it – was and is ammunition for polemic. This study aims to provide a brief overview of the politics involved in piety: its motivations, depictions, consequences, and implications.

If piety is an entity, then it is something that can, to some extent, be transferred between people and between objects and people. Piety can be generated in an experience, such as a dream encounter with the Prophet or presence in a sanctified place, such as tomb of a saint. Sacred sites, such as tombs and graves – including those of pre-Islamic prophets – as well as sacred etymologies are elements that appear in local histories as places sanctified by piety. The “rediscovery” or “discovery” of tombs of saints, such as that of the tomb of the Prophet Daniel in Samarqand, Prophet Ayyūb in Bukhara and Imam ‘Alī’s tomb near Balkh (Mazarisharif) in the 12th and again in the 15th century are examples of this phenomenon of the sacralization of place. An important aspect of binding place to piety is the power of piety and its transference as baraka.

It is central to the idea of Islamic piety addressed in this dissertation that believers wanted to be associated with a pious person, relic, place, or thing. Ways in which believers achieved this – and indeed continue to do this through the Muslim world and in other traditions – include visits to the shrine complex or site where holy or sacred things are or at some point were. Places where a pious or martyred person once was – such as Husayn, the son of ‘Alī and the grandson of the Prophet, whose head was for a time taken to the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus en route to the Umayyad court – retain the piety and power associated with the pious individual.

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As a consequence of the power of piety exercised in the medieval world, great volumes of visitors flocked to shrines and burial places of Companions, notables, saints or martyrs. For the family of the Prophet, some of the most important sites of pilgrimage include `Alī b. Abī Ṭalib’s tomb in Najaf, his son al-Ḥusayn’s tomb in Karbala, and the 8th Shi’a Imam `Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā in Tus (now Mashhad). `Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā’s sister Fāṭima is buried in Qum. The shrines in Damascus of Sayyida Zaynab (daughter of `Alī b. Abī Ṭalib and granddaughter of the Prophet Muḥammad) and Sayyida Ruqayya bint al-Ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abī Ṭalib (daughter of Imam Ḥusayn b. `Alī b. Abī Ṭalib and the great-granddaughter of Muḥammad) are popular pilgrimage sites of Shi’i pilgrims today. As pilgrimage sites proliferated in the Arab and Persian realms of the Islamic world, so too did the attendant phenomenon of ziyārat literature which catered to the pious visitors. Control and promotion of human traffic to pilgrimage sites was a political as well as religious concern, a topic addressed in the context of Tārīkh-i Qum.

The dreamscape of the city’s denizens was a vibrant dimension of the medieval city, full of sacred encounters and information about ziyārat sites. Dreams functioned as a liminal sacred space, and dreams signaled the existence of sacred ground where a shrine should be discovered, rediscovered, or erected. Dreams formed a liminal space where information about the sacred was transmitted. Furthermore, dreams are themselves a medium of prophecy. There exist various hadith in which the Prophet declared that dreams are 1/46 part of prophecy, and alternate variations of this tradition place dreams
as 1/90, 1/70, 1/50, 1/44, 1/60, 1/49, 1/44, 1/45, 1/24, 1/25, 1/76, 1/40, 1/46, 1/76, 1/26 parts of prophecy.  

The pietistic virtues that bind Persian cities to critical moments in Islamic history and to prophetic and religious authority incorporate modes of piety that are tied to Islamic institutions as well as extra-institutional elements of piety. The former include *awqāf*, localized *hadith* collections and local *hadith* transmitters, as well as *ulama* and pious exemplars, both deceased and living. The latter are constituted by dreams and visions of Muḥammad, Khīḍr, and other prophets, and *ziyārat* sites such as graves and tombs of pre-Islamic prophets, religious notables, and holy men, such as ascetics and saints. Dreams and visions grant privileged access to *baraka* and sacred space. When the Prophet appears in dreams he is a signifier of legitimacy. This is particularly evident in dreams in which Muhammad plays only a minor role and it is instead a local pious exemplar who is the focus of the narrative and the dream. Like the Prophet who signifies legitimacy in dreams, Khīḍr also functions as a legitimating device in dream narratives. Additionally, in his capacity as legitimator, Khīḍr is also an initiator onto the Sufi path through his appearance in dreams and visions. Through his appearance Khīḍr provides a mode of privileged access that bypasses the constraints of genealogy, time, and space, and signals legitimacy.

Places are not inherently sacred but are made so, and a place’s commemoration in the literature is part of that process of sanctification and association with prophets, *baraka*, piety, legitimacy, and authority. The example of the tomb in Qum of Fāṭima bint Mūsa al-Kādhim (*Fāṭimah al-Maʾsūmah*, “Fāṭimah the Innocent”) illustrates how various

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political, literary, factional, and circumstantial factors contribute to a location becoming noted for its religious significance. Despite the fact that she died in the early 9th century, the shrine sanctuary of Faṭima in Qum was a negligible site until the Safavid period and really until the era of Shah ʿ Abbās in the 17th century.⁴⁴ There is a multi-dimensional process whereby a place, such as the tomb of Faṭima bint Mūsa al-Kāḏhim in Qum – once neglected and now tremendously important – became sanctified as a locus of sacred value and baraka. It is one of the goals of this dissertation to determine how the literary portrayals of locations in city and regional histories participated in and advocated this process of sanctification and construction of piety and authority. Local and regional histories served not only descriptive, political, and factional purposes but also commemorative purposes. Literary commemoration had the power to assert, affirm, or elide the participation of particular places in the broader narrative of Islamic history and religious authority.

Methodology and Organization

This dissertation uses several texts as case studies. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, a quantitative method is inappropriate for this project. While Bulliet brilliantly applied quantitative methods to social history in his work with biographical dictionaries and conversion, this project does not focus on biographical dictionaries but rather on the broader narrative content of local histories. While these genres are blurred – local histories contain biographical entries – and information about local patricians and

Muslims of note are an integral part of the local and regional histories, I have specifically chosen local histories that are not exclusively or primarily biographical dictionaries. The patricians, Sufis, and religious exemplars form only one part of the *faḍa'il* of a city, so this project is ill-suited to applying the rigors of quantitative methodologies to the onomastic data that biographical entries can yield.

My method is to use a few texts that are representative and use them as case studies. This method – while admittedly more impressionistic and selective – is better suited to the parameters for this study, whose aim is to discern distinctive patterns in the literature and test hypotheses that explain these patterns. The purpose here is examine the literary processes by which a city was imbued with religious significance and prophetic authority. This study does not intend to define the “average” local or regional history. Rather, the aim is to discern the various patterns in the literature that the authors employ to bring the sanction and prestige of religious authority and importance to their respective cities.

Though placed at a great distance in both place and time, the most informative of Hayden White’s conclusions for this project is his claim that the modes of historiography and philosophy of history – for the two are for White the same – are “in reality *formalizations* of poetic insights that analytically precede them and that sanction the particular theories used to give historical accounts the aspect of an ‘explanation’.”

The composers and compilers of the local histories have understandings of historical writing that underpin their enterprise. This project is not an exercise in uncovering events as they

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occurred. Rather, this project is to unravel the conceptions of simultaneously Persian, local, and Muslim identity as they are expressed in these texts.\(^\text{46}\)

Functionally, this study adopts a skeptical methodology. The purpose of city histories is not to extract data from them, *per se*. The interest of this study is how the authors of these texts created or fostered a sense of local identity or self-understanding and the means by which they chose to articulate this identity. Thus, whether the etymology of the city of Bukhara actually stems from the Prophet’s description of that city as a splendid city and one of the finest in Khurasan is for me largely irrelevant. What is important is that the author chose to include this explanation – and to supply a prophetic *hadith* to bolster this claim– as a noteworthy aspect central to the formation of the city’s history and identity.

The functionally skeptical methodology applies to both *hadith* study and historical writing. Many scholars of *hadith* have been concerned with establishing or disputing the authenticity of traditions attributed to the Prophet or in determining the veracity of *isnads* and examining the *isnad* as a legitimating tool. I am interested in neither. As Wael

\(^{46}\) Writing in *The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Hayden White argued that historical writing and philosophy of history are the same in content; the difference between the two is not in their content but in their emphases. White claims that Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, and Irony are the “four principal modes of historical consciousness” in 19\(^\text{th}\) century historical writing in Europe, and these modes are prefigured in and identified through the tropological strategies and language the historian employs. In addition to these four broader tropological strategies there are also three kinds of strategies of explanation and, within those explanatory strategies, four modes of articulation. The explanatory strategies are explanation by formal argument, explanation by emplotment, and explanation by ideological implication. Each of these strategies have four possible modes of articulation. Therefore, for explanation by formal argument, the possible modes of articulation are Formism, Organicism, Mechanism, and Contextualism. For explanatory effect: explanation by emplotment, the possible modes of articulation are the Archetypes of Romance, Comedy, Tragedy and Satire. For explanation by ideological implication, there are the tactics of Anarchism, Conservatism, Radicalism, and Liberalism as the four possible modes of articulation. White adopts a formalist methodology and places himself in the historiographical tradition as writing in the Ironic mode. In White’s words, “Each of these modes of consciousness provides the basis for a distinctive linguistic protocol by which to prefigure the historical field and on the basis of which specific strategies of historical interpretation can be employed for ‘explaining’ it (xi).” Thus, through these modes of historical consciousness, the “historian performs an essentially poetic act, in which he prefigures the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring to bear the specific theories he will use to explain ‘what was really happening’ in it (s).” *Ibid.*, xi, x-xii, 3-4.
Hallaq aptly stated: “...I argue that the scholarly output concerned with authenticity since Weil raised the issue a century and a half ago is largely, if not totally, pointless.”

*Hadith* mentioned in pre-Mongol Persian city and regional histories, as well as the relevant Sahaba and Tabi‘un mentioned in their *isnads*, are a type of social history.

*Hadith* transmitters and collections mentioned in pre-Mongol Persian city histories help elucidate the state of non-canonical *hadith*, its importance, and the extent and nature of local religious identity, authority, belief, and practice during the early Muslim era in Iran.

This phenomenon of the discrepancy between canonical traditions and their practical application becomes apparent in cases of dreams and traditions about dreams. Despite the *hadith* about Prophetic dreams as being parts of prophecy and Satan not being able to take the Prophet’s form, we will see that in practice, in at least a few examples in local histories, the Prophet takes on a much smaller role as a signifier. Other local characters come to the fore. Despite the dream theory and *hadith* that put great emphasis on the Prophet, in its local iteration, dreams take on a strong local tenor and may focus more on a local character and the region rather than on Muḥammad. The Prophet can instead become a minor character, and his role is not as a conveyor of prophecy through the dream, but rather as a figure who signals unimpeachable legitimacy.

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47 Wael B. Hallaq, “The Authenticity of Prophetic Hadith: A Pseudo-Problem” *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 77. Hallaq’s argument is that all this discussion about authenticity of *hadith* – an issue to which scholars such as Goldziher and Schacht devoted extraordinary energy – rests on the assumption that early and medieval Muslim scholars were convinced that the corpus of Prophetic *hadith* is largely genuine. Rather, Hallaq argues that since the medieval Muslim scholars did not necessarily believe in the genuineness of Prophetic *hadith* – and Hallaq argues that previous scholars have not examined this – then the question of authenticity is a non-issue. If the medieval Muslim scholars were not convinced of the authenticity of Prophetic *hadith*, modern scholarly attempts to determine their authenticity is irrelevant. “If both the traditionists and the jurists - the two most important groups in the study of *ḥadīths* - have acknowledged the precarious epistemological status of the literature, then we need not squander our energies in arguing about the matter of authenticity. We have been told that except for a score of *ḥadīths*, the rest engenders probability, and probability, as we know - and as we have also been unambiguously told by our sources - allows for mendacity and error. What more do we want? (90).”
The direction this study pursues has been established by scholars who have focused heavily on history and historiography such as Humphreys, Donner, Bulliet, el-Hibri and Cooperson; scholars who have focused on Islamic movements and hadith study, such as Melchert; scholars of religion, such as Awn and Mourad, who have traced the portrayal in medieval literature and in multiple strands of Islamic mysticism the characters of Iblīs and al-Hasan al-Basrī, respectively, and examined the implications of reception to these literary portraits. Various scholars of Islamic history, such as...


50 See citations on page 5, note 3, as well as Richard W. Bulliet, “City Histories in Medieval Iran,” Iranian Studies 1, no. 3 (Summer 1968): 104-109; Richard W. Bulliet, Islam: The View from the Edge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).


52 While Cooperson is skeptical about the veracity of hadith and does not take historical reports at face value, he does believe we can extract some truth from the narratives. Unlike Crone and Hinds, for example, Cooperson does not claim that retrospective literary recasting of an event makes history unrecoverable or that texts that rehabilitate the image of a person necessarily fail to contain truth. Rather, Cooperson suggests that wholesale manufacturing of questions would have been too transparent and was unlikely. Therefore, even rehabilitated sources can contain – in addition to the concerns, motivations, and mindsets of the authors of the time – some scaffolding upon which to build a reconstruction of what factually might have occurred.


54 Peter Awn, Satan’s Tragedy and Redemption: Iblīs in Sufi psychology (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983).

Bosworth and Hodgson, have valiantly mined the sources for facts and figures about the conquests, much in the way that scholars of hadith, such as Juynboll, Schacht, and Cook, have sifted painstakingly through isnads in their brave attempts to establish the veracity of hadiths and isnads. Scholars with a skeptical methodology who have worked on political theory and the earliest years of the nascent umma, such as Crone and Hinds, have developed a revisionist view that counters the traditional narratives of Islamic history. This dissertation does not intend to establish “what really happened” or provide a historical narrative. Rather, it will determine and elucidate patterns in local histories over time and place, and to ground this study in a historical framework while incorporating functionally skeptical methodologies from Islamic studies. If accurate reconstruction of the earliest years of Islamic history – with its scant documentation – is even possible, then it is not the focus of this project.

One idea tested in this dissertation is whether the persistence of tribal affiliation in Arab areas – and the comparative lack of it in Iranian cities – created a disproportionate emphasis on the city as the unit of measure in Iranian local histories. It is evident that the resilience of tribal affiliations persisted in Arab cities, such as Kufa, and that these tribal affiliations reinforced kinship and tribal identities and were administrative tools for social organization as well as the physical organization of a city. The ways in which Qum was largely settled by Ash’ari Arabs impacted later tribal and Muslim identities in Qum. This

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56 Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), see esp. 1, 3, 19-20. Crone and Hinds’ *God’s Caliph* is about Umayyad political theory, and they claim that the title “khalīfah allāh” was used to mean “God’s caliph” as opposed to the “deputy or viceroy of the prophet of God” (khalīfat rasūl allāh) and that there was a cesarо-papist tendency in Umayyad Islam wherein the caliph was both a political and a religious authority. The traditional view is that the ulama understood that the term was initially “khalīfah rasūl allāh,” but that this meaning of khalīfah changed sometime during the 12 years from 632-644 during Umayyad rule from “khalīfah rasūl allāh,” to “khalīfah allāh”; Crone argues the opposite.

project examines the extent to which this phenomenon of sustained tribal affiliation
existed in Persian cities and, if so, what its impact was on the Persian Islamic identity and
the city. Another critical question about social order and organization is how inter-tribal
conflict and the organization of the people – both administrative and physical – in Arab
and Persian cities affected communal relations and strife in the cities.

One research goal of this dissertation in terms of hadith is to determine what
kinds of traditions are included in the local and regional histories about the city, its
Sahaba, its virtues, its etymologies, and its relationship to Muḥammad and other prophets
and pivotal figures in the Islamic and pre-Islamic tradition. This dissertation hopes to lay
some groundwork for future research about whether hadith mentioned in local city
histories evidence regionally differentiated thematic concerns. Identifying possible
thematic consistency amongst local hadith transmitters is important, because the
collection of hadith was simultaneously a centripetal and centrifugal process. On one
hand, hadith collections such as the Ṣaḥīḥayn and what became the six canonical books
were mechanisms for standardization of hadith. On the other hand, widespread
acceptance of the Ṣaḥīḥayn meant the delegitimization of local collections. There exists a
tension between the centralizing impulse of creating canonical hadith collections and the
decentralizing drive of promoting local hadith collections. A canon is intrinsically anti-
local in its winnowing down of diverse materials into a universally acceptable standard.

What is the impact of fiqh on this process? Given the centrality of hadith in fiqh,
if we agree with Schacht’s argument that Islamic jurisprudence, “Taken as a whole...
reflects and fits the social and economic conditions of the early ‘Abbāsid period” and that
“Islamic jurisprudence did not grow out of an existing law, it itself created it,”\textsuperscript{58} it is worth examining in a future project how the vitality of local hadith collections may have impacted local developments in understandings of Islamic jurisprudence.

One possible way of tracing thematic concerns of localized hadith is to see whether hadith transmitters in towns branching off a main city at some point trace their isnads back to the main or garrison city. If the hadith these traditionists transmitted evidence a thematic focus, then these thematic concerns elucidate how the early Muslims in that region understood and practiced their faith. For example, if the hadith transmitted in and around Basra share a thematic pattern, then this allows us to understand how the early Muslims in and around Basra region understood and practiced Islam. Since Basra is a garrison city, it functioned as the cultural and military hub of the nascent Muslim community in that area. However, it would not be possible to conduct such research for regions that were conquered \textit{en passant} over very long periods of time, or an area such as Gurgan, which is far from any garrison.

Alternatively, where there is no discernible pattern of differentiated thematic concerns with hadith mentioned in local city histories, this suggests that the most important aspects of hadith mentioned in local city histories were not their content but who transmitted them and that they were associated with the city. Furthermore, if hadith mentioned in the city histories are either \textit{da'i} or exist only in local collections and not in canonical books, then this further reinforces the idea that, for these local authors and cities, what made a hadith noteworthy was not that it was universally validated but that

\textsuperscript{58} J. Schacht, “Fiqh,” \textit{EI2}. 
who said it was deemed worthy on a local level. In short, what made a *hadith* “*sahih*” for a local traditionist was who said it, not its actual *isnad* or *matn*.

This study offers new frameworks for considering historical and commemorative writing. There have been studies by Pourshariati and Meisami that consider Persian historical – or “Persicate” – writing. There have also been formative studies in early Islamic Arabic historical writing by Noth, Donner, Humphreys, Lassner, Wansbrough, Crone, Cook, Bulliet, el-Hibri, Leder, and Melchert. The aim of this dissertation is to forge a path somewhere between these trails and that owes much to these scholars. This study identifies and examines patterns in this Islamo-Persciate writing – specific enough to offer case studies, but broad enough so that they afford some more generalized conclusions – about the nature of historical writing and Muslim literary self-fashioning in local and city histories in early Islamic Persia.

It is important that scholarship address the plethora of local understandings of Islam and early Muslim self-identity in Iran because identifying such diversity in the history of Islam shows what the canonizers of the early *hadith* – and, indeed, any writers that posit a uniform, monolithic, or universal understanding of early Islam – wanted to supersede: vibrant, characteristic, and regionally differentiated understandings and expressions of Islamic piety. When the centralizers – such as those who advocated the elevation of certain canonical *hadith* collections over others – were working to create the impression of homogenous and standardized Islamic religious belief and practice, they were confronted with a variety of expressions of early urban-Muslim Persian self-identity. Therefore, the centralizers had to supersede these disparate understandings of Islam and expressions of piety and Muslim self-identity.
These local histories, through their narrative structure and content, portray highly localized understandings of Perso-Muslim identity. In the case of Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, this includes a strong emphasis on the region’s local Persian ruling families as well as its Alid heritage; in Tārīkh-i Qum, a simultaneous emphasis on the area’s Ash‘ari Arab lineage and association with the Shi‘i Imams as well as a violent refusal to capitulate to caliphal demands of fiscal and administrative subordination; in Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, narrative forms that bypass attempts at genealogical affirmation and instead claim non-biological genealogies and investments of power that enmesh the city deep within an Islamic and Qur’anic framework. Even though the central forces wanted to supersede local practice, local variation persisted because the locally different Muslim self-identity persisted.

The diversity of Islamic thought and Muslim experience today is lived evidence of the range of Islamic piety, yet scholarship still lacks a book-length work that analyzes the variety of early Islamic experience through Persic策 local and regional histories. For example, the geographical work Kitāb aḥsan al-taqāṣīm fī ma‘rifat al-aqālīm by Muqaddasī (born c. 334/946—d. ca. 380/990 or 390/1000) is rife with descriptions of local religious customs. By turns Muqaddasī denigrates, praises, or observes the divergent Muslim religious customs and beliefs across the Islamic realms. Some of the different local customs and practices that Muqaddasī catalogues include: the variant readings of the Qur’an common in different regions, funerary practices, different rituals of communal prayer, the popularity of the various law schools, and the preponderance of

the varied schools of law, Ramadan rituals, Muslim names that are popular in particular regions, and local lore that claims a special relationship with a prophet, such as the alleged existence in a town of the coffin of the prophet Daniel. Not only Muqaddasī, but other writers who documented travels, such as Ibn Jubayr (d. 614/1217) and Ibn Baṭṭuṭa (d. 770/1368-9 or 779/1377), as well as traditionists and historians such as Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176), Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262) and Ibn Shaddād (d. 684/1285) document the localisms and traditions of a region; pilgrimage guides are another source of material on local beliefs and devotional practice.60 This dissertation addresses the diversity of religious practice by examining the individual local histories to offer an examination of the breadth of regionally differentiated understandings and expressions of Islamic piety.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation has outlined the project, sources, methodology, and research goals of this project. Chapter 2 presents a literature review and summarizes the state of the fields of early Islamic Persian and Arabic historiography and historical writing, hadith study, commemorative writing, urban history and studies of the oneirocritical tradition in Islamic studies. Chapter 3 examines dreams as tools of legitimation in local and regional histories. Chapter 4 explores the roles that Sahabah, Tabiʿun, Sayyids, saints, and hadith play in local and regional histories as tools of legitimation. Chapter 5 analyzes the sacred in the urban landscape and places local histories and their claims to prophetic authority, piety, and sanctity in the context of broader scholarship on the urban environment in the Islamic world. Chapter 6 presents the results and conclusions about the hypotheses tested in this project, theories about the

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60 Meri, “Islamic Cult of Saints,” 35.
differences between Persicale local histories and commemorative writing in the context of those written elsewhere, and directions for future research.
Chapter 2: The State of the Field

“Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.”

This research falls at the unique crossroads of multiple subfields, several of which are still in their early years. This dissertation incorporates research from early Islamic Persian and Arabic historiography and historical writing, hadith study, commemorative writing, urban history, and studies of the oneirocritical tradition. In the field of historical writing, there tends to be a split between scholars who work with Persian sources and those whose medium is primarily Arabic. This chapter presents a literature review and summarizes the state of the fields of the relevant disciplines, including proposed dates for the development of local biographical dictionaries and local histories in the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries. It also considers three hypotheses about the development of local historical writing in Persia and considers whether the current scholarship addresses or supports them.

**Persian historiography and local history**

In the scholarly material on Persian history and historiography, the umbrella term “local history” encompasses multiple genres of writing: biographical dictionaries, urban topographies, chronicles of mainly political events, and compendiums of the virtues and merits of the region. This broad field of Persian historiography is still an under-examined aspect of early Islamic history and historiography. This is despite earlier scholarship on

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specific aspects of social and political history of the eastern Islamic realms, such as the role of Khurasan and its population vis-à-vis the Abbasid Revolution and recent scholarship about the Abbasid revolution that challenges the dominant narrative.\footnote{The earlier generation of scholars who contested the traditional narratives about the causes of the Abbasid Revolution and put forth various revisionist explanations of the movement includes D. C. Dennett, ‘Abd al-ʿAziz Dūrī, Faruqʿ Omar, M. A. Shaʿban. The more recent generation includes Jacob Lassner, Moshe Sharon, and Elton Daniel, amongst others. For a survey and summary of scholarship on the Abbasid revolution and revisionist scholarship of the topic and its major proponents, see Ehsan Yarshater, “The Persian presence in the Islamic world,” in The Persian Presence in the Islamic World, 4-125.}

When it comes to research specifically about local histories in Persia, scholarship has focused more heavily on Arabic texts than on Persian texts.\footnote{Charles Melville, “Persian Local Histories: Views from the Wings,” Iranian Studies 33, no. 1/2 (Winter - Spring 2000): 9.} A volume of Iranian Studies in 2000 devoted to local histories marked a corrective attempt to shift the balance of focus more evenly on Persian sources as well as Arabic sources. This rich issue of Iranian studies includes work by scholars including Jurgen Paul, Melville, Meisami, Pourshariati, Werner, and Bosworth and builds on earlier generations of scholars such as H.A.R. Gibb, Franz Rosenthal, Sami Dahan, Felix Tauer, A. K. S. Lambton, as well as the work of influential contemporary scholars such as Tarif Khalidi and R. S. Humphreys.\footnote{Ibid., 7-14.}

The very nature of the scholarship and the starting assumptions of scholars shape their work. A number of scholars address Persian historical writing, include Meisami, Pourshariati, Storey, Lambton, Paul, Bulliet, and Melville, but there is to date no book-length study on the ways in which the authors of Persian local histories bind the cities to key moments and characters in Islamic history and to prophetic authority as a mode of literary self-fashioning. Where Lambton has focused on local histories, biographical
dictionaries, and local particularism – subjects examined in this dissertation – she specialized in the administrative and economic history of medieval and pre-modern Persia.65 Lambton was an expert on Iran, but questions of what constituted piety and identity in the various quarters of Iran, and how these were expressed in local historical writing – the pressing questions of this dissertation – did not concern her. Lambton highlighted the political context of the era in which pre-Mongol Persian histories were written, which includes dynastic rulers, political fragmentation, and power decentralized into local dynastic rulers who were ostensibly ruling under the aegis of the caliph.

Indeed, in studies of Persian urban history that focus on the more modern era, the kinds of research that have attracted the most attention are studies that have focused on land tenure and the relationship between the ulama and the state.66

Other scholars of Persian history and historiography have focused more heavily on literary analysis. Meisami’s work on Persian historiography takes as one of her premises a conviction that early Persicite authors employed literary devices. Although it is strange that she questions whether the Persian writers had a word for “literature,” she


does rightly note, “since history was, for them, less a dry record of events than an
elucidation of the meaning of those events, historians employed such ‘literary’ devices -
narrative structure, direct discourse, rhetorical embellishment, and so on - as would
effectively convey that meaning.”

Meisami sketches bifurcation of Persian historical writing into material that follows a kingly Iranian model (exemplified by Ferdowsī’s 
\textit{Shāhnāma}) and another in the Islamic model (Abū al-Fazl Bayhaqī’s \textit{Tārīkh-i Mašʿūdī}).
The thrust of Meisami’s argument is that the primary purpose of historical literature in
both the Iranian and Islamic models was to edify and illustrate examples of proper
conduct and rule. Pourshariati addressed Persian local histories, including Ibn Funduq’s
mid-12th century local history, \textit{Tārīkh-i Bayhaq}. Jurgen Paul researched numerous local
Persian histories, and Melville has addressed local histories, particularly those from the
Caspian provinces.

The texts studied in this project are layered creations that were produced by many
hands. The very concepts of authorship, anthologization, and composition at play in
these medieval Persian local histories are problematic for the modern reader. The lines
between author, compiler, composer, and translator are blurred. For Persian texts such as
\textit{Tārīkh-i Qum}, based on a no longer extant Arabic original, it is unclear what was the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{67} Julie Scott Meisami, “History as Literature,” \textit{Iranian Studies} 33, no. 1/2 (Winter – Spring 2000): 15. See
also See J. S. Meisami, \textit{Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century} (Edinburgh: Edinburgh
University Press, 1999), esp. 289-98.
\item \textbf{68} J. S. Meisami, “The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia,” \textit{Poetics
Today} 14, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 247, 272.
\item \textbf{69} Pourshariati, “Local Historiography,” 133-164; Parvaneh Pourshariati, “Local Histories of Khurasan and
\item \textbf{70} Jurgen Paul, “Early Islamic History of Iran: From the Arab Conquest to the Mongol Invasion,” \textit{Iranian
Studies} 31, no. 3/4, A Review of the "Encyclopaedia Iranica" (Summer - Autumn 1998): 463-471; Paul
\end{itemize}
creation of the earlier author and what has been written or redacted by the later translator. The text is both an abridgement of the Arabic original and an extension of it as well as a translation into Persian. Without the original, it is largely impossible to tell where in the sedimentary layers of the text new material was added and where something was removed. Thus the Persian translation of the *Tārīkh-i Qum* available today may contain vestiges of older material, such as traditions of the Prophet. And yet spurious traditions could also have been added later, towards the end of the process that produced the Persian translation extant today. It is the very nature of these texts that they are layered and contain material from different sources, authors, copyists, languages, and places, all woven together and presented as a unified text.

Even in cases where we cannot know precisely which author was responsible for what material, we may borrow from Hilary Kilpatrick’s insights about the process of compilation and anthology and the ways in which we may understand authorship, anthologization, and composition. In her study on the massive compendium of Arabic music, language, and culture that is the 4th/10th century *Kitāb al-aghānī* by Abū l-Faraj ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥ b. Aḥmad ibn al-Haytham al-Umawī al-Isbāhānī (284-356/897-967), Kilpatrick identifies the ways in which Abū l-Faraj conveys his style, priorities, and opinion of the material through the structure by which he anthologizes and the compiles his *Kitāb al-aghānī*.71 The ordering and placement of narratives, *akhbar* reports, songs, *isnads* and sources, and biographical information convey the author’s style and position through the form of the text.

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Moreover, Kilpatrick highlights the common stock of material that rises to the fore when one reads not only one or several articles from the *Kitāb al-aghānī* but the entire multivolume compendium. Much in the way that El-Hibri stresses that it is only when one reads through the volumes of Ṭabarī’s Tārīkh that one can effectively understand Ṭabarī’s positions and historiographical approach through the patterns, motifs, tropes, themes, that he employs throughout his work, Kilpatrick underscores the continuity of form and content that Abū l-Faraj envisioned as he compiled and composed his anthology.\(^\text{72}\)

Scholarship on how and why writing local history developed in Persia has varied, not least because the starting assumptions of scholars – particularly in terms of methodology, focus, and sources – has shaped their work. Persian local historical writing developed in the context of the *Shuʿubiya* movement, decentralization and rise in local dynasties, and the flourishing of intellectual and religious sciences in the east, particularly in Khurasan, in an era when the intellectual and literary center of gravity was moving eastwards away from the Abbasid capital in Baghdad.

Several hypotheses about the development of Persian local history that are not necessarily mutually exclusive are considered here in light of scholarship in the field. Subsequent chapters of this dissertation will offer examples as another means of testing the validity and applicability of these hypotheses. One hypothesis about the development of local history and commemorative writing in Persia is that the shifting political and dynastic trends and the decentralization of authority affected local literary production. The decentralization of political caliphal authority in the 4\(^{th}/\)10\(^{th}\) and 5\(^{th}/\)11\(^{th}\) centuries is

exemplified by the *Shuʿubiya* movement in Persia and independent dynasties in Khurasan that, although they operated under the nominal suzerainty of the caliph in Baghdad, were functionally independent operators who ruled the region. Additionally, the center of scholarly and literary gravity shifted east by the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries, which allowed authors in Persia to assert – in texts written in Arabic, Persian, and both – the importance of Persian cities and Persicate literary and intellectual contributions to Islamic society.

In later works, Lambton tentatively suggested that the development of Persian local histories was a reaction to the dual phenomenon of the centralizing grip of the empire and the rise of local dynasties. This was a compelling theory that she did not, unfortunately, examine in a monograph-length work and which still remains conjecture. Elsewhere Lambton suggested – again tentatively – that though local particularism is not unique to Persia, local patriotism is particularly notable in Persia and in Persian local histories. Lambton suggested that local particularism in Persia – understood as the distinguishing geographic, ethnic, or social features of a group – is “closely associated with local patriotism, an outstanding feature of which is the proliferation of local histories, written in Arabic in the early Islamic centuries and from the 5th/11th century in Persian.”

Lambton suggested two slightly oppositional factors for the production of local histories: firstly, that the fragmentation of the empires encouraged the production of local histories while, on the other hand, the centralizing impetus and heavy-handedness of the caliphs were resented by the provinces. In the case of the latter, “the writing of local

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histories may consequently have reflected a wish to underline the fact that the
collection of the regions was worthy of record and represented the vigor and strength
of Muslim society.\textsuperscript{75}

This latter idea – of the relationship between the composition of local histories
and the political fragmentation at the time – is one that Lambton did not significantly
develop late in her life and career, and the dynamics of literary self-fashioning in these
local histories is not an issue that Lambton explored in her work. Lambton laid great
weight on extracting administrative, economic, and political history from the literary
sources, and she was greatly successful in her aims. The starting assumption of this
dissertation differs from those which shaped Lambton’s work, and it argues that
something more subtle and opaque can also be uncovered within the layers of historical
writing: why and how local histories evidence the articulation of a spatio-communal
Muslim-Persian identity, what idioms, tropes, and patterns are employed, and what
strategies of pious and religious legitimation were central to the formation of this spatio-
communal Muslim-Persian identity.

One underlying premise of the above theories about the decentralization of
authority and the provincial resentment of caliphal power is that individuals and writers
alike subscribed to the idea of a Muslim umma, but that they also adhered to a more
specific and localized sense of identity that was far more resonant with their lives than
that of an abstruse umma in the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, geographically diverse
Islamic Empire. Lambton earlier suggested that an individual’s loyalty lay with the
broader umma and his local town or region:

\textsuperscript{75} Lambton, “Local particularism,” 6-7.
Although the chief interest of the Muslim was centered on the Islamic community, his loyalty was also accorded to his local town or province. The towns were in many cases virtually semi-autonomous units, which in times of trouble and disorder might act independently, often under the leadership of the local qādi or shaykh. These local communities formed reservoirs on which Persia could draw to replenish herself after periods of disaster. Often they were closely knit and in many periods played an important role in the transmission of Islamic civilization. Such circumstances account for the cultivation of local histories, which in many cases consist mainly of biographical material.  

Lambton’s statement about the chief interest of the Muslim being the Islamic community seems to be in the more abstract sense. What, precisely, was the Qummi resident’s notion of the “Islamic community”? And was this Qummi understanding of the Islamic umma identical to a denizen of Tabaristan, Bayhaq, or Bukhara? This umma may have been a more abstract ideal, since it necessarily de-emphasizes the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-racial reality of the geographically dispersed Islamic community in its totality. 

The unique form and structure of Persian local histories seems to support Lambton’s claim. While the overriding interest of these Persian Muslim authors may have been the broader umma – as belief in the Prophet as the Messenger of God, an emphasis on his sunna, a general reverence for the family of the Prophet, and a high esteem of the Islamic sciences and scholarship – the local and regional histories evidence a distinct pride and focus on their local cities or region. Since piety and knowledge were the currency of prestige in the early Muslim world, and since the ulama served as a bulwark and a check on tyrannical caliphal power – a role, in some cases, they continue to play – then it does not seem strange that at least some local histories should lay

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76 Lambton, “Persian Biographical Literature,” 143-144.
emphasis on the merits of the city and the virtues of the local patricians. It may seem particularly natural for areas such as Qum and Tabaristan, which displayed strong and sometimes violent reluctance to submit to caliphal fiscal and political administration.

It is necessary to modify – or at least clarify – Lambton’s claim about the power of the local shaykh or qadi in light of the complex relationships amongst the urban patrician class and the at times collaborative relationship between governors and local elites. The local shaykh, whom Lambton posits as a de facto ruler in times of turmoil, was not necessarily the local dynast in charge of the region. Richard Bulliet observed the overlapping social functions of the patrician class in his study *The Patricians of Nishapur*, where he highlighted the economic, madhhab, and kinship ties that knit together the patricians of early Islamic Iranian cities.\(^77\) Hugh Kennedy examined the role of the central government vis-à-vis provincial elites in the early Abbasid period, and he similarly concluded that certainly in the case of Mosul, governors must have had to rely on local notables – who controlled the office of the qadi – for both support and advice.\(^78\)

Local authorities were in complex and nuanced negotiations for power with central authorities. Local elites negotiated for and shared power both with each other and with central government authorities. A variety of political factors contributed to this dependence on local elites by the governors, including governors’ high turn-over rates, their dependency on the local patricians for military support, the patricians’ ability to

\(^{77}\) Bulliet, *Patricians*.

\(^{78}\) “It is clear, however, that the governor must have had to rely very heavily on local notables for support and advice… and was dependent for military support on locally raised men led by prominent local citizens. … Through their control of the office of qadi, at least for some of the time, and above all their control of the local armed forces, local leaders played a much bigger part in the affairs of their city than would appear at first glance.” Hugh Kennedy, “Central Government and Provincial Élites in the Early ’Abbāsid caliphate,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 44, no. 1 (1981): 31.
control the office of qadi, and the possibility that someone other than the governor who enjoyed a closer relationship with the caliph was responsible for the region’s financial administration. ⁷⁹

The second hypothesis about the development and character of local histories in Persia argues that they manifested assertions of non-centralized religious authority and identity. By propounding local ulama and shaykhs, futuwwa groups, various ascetic or antinomian groups, pietistic movements, hadith transmitters, prophets, and saints, the local histories declare a proudly local, patriotic understanding of the place, and the significance of specific Persian cities and regions in Islamic history. This hypothesis builds on the previous argument about shifting political and dynastic trends and the decentralization of authority and assertions of non-centralized authority and identity.

Hadith transmission was one of the realms of contestation in which religious authority was constantly challenged and negotiated. Despite the existence of hadith collections in the 3/9th century of the Sahihayn of al-Bukhari and Muslim, which would later become the authoritative Sunni collections, these collections were not yet accepted universally. Localized hadith collections persisted. Local histories evidence these local hadith collections through the traditions and transmitters they include. Chapter 4 of this dissertation suggests that what was “sahih” in a city in the pre-Mongol era may have been “sahih” because it was taught by the local shaykh or transmitted in local lore, not because it was in a “sahih” collection by al-Bukhari and or Muslim.

A third possible contributing factor is that a majority Muslim population enabled articulations of dual Perso-Muslim local identity. During the 4th/10th century the Persian

⁷⁹ Ibid., 38.
populace coalesced around a Muslim identity as the majority of people converted to Islam. This phenomenon leads to the third theory about the development of local Persian historical writing, which argues that once society achieved majority conversion to Islam around the year 390/1000, this rendered Muslim identity as a tangible and local phenomenon that also reflected the reality of a fragmented religious community with its multitudinous articulations of local Muslim identity. Once a community’s identity was firmly established as Muslim, there was then more room to record and elaborate on the rich diversity of localized Persian Muslim identity. Muslim identity was then articulated below the level of the overarching but amorphous supra-category of *umma* and as a more tangible and local phenomenon in varied local iterations.

Of course there are explanations that have been put forth for the change in the type of historical writing in the 4th/10th century. Humphreys, for example, argues that a Qur’anic paradigm of the idea of Covenant-Betrayal-Redemption governed early Islamic history. Furthermore, later historians, he argues, found this paradigm was problematic – since it appeared unclear if the new *umma* would be redeemed and, if so, when such redemption would be in the offing. They, partially as a consequence, began to focus on contemporary events.80 Historians from the mid-4th/10th century were not concerned, like the historians for the 3rd/9th century, with the legitimacy of the Abbasid caliphate – keeping in mind that caliphal power effectively collapsed in many ways in 334/945 as the

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Twelver Shi‘i Buyids⁸¹ assumed control of Baghdad – but rather turned their gaze to contemporary events.⁸²

In an early paper Bulliet addressed the distinct cleft in the local historical literature between biographical dictionaries, or *tabaqāt*, and more political histories of regions, such as cities, or dynasties. Bulliet raised the question of why an author would choose to write a local history in the format of a local biographical dictionary instead of a local political history or vice versa. He argued that the authors knew that both types of history existed, and the reason that an author chose to write a biographical dictionary or a political history depended on his position in society as either a member of the *ulama*, the religious elite, or the ‘*umara*’, the secular elite. Authors more allied with the religious elite wrote more biographical dictionaries, while the secular elite focused more on political history.⁸³

The local and regional histories examined in this dissertation, such as *Tarīkh-i Qum*, *Tarīkh-i Bukhara*, *Tarīkh-i Bayhaq*, and *Tarīkh-i Ṭabaristan* do not fall easily into the neat categories of either political chronicles (although they do record political events) or biographical dictionaries (although they do contain biographical material). The histories were local. Their focus was particular, not universal. Their organization was not necessarily or exclusively annalistic, and they include biographical and political material. They are rich and underutilized sources that illustrate the state of *umma* and identity in early Islamic Persia.

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⁸¹ The Buyids are also known as the Buwayhids. “The Buwayhids, who originally adhered to Zaydi Shi‘ism, also embellished the ‘Alid shrines of ‘Iraq.” Daftary, *Ismā‘īlī*, 186.

⁸² Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 129-130.

The 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries were turning points for the development of local histories, local biographical dictionaries, and fadāʾil literature. In the 4th/10th century authors began to write history not just in Arabic but also in Persian, and local histories emerged. The fadāʾil al-madīna genre of literature, which highlights the merits and virtues of a city, first appears in the 4th/10th century. In the 4th/10th century historical writing became heavily didactic, and this marked a departure from the earlier foci of historical writing that focused on the legitimacy of Islamic rulers. Bosworth, who has written on the local histories of Sistan and the Saffarids of Sistan, asserts that of the sources known to us, Persian Muslim literature was written in Arabic until the 4th/10th century.

Bosworth marks this transition from writing in Arabic to Persian to the Samanid vizier Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad Balʿamī’s Tarjamah-i Tārīkh-i Ṭabarî, which is a condensed Persian-language translation and summary of Ṭabarî’s Arabic Tārīkh. Meisami concurs and dates the emergence of historical writing in Persian to the 4th/10th century under the Samanids and its development under the Ghaznavids in the 11th century, during which time local historical writing in Persia achieved general acceptance. Local Persian

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85 Ibid.


87 Bosworth, “Persian Contribution,” 223-224. Balʿamī added material not included in Ṭabarî’s original Tārīkh without updating Ṭabarî’s history up to Balʿamī’s own era.
dynasties sponsored and produced historical writing in the 4th/10th century, and these include the Daylam and Kurdish dynasties, which sponsored and produced historical writing in the 4th/10th century in order to legitimize their presence in the context of Islamic history.\textsuperscript{88}

Though he cautions against broad generalizations, Humphreys characterizes the new genres of local historical chronicles and local biographical dictionaries that emerged in the “Middle Period” of Islamic historiography – from the Buyids assuming control of Abbasid Baghdad in 334/945 to the rise of Ottoman and Safavid states around 900/1500 – as “works [that] seem to have been produced particularly in cities and regions with a strong tradition of political autonomy, places that the big empires found it difficult to digest,” and the biographical dictionary “was rooted in local patriotism, the desire of the urban notables to show that their native cities were major centers of Islamic piety and learning. Such dictionaries are, so to speak, an expression of civic pride.”\textsuperscript{89} The anonymous \textit{Tārīkh-i Sīstān}, composed before 455/1063, exemplifies a Persian-language local historical chronicle, and al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī’s (d. 463/1071) massive Arabic-language \textit{Tārīkh Baghdād} exemplifies the local biographical dictionary. Humphreys also argues that court-centered histories of the late 10th and 11th centuries, written both in Arabic and in Persian with a conscious connection with Sassanian roots, contrasts with the writers a century earlier who generally portrayed Islam as a radically new phase of history.\textsuperscript{90} It is worth noting that Humphreys’ scholarship has been shaped by a strong

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 227-228.

\textsuperscript{89} Humphreys, \textit{Islamic History}, 129, 132.

\textsuperscript{90} Humphreys, “Qur’anic myth,” 274.
focus on Syrian sources, such Ibn ʿAsākir and his Tārīkh madīnāt Dimashq, and his work has concentrated more on Arab and Arabic sources within Islamic historiography.

Jurgen Paul builds upon and revises the work of Wadad al-Qadi91, whose research on the genre of biographical dictionary has yielded many conclusions, several of which are relevant for this dissertation. Paul critiques al-Qadi’s work and revises her dates by a century, claiming that the first local biographical dictionaries were written from the second half of the 3rd/9th century.92 Paul asserts that the genre of biographical dictionary restricted to region was an established genre in Iran generally and especially Khurasan by 400/1000, despite the fact that some of these earlier sources are no longer extant in their original format or language today. Paul argues that local biographical dictionaries were common from the 3rd/9th – 7th/13th centuries and were written in Arabic; from the 7th/13th century on, these were translated into Persian, but the translators made so many changes to these Persian editions that they are more accurately called adaptations instead of translations. Local biographical dictionaries may have been written before the 4th/10th century, but they are no longer extant. Therefore, we know that one of the sources for the Faḍa’il-i Balkh was written by someone who lived around 300/912, that an author who died in 268/891 wrote about Marv, and that in his Arabic biographical dictionary of Isfahan, Abū al-Shaykh (d. 349/960-1) used a source by Ibn Manda (d. 301/913-4), but


we cannot check the format of these texts to see how they were organized because they no longer exist.\footnote{Ibid., 94.}

As a genre, a tārīkh text consists of many types of material embedded within it. It is precisely this embedded nature of tārīkh that make these texts suitable for this dissertation as a window into the milieu and place in intellectual history and religio-cultural self-articulation that they represent. Though individual writers were and could be muhaddiths, Humphreys – who writes here on Arabic historiography, though these observations are relevant for the Persian sources I study – argues that since there was no ijāzas system for historical writing comparable to that which was required for hadith and fiqh, “a would-be historian would be quite free to copy or paraphrase whatever books lay to hand without certifying the authenticity of these texts or demonstrating that he had obtained the author’s permission to use them.”\footnote{R. Stephen Humphreys, “Borrowed Lives: The Reproduction of Texts in Islamic Cultures,” in Text and Context in Islamic Societies, ed. Irene A. Bierman (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2004), 75.} Though some, like al-Ṭabarî (d. 310/923), were explicit and meticulous about providing akhbar with isnads, others, like Ibn al-Athîr (d. 623/1234) dissolved the boundaries between narratives from different sources and incorporated them more seamlessly into broader narrative account. This process of embedding, appropriating, and reshaping older sources that were part of the broader historiographical discourse was essential to the nature of historical writing, extending beyond the formative period of the genre that culminated in the works of the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries.\footnote{Ibid., 75-78.}
In material written prior to the mid-10th and early 11th century, I use the terms Alid, Shi‘i, and proto-Shi‘i generally interchangeably. Melchert has suggested that a self-conscious Shi‘ism as a party and identity, like articulated Sunni identity, was weak until the mid-4th/mid-10th century and only fully developed in the 5th/11th century. 96 Though the validity of this claim can be debated, it is true that at least in some cases, particularly in Tārtkh-i Qum and Tārtkh-i Tabaristan, that the texts sometimes conflate the meanings of Alid and Shi‘i.

The cleft between Shi‘i and Sunni Islam developed over centuries. Stephen Humphreys follows Claude Cahen and argues that in the “in the early 2nd/8th century, Shi‘ism was a broad religious orientation rather than an organized sect.” 97 This broad Shi‘i orientation argued that the ruler be an appropriate member of ahl al-bayt. Who precisely was included in the House of the Prophet was still uncertain. What was clear was that the ruler must govern in conformity with the Qur’an and sunna, and that martyrs from the ahl al-bayt be avenged. However, more precise theological formulations within the broad orientation had yet to be solidified. 98 Mutual Shi‘i and Sunni self-identity in contradistinction to one another was a product of the 11th century. 99 In the context of this dissertation, the Persian-Muslim identities and concepts of umma that I will parse from the form, style, and content of local histories occurred precisely during and after this period of developing partisan polarization.


97 Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 110.

98 Ibid., 124.

99 Melchert, “The Piety of the Hadith Folk,” 426. “The polarity of Sunni and Shi‘i was not strong until the mid-10th century, and full Sunni mutual recognition and self-awareness appeared only in the 11th century.”
Hadith study has been determined by scholars’ interests, and many prominent scholars of hadith have been concerned with establishing or disputing the authenticity of traditions attributed to the Prophet or in determining the veracity of isnads and examining the isnad as a legitimating tool. This category includes scholars such as Juynboll and Schacht. Madelung exemplifies yet another type of approach, in which he has focused on tracing one particular hadith. In doing so, Madelung provides a model for thinking about the dissemination, use, and history of a particular hadith. Yet others have examined hadith as sources for social and political history, including a study of how hadith reflects social, political, and economic conditions as well as tribal factionalization and the Prophet’s relationships with tribal groups.

Recent examples of scholarship that, in their aims and lines of inquiry, inspire the research undertaken in this dissertation include scholars who address the social history and educational institutions – thereby touching madrasas, Sufi transmission of knowledge, and hadith transmission – all of which pertain to local histories, such as


101 Wilferd Madelung, “ʿAbd Allāh B. Al-Zubayr and the Mahdi,” Journal of Near Eastern Studies 40, no. 4 Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Nabia Abbott: Part Two (Oct. 1981): 291-305. For example, Madelung uses with the specific case of a hadith about the Mahdi that Abu Dawūd al-Sijistani included in the chapter on the Mahdi in his Kitāb al-Sunan, which is a prediction about the Mahdi (although the restorer is not identified by name or title as the Mahdi) on the authority of the Prophet’s wife Umm Salama, and researching how and why it was put into circulation.

102 For an example of a study which argues that hadith reflect social, political, and economic conditions as well as tribal factionalization and the Prophet’s relationships with tribal groups, see M. J. Kister, “O God, Tighten Thy Grip on Mudar... Some Socio-Economic and Religious Aspects of an Early Hadith,” Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 24, no. 3 (Oct. 1981): 242-273, esp. 244.
Berkey, Bulliet, McChesney, Makdisi, Melchert, Mottahedeh, and Shahab Ahmed. Cooperson’s recent work on the concept of heirship and legitimation in classical Arabic biography is informative in that he suggests that, in their portrayals of their subjects, which evolved over the years, biographers sought to emphasize the qualities of “heirship” of their subjects including different notions of legitimate “heirship to the prophet.” This concept “heirship” that Cooperson identifies in the biographical tradition is precisely what the local histories document, albeit in a different form. The


104 Bulliet, *Patricians*.


109 Shahab Ahmed, “Mapping the World of a Scholar in Sixth/Twelfth Century Bukhārā: Regional Tradition in Medieval Islamic Scholarship as Reflected in a Bibliography,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120, no. 1 (Jan. - Mar. 2000): 24-43. In a recent work focused on tracing the transmission of knowledge in medieval Khurasan, Ahmed uses the bibliography for the *Kitāb khalisat al-haqaʿiq* (compiled in 597/1200) of Mahmud al-Faryabi, a Hanafi scholar in 6th/12th century Bukhara to create a map – both geographic and intellectual – of this intellectual life. Ahmed tracks the dates of the sources and their writers that al-Faryabi used, which enables him to track the development of the intellectual milieu of Khurasan and Transoxania. Ahmed uses al-Faryabi’s bibliography of the sources he used to compile his book – which is basically a compendium of material taken from earlier works – instead of using bibliography other sources, such as the author’s ijāza or mashyakhah, on the basis that in creating his compilation, the sources materials were those which “must have been regarded by Mahmud al-Faryabi as the most authoritative and valuable works on the subject that had been transmitted within his intellectual tradition (24-25).” Ahmed’s conclusions are that the majority by a very large margin of the authors that al-Faryabi cites as his sources for his *Kitāb khalisat al-haqaʿiq* are or are associated with Khurasan and Transoxania, that self-conscious identity of Khurasanian ulama was formed and was developed from 200-600/800-1200, and that the region of Khurasan was not on the intellectual periphery and did not defer to the center, especially from 400-600/1000-1200.

110 Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, xiii.
authors of local histories claim a kind of heirship to the Prophet through their connection
to him through a dream-visitations to the city, Companions and Followers who lived,
taught, or died in the city, contemporary *ulama*, Sufis, and other figures of religious
significance associated with the city, sacred etymologies and sacred or sanctified places
in the cities and their environs. If piety and knowledge were the currency of prestige and
authority in the early Muslim world, then the Persian local histories minted it with
exuberance. As Cooperson rightly notes, one of the markers of heirship to the prophet
was *ʿilm*, or knowledge, and the premium placed on knowledge is prominent in Persian
local histories and in Arabic biographical literature.

On religious trends and studies of piety, Madelung has written on religious trends
in Islam more broadly and in Iran more specifically. Talmon-Heller focuses on modes
of piety in medieval Syria, and while her work is centered on the Zangid and Ayyubid
periods (541-658/1146-1260), her work is a valuable model in that it documents the
different modes of piety and the heterogeneity of religious life in the medieval Muslim
world. This dissertation owes much to these scholars and will incorporate research from
the fields of Persian and Arabic historical writing and historiography of the early

111 Some of the Persian cities I address in this dissertation were actually mint cities. This raises the question
(to be considered in a different paper) what the relationship was – if there was an identifiable pattern –
between religious prestige and the material well-being of a city and its inhabitants. *Waqfs* and other pious
institutions, such as schools or charities, served religious functions and contributed to the material and
cultural wellbeing of a community. Since western medieval education also has its roots in religious
institutions, this is also an issue with a comparative perspective.

112 Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 67. “It does, however, set caliphal biography apart from other
subgenres of *taifā*-based historiography. The biographers of Shiʿite Imams, Hanbali scholars, and Sufis
emphasize their subjects’ heirship to the Prophet, an heirship most conspicuously manifested in *ʿilm*,
knowledge. In his day, al-Mamūn claimed a similar legacy for himself. Indeed, he specifically declared
himself the *imām al-hudā*, ‘the rightly guided leader.’ The majority of his biographers, however, did not
endorse this claim.”

113 Madelung, *Religious Trends*. 
medieval period, social history and development of educational institutions, Sufi transmission of knowledge, and *hadith* scholarship.

The sacred in the city has multiple foci that function on social and religious levels and which are evidenced in the literary world through their commemoration in local histories. These diffuse foci of piety and sacredness range from the tombs of prophets or pious individuals to marvels and living descendants of Companions or the Prophet. The mosque was far from holding a monopoly on the sacred. Indeed, only from the era of the Turkish conquests did the mosque become primarily (though not even then exclusively) a place of prayer.\textsuperscript{114} Local histories illustrate how a city’s literary portrait sanctified the city on many levels, the environs of which were permeated with various *baraka* and foci of piety and served as a locus of prophetic and religious authority.

Since the focus of this study is local histories, most of which are histories of cities (though *Tārīkh-i Tabaristan* focuses on a region), a brief assessment of cities and the Muslim world is in order here. The idea that Islam is an essentially urban religion gained traction in many quarters, and this fostered various characterizations about what constituted an Islamic city. Invoking the importance of the city and urban environment has come to be generally accepted as a maxim in studies of the Islamic world. From the small settlements of Mecca and Medina to the metropolises of Umayyad Damascus and ‘Abbasid Baghdad, and the famed Silk Road cities of Samarqand and Bukhara in the Islamic east and Cairo to the west, urban environments have been one of the central forces to have shaped the development of Islamic civilization.

\textsuperscript{114} Wheatley, *Places Where Men Pray Together*, 235.
The earliest assumptions about Islam being an urban religion were based on a combination of ideas. These ideas included Mecca’s role as a trading center, the development of cities and garrisons, migration to cities, and distinctively Islamic features of cities, such as the congregational mosque, bath, and bazaar. Earlier generations of scholars, including early 20th century Orientalists, attempted to describe and ahistorically essentialize the Islamic city. Recent generations of scholars, such as Abu-Lughod, have revised and critiqued such earlier studies. The attempt to find correctives to the initial phase of modern Western scholarship whose views of the Islamic city were founded on Orientalist premises has yielded some new scholarship of broad geographical and chronological scope. Nevertheless, the body of scholarship devoted to examining the claims made in local histories themselves about the foundational narratives and myths of their cities is very slim.

For this study the most relevant of Lapidus’ conclusions about the Islamic city concern the boundaries between populations of Arabs and Persians. Arabs built two types of cities after the conquests – garrisons and administrative bases for the elite; Kufa


117 For a brief summary of the literature on modern Western scholarship on the Islamic city, from a critique of its earlier 20th century articulations to more recent revisionist critiques of these views, see Amira K. Bennison, “Introduction” in Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World: The Urban Impact of Religion, State and Society, eds. Amira K. Bennison and Alison L. Gascoigne (Milton Park, Abingdon, UK; New York: Routledge, 2007), 1-12.
and Basra are examples of the former and Baghdad is a prime example of the latter.\textsuperscript{118} Both types of settlements encouraged migration, commerce, and building projects. However, it was really in garrison towns that Arabs are brought in \textit{en masse}. Cities such as Nishapur, Rayy, and Qazvin, which were administrative centers that were suburbs of already extant cities, were then not subject to a similar massive influx of Arabs, so they would have retained a stronger Persian \textit{a'yān} nobility population and identity. In certain instances – for Fustat, Baghdad, Samarra, Mosul, and small garrison towns – a \textit{khatta} (a “piece of land marked out for building upon”) were allocated to groups, such as tribes, individuals, or officers when the Arabs founded garrison cities during the conquests; this sometimes promoted significant population growth, because it encouraged commerce, construction, and settlement of large groups.\textsuperscript{119} There was also the phenomenon of the Arab quarter in an extant city, in which a population of Arabs who moved to the region settled. Examples of this include Kirman, Fars, Isfahan, Marw, Balkh, as well as some regions in Kirman, Fars, and in some districts in Syria and Azerbaijan.\textsuperscript{120}

What is of interest to this dissertation are the ways in which cities were portrayed in local histories as bound through their formation narratives and constituent parts to foundational moments and characters in Islamic, cosmic, and prophetic history. Therefore, von Grunebaum’s observations in ‘The Sacred Character of Islamic Cities’\textsuperscript{121} that the city or town is – much more than rural areas – a locus of religious merit, remains, despite any reasonable critiques of Orientalist premises or influences, a useful departure


\textsuperscript{120} Lapidus, “The Evolution of Muslim Urban Society,” 25.

\textsuperscript{121} Grunebaum, “The Sacred Character of Islamic Cities,” 25-37.
point for considering hitherto unexamined ways in which the literary self-portraits of
cities in local histories stake out claims to prophetic and religious authority and
legitimacy.

At a slight remove from social, political, or sociological studies of cities are those
that approach the subject of the Islamic city from the perspective of urban studies. Paul
Wheatley’s study of cities in the Islamic world between the 1st/7th and 4th/10th century is
one such work, in which he uses as his departure point the 4th/10th century author Shams
al-Dīn Abū ’Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Bannā’ al-Muqaddasī’s
_Ahsan al-Taqāsim fī Maʿrifat al-Aqālim_. Wheatley’s methodology is to examine the
function of a city and its position in the broader urban hierarchy. His position is that “the
role of a particular settlement within an urban hierarchy is determined almost exclusively
by its function, hardly at all by its forms – in simple terms, by what it does rather than
what it is.”

In leaning heavily on al-Muqaddasī’s work, Wheatley’s own research is
therefore shaped to an extent by al-Muqaddasī’s Syrian bias and his more westerly center
of gravity in his approach to Persia. Though al-Muqaddasī’s mother’s family was
originally from a small down in Khurasan called Biyār, al-Muqaddasī is more attached to
and oriented towards Syria and specifically to Palestine, where he was born, as his name
attests.

There are understandable reasons that scholarship about the articulated identities
of cities as presented in medieval local and regional histories has been comparatively
neglected. As O’Meara notes, “Early and medieval Muslim claims that biblical and

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122 Wheatley, _Places Where Men Pray Together_, xiv.

antique sites lie at the foundations of a number of Islamic mādīnas have received academic consideration. By contrast, the legends narrated of these and other mādīnas at the moment of their foundation or Islamic re‐foundation have received almost none."124 The claims the authors of the medieval city histories offer as part of the foundational narratives of their cities can seem fanciful. In the Perso‐Islamicate literature, the stories about the etymologies of the cities are sometimes fantastic, such as the story of how Bukhara was named in connection with the Prophetic hadith transmitted from the Prophet on the authority of Salmān al‐Farīsī as a one of the three most glorified cities in Khurasan on the Judgment day.125

Although scholarship has every right to call into question the historicity of the claims that local histories put forth – particularly about their extraordinarily fortuitous, prestigious, or fantastical origins or etymologies – an examination of these claims themselves will shed light on the social, religious, intellectual, and cultural climate in which their authors operated. If their claims are less useful for history as a reconstruction of events and accurate historicity, then they are very useful as a window into the mindsets of the authors and the topoi, themes, literary structures and devices they employed.

The dreams of a city’s denizens offer an ethereal counterpart to the physical structures of Islamic cities. The dreams of a city’s inhabitants as described in city and regional histories form the dream landscape of the city and functioned, at least in part, as a literary device to provide a portrait of the virtuous city. Pre- and non-Islamic religious traditions in the Middle and Near East long had customs and practices related to dream

124 Simon O’Meara, “The Foundation Legend of Fez and Other Islamic Cities in Light of The Life of The Prophet,” in Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World, 27.

interpretation, or oneiromancy. In this context, it was incumbent upon new Muslim believers and scholars to establish foundations for the legitimacy of dream interpretation within Islam. Greek, Jewish, Christian traditions in the milieu of the ancient Near East engaged in oneirocritical activities. In this environment, material common to the Abrahamic faiths, combined with Prophetic traditions and interpretations of Qur’anic passages, formed the basis of Islamic oneiromancy.

Kister determined that the earliest surviving text of Muslim dream interpretation is a text by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutayba (213-276 / 828-889). Ibn Qutayba’s 9th century text about dreams is published as Kitāb taʿbīr al-rū’ya but is also known by various names, including ʿIbārat al- ruʿyā, Taʿbīr al-rūʿyā, and Kitāb ʿibārat al-rūʿyā. Islamic scholars were aware of non-Muslim traditions of oneiromancy, attested by a translation by Hunayn b. Ishaq (d. 260/873) of the Greek oneirocritical text by Artemidorus, The Interpretation of Dreams, which was completed during Ibn Qutayba’s lifetime.

Kister and Kinberg have both written extensively on dreams in the Arabic literary tradition. Both scholars address the implications of dreams’ various interpretations and

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126 Kister, “Interpretation of Dreams,” 67-68.

127 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah (828-889), Kitāb Taʿbīr al-rūʿyā /ʿaʿīf Abī Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnūrī; ṣuniya bi-taḥqīqihi Ibrāhīm Ṣālih (Damascus: Dār al-Bāshāʾir, 2001).

uses, and both have documented the use of dreams as a tool to confirm the veracity of a 
_hadith_. Kister has examined Ibn Qutayba’s _ʿIbārat al-ruʿyā_, while Kinberg writes on Ibn 
Qutayba’s contemporary, Ibn Abī Dunya, amongst other oneirocritical topics. Following 
their lead, this study will explore the ways in which dreams sanctify and legitimate 
specific Persian cities and their denizens.

The local and regional Persian histories participate in the construction of a 
communal identity and the process of commemorative writing. Therefore, this study is 
situated in the broader context of studies in cultural memory, culture-making, and literary 
self-fashioning. This study borrows from Halbwachs’s theories about collective memory 
– particularly in terms of dreams, legendary topography, and the reconstruction of the 
past – and apply them to local and regional histories in order to place literary production 
and the articulation of a Perso-Muslim identity in a broader sociological context.¹²⁹

Cultural memory and the placement or displacement of the Islamic narrative in 
Persian history is an ongoing project. Just as there are moves that place Persian history 
firmly within prophetic genealogies and Islamic history, so too are there modernist 
narratives that recast Iranian history and displace the Islamic narrative as the dominant 
organizing force of Persian history. Tavakoli-Targhi’s study documents how religio-
communal identities and historical memories are repeatedly contested and are a site of 
continual contest and flux. His work focuses on the reinterpretation of the portrayal of 
pre-Islamic Iran in literature and intellectual movements from the Safavid period.

Tavakoli-Targhi focuses on the role that the intellectual movement led by Azar Kayvān 
(939 or 940-1027/1533-1618) that is called either Kayvānī, Azārī, or Dasatirī, was played

¹²⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, _On Collective Memory_, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: 
in constructing an Iranian modernist portrayal – through written historical narratives – of Iranian history that portrayed the region’s pre-Islamic past as a golden age that was ended by the Islamic conquests.\textsuperscript{130} This dissertation traces the contours of a definitive and early negotiation of the Islamic narrative in Persian history.

In tracking the development of Perso-Muslim culture-making, this study places the literary self-fashioning, spatio-communal identity, and the sacralization of place in these local histories in the a broader conversation about theories of ritual, religion, and space. Jonathan Z. Smith’s understanding of sacred space that “sacrality is, above all, a category of emplacement,”\textsuperscript{131} is applicable to this study. Though Smith focuses on ritual, that we may apply his thoughts on sacred space and sacralization in order to understand the sacred etymologies, claims to sacred tombs, shrines, and sources of \textit{baraka} asserted in the local Persian histories.\textsuperscript{132} Sacred etymologies function as foundational narratives that sacralize a particular city by placing it and its etymology into a critical juncture in Islamic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{130} Contrary to the Islamic narrative – that the end of Sasanian rule and the inauguration of Muslim rule with Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets and cycle of prophecy that began with Adam, marked a fundamental break and inauguration of a superior religio-political order and community – Azar Kayvān’s (939 or 940–1027/1533-1618) modernist narrative recast Iranian history and displaces the Islamic narrative as the dominant organizing force of Persian history. In this Safavid-era project, “the modernist struggle for a new social order became intrinsically connected to the politics of cultural memory and its de-Arabicizing projects of history and language,” and in these “modernist emplotments of ancient Iranian history, the biblical/Qur’anic tempo was displaced with an Iran-time conjured up by Azar Kayvan and his disciples.” In this retroactively recast history pre-Islamic Iran was “a lost utopia with Mazdak as a theoretician and practitioner of freedom and equality, Kavah as the originator of "national will" (\textit{himmat-i milli}), and Anushirvan as a paradigmatic just-constitutional monarch.” This intellectual movement – based in the context of Safavid persecution of neo-Mazdean thought – reasserted the importance of Iran’s pre-Islamic past and repositioned the region’s pre-Islamic past as a model for a superior, indigenous, and non-Arab religio-social order. That this project in the construction of cultural memory was again turned on its head in the 1970s and 1980s with the Islamic Revolution and the re-centering of Iran’s Islamic heritage underscores the contested dynamic process of the creation and articulation of cultural memory and spatio-communal religious identity. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, “Contested Memories: Narrative Structures and Allegorical Meanings of Iran's Pre-Islamic History,” \textit{Iranian Studies} 29, no. 1/2 (Winter – Spring 1996): 151, 174, 175.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Jonathan Z. Smith, \textit{To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 104.
\item \textsuperscript{132} I address sacred etymologies in Chapter 5.
\end{itemize}
history and thereby in the broader Qur’anic narrative of revelation and into historical memory. In this context, it is the mythical foundation narrative – and not here ritual – that has the power to transport and convert a physical place into sacred space. For example, sacred etymologies for Qum weave the land into Islam’s foundational moments and articulate a highly localized sense of Persian-Muslim identity.

This study of the dynamics of piety and authority in local histories should be seen in the broader context of the strategies and discourse of prophetic genealogies and the formation of identity, such as the recent work of Savant. Savant’s study of Persian identity and claims to prophetic genealogy in the 9th and 10th centuries found that some Persian Muslims identified Abraham’s son Isaac (born to Sarah, a free woman) as the progenitor of the Persians as an analogue to the more standard understanding that Arabs claimed to be descended from Abraham through Ishmael (born to Hagar, a slave-woman), Isaac’s brother.

The Arab historian al-Mas’ūdī (d. 345/956) and the late 8th/early 9th poet Abū Nuwās refer to these claims – despite the sometimes considerable variety and vagueness regarding how, precisely, the Persians descended from Isaac – which proved controversial. Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawarī (d.281 or 282/894-895 or before 290/902-903) portrays the Persians and their early progenitors, including Farīdūn, Īraj, and Manūchīhr, as descended from Noah. As the children of Isaac, these claimants portrayed Persians as inheritors of a prophetic legacy, and “when Persians identified Isaac as a father, there was an overwhelming concern to establish through prophetic genealogy a better place for
Persians in Islamic society.” The Persians were looking into the central Arab narratives of the Islamic tradition, and these local histories were written precisely during the era of the rise of local dynasties in Khurasan, which included the Sunni Tahirids (fl. 3rd/9th century), Saffarids (fl. 3rd/9th century), Shi'i Buyids (334–447/945–1055), Samanids (204–395/819–1005), and Ghaznavids (367–583/977–1187).

Previous scholarship has examined the Shuʿubiya movement of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th and its relationship to Perso-Muslim identity. Earlier scholarship considered claims of “Isaac as the Persians’ Ishmael” in the context of the Shuʿubiya movement and “inter-Arab tribal boasting,” but most recently Savant documented the ways in which claims of “Isaac as the Persians’ Ishmael” were attempts to link Persians to prophetic lineages. Assimilating Persians into the Prophet’s genealogy meant crafting a prophetic genealogy as a way to grant Persians a privileged and legitimate position in Islamic history. Broader claims about Persian Muslim legitimacy include a late prophetic hadith in which Muhammad asserts that Persians – citing Abraham and Ishmael – are heir to a prophetic genealogy and a Shi'i tradition which states that the mother of ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib (Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn) was the daughter of Yazdāgird III, the last Sasanian emperor. This would mean that Shi'i Imams, after and including the 4th Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, descended both from the Prophet and from Persian kings.

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133 Savant, “Isaac as the Persians’ Ishmael,” 5. “The Isaac claims, so prominent in the ninth and tenth centuries, however, open a window onto Persian Islamic identity in development, when entry into Islam still seemed, for some Persians, to require a more thorough refashioning of Iran’s pre-Islamic past in accord with that of a comparatively new Islam with Arab roots (16).”

The phenomenon of Persian local and regional histories asserting a privileged connection with the Prophet – whether these connections occur in the form of Muhammad or other prophets visiting the city in waking life or in dreams, *hadith* transmitters who lived and taught in the city as living virtues of the city and custodians of the faith, and Companions or descendants of the Prophet who lived and died in the region, and Imams connected to the city – is distinct from but related to Persian claims of prophetic genealogy. Such a phenomenon demonstrates how the authors of local histories employed varied modalities of piety to assert for Persians a privileged and legitimate position in Islamic history and to articulate a spatio-communal historical memory specific to each place on the basis of piety and legitimacy.

The following chapter addresses dreams as tools of legitimation in local and regional histories. It includes brief history of dream interpretation in Islam and places the Islamic oneirocritical tradition in the broader framework of theories of collective memory and culture making. A typology of dreams serves as a basis from which to consider the use of dreams in local and regional histories.
Chapter 3: Dreams as Tools of Legitimation

“Whoever sees me in sleep has seen me, for Satan cannot appear in my form, and the dream of the believer is 1/46th part of prophecy.”

Dreams constituted an integral part of the intellectual, spiritual, and social life of the medieval Islamic world. The Prophet addressed dreams in his hadith, the Qur’an speaks of the interpretations of dreams, and scholars composed dream manuals to interpret the dreams of the faithful. Dreams were used in polemical discourse to affirm or deny the validity or virtue of an individual, a theological position, or the relative merits of an action, such as study of hadith. Historical writing, including local histories, adduce dream narratives that serve various ends. Dreams occupy a liminal space on multiple levels: between waking life and prophecy, between the living and the dead, between the umma and the Prophet of Islam, and as a conduit of truth from the afterworld to this world.

Dreams affected all spectrums of Islamic society, and dream narratives are avenues through which we can read issues that concerned the writers of the early Islamic world. If the pious dreamed about encounters with the Prophet or pious exemplars, scholars interpreted them, and accounts of dreams – and the revelations they were claimed to contain – were recounted in local histories. Narratives of dreams or visions are contained in local histories, biographical material, and chronicles in addition to dream manuals and theological literature. Dreams or visions may occur in waking life or in

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sleep, and such narratives in historical writing may be as short as a couple sentences or be presented as longer developed narratives.

Dream narratives in local and regional histories were molded and presented in service of broader aims of the authors and the larger narrative of the particular local history. The dream narratives cannot be authenticated as having been really dreamed by a particular individual in the way it was recorded. Nevertheless, the literary representations of these dreams are authentic artifacts from the era in which they were written in that they record the themes, conflicts, and pressing issues that purportedly permeated the dream lives of the denizens of the early Islamic world.

This study uses a functionally skeptical methodology that understands dream narratives as literary artifacts of early Islamic social life and cultural production. This methodology treats dream narratives incorporated in literary sources as avenues through which we can access the issues that concerned the writing classes when the narratives were produced. Whether people truly dreamed what the narratives relate is irrelevant for this project. What matters is what the authors sought to accomplish, argue, debate, and demonstrate by including these dream narratives. This chapter agrees with Moin’s assertion that although modern studies of al-Mas'ūdī tend to ignore dreams, “This represents a hermeneutical lapse in our approach to early Islamic historiography: that is, a general tendency to prefer fact over ‘fiction’ and material over ‘immaterial’ reality. In contrast, I argue that the dream belongs to the lost ‘intellectual scaffoldings’ with the help of which early Muslim historians constructed narrative.”

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A recent collection of essays on dreaming in the Islamic world edited by Louise Marlow has further opened the study of Islamic oneiromancy to critical western scholarship. This dissertation agrees with the methodological presupposition of the volume, which follows the work of David Schulman and Guy G. Stroumsa, that narrative accounts and interpretations of dreams are cultural products, conditioned by the complex environments in which they were created and ‘expressive of culturally specific themes, patterns, tensions, and meanings’... Alongside the shaping forces of these historically specific contexts, cultural orientations, intellectual disciplines and literary genres also contributed to the understandings and representations of dreams.137

Kinberg, who has written extensively on dreams in the Islamic tradition, earlier advocated a related approach.138 Similarly, this chapter explores the role of dreams as literary devices. It aims to determine what functions dreams served in the literature and why dreams were effective in serving these aims.

**Dreams in the Islamic tradition**

Ideas about the origins and purposes of dreams, grounded in the hadith and the Qur’ān, inform Islamic dream interpretation theory. Hadith in the canonical collections attest to the trustworthiness of dreams in which the Prophet appears and generally support narratives featuring the Prophet. There are three dreams which feature the Prophet in al-Mas’ūdī’s history of the Abbasids, and these dreams also feature three caliphs: Harūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809), al-Mu’tasim (d. 227/842), and al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861). In these dream narratives the Prophet appears in order to make sure there is justice for the Shi’a, and the Abbasids are implicitly criticized for coming to power in a revolution that relied on Alid support, only to betray ‘Alī’s family once in power. al-Mas’ūdī couches his support of anti-Abbasid Shi’i sentiments through dreams narratives featuring the Prophet.

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138 “We should use each dream as a historical piece of evidence and concentrate on the conditions and ideas it reflects. The examination of dreams should not differ from the analysis of hadiths since both are products of given circumstances which prevailed at a given time and place, and both were narrated to answer certain questions, or to approve of existing phenomena; both, therefore, should be treated as the mirror of their environment.” Kinberg, “Literal Dreams and Prophetic Hadith,” 292.
the authority of ruʿyā, or visions, which may occur during wakefulness or in sleep. Satan cannot take Muḥammad’s form, and, therefore, the Prophet seen in a vision must be the true Prophet. The widely transmitted prophetic hadith that a good dream is one forty-sixths part of prophecy has many variant traditions, which place dreams as 1/90, 1/70, 1/50, 1/44, 1/60, 1/49, 1/44, 1/45, 1/24, 1/25, 1/76, 1/40 1/46, 1/76, 1/26 part of prophecy.\textsuperscript{139} Ruʿyā may occur during wakefulness or during sleep as dream-visions, but the implications of each as presented in the literary sources are different: “Having visions while awake generally made one a holy man – that is, a miracle maker – or a prophet, which, in a world that the ulama insisted was post-Prophetic, meant being a heretic. By contrast, hearing God while asleep simply made one human.”\textsuperscript{140}

Some are chosen by God to have the power to interpret dreams. Joseph’s power to interpret dreams is recorded in Qur’anic revelation in Sura 12 (Yūsuf), and there are Persian tafsīr works that exclusively focus on Sura 12, such as al-Sittīn al-jāmiʿ li-latāʿif al-basātīn by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Zayd Tūsī (written in the 6\textsuperscript{th}/12\textsuperscript{th} century), and Hadaṭīq al-haqāʾiq by Mowlā Moʿīn al-Dīn Farāḥī Haravī (d. 908/1502-3), also known as Molla Meskīn.\textsuperscript{141} In addition to the most famous and intricate stories of dreams in Sura 12, there are also ruʿyā, understood as dreams or visions, in Sura 17:60 (Al-Isrāʾ or Banī Isrāʾīl, The Night Journey, or Children of Israel), Sura 37:105 (Al-Ṣaḥḥāt, Those Who Set The Ranks, or Who Stand Arrayed in Rows), and Sura 48:27 (Al-Fath, Victory).

\textsuperscript{139} Kister, “Interpretation of Dreams,” 71.

\textsuperscript{140} Robinson, Islamic Historiography, 152.

\textsuperscript{141} See Mohammad Mahallati, “The Significance of Dreams and Dream Interpretation in the Qurʾan: Two Sufi Commentaries on Sūrat Yūsuf,” in Dreaming Across Boundaries.
Medieval authors, scholars, and laypeople used and interpreted dreams for various purposes. The Sufi tradition is particularly rich in such dreams and visions. These dreams, which are recorded in hagiographical, bibliographical, local histories, chronicles, and other literature, can be categorized into various genres. Infancy narratives and visions that prefigure the life of a pious individual – such as Āmina sighting the lights of Bosra during her pregnancy with the Prophet Muḥammad – offer a visionary complement to the records of the pious person’s later accomplishments. Dreams and visions play parts in conversion stories, foreshadowing of greatness, and evidence an individual’s piety and friendship with God in chronicles, hagiographical material, hadith and biographical literature.

Islamic literature contains numerous examples of pre-Islamic as well as Islamic characters for whom dreams are significant. According to Waḥ b. Munabbīḥ in a narrative transmitted by al-Kisāʾī, the birth of the Arabian prophet Hūd was heralded by a dream that prefigures his greatness.142 According to hadith adduced in Faḍāʾil al-Shām wa faḍl Dimashq by Abī al-Ḥasan Ṭalʿī ibn Muḥammad Rabaʾī (d. 444AH/1052 or 3), a text on the virtues of merits and Sham and Damascus, the Arabian prophet Hūd is allegedly buried near Damascus.143 Other sources find Hūd’s grave in Mecca or the Hadramawt in the Arabian Peninsula.144

142 Muhammad b. Ḥāfīz al-Ḫūṣaynī (11th cent). Qisas al-anbiyaʾ or The Tales of the Prophets of Kisaʾī, trans. Wheeler Thackston (Boston: Twayne, 1978), 109-110. For a dream that Isaac saw in which he foreshadowed his wife Rebecca bear him Esau and Jacob, see pp. 163-164. For a discussion of dreams that foretell the birth of prophets, see John Renard, Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 14-15, 192.

143 On Hūd and his burial in or near Damascus, see Faḍāʾil al-Shām / taḥqīq Abī ʿAbd al-Rahmān ʿĀdil ibn ʿĀdil (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2001), 77, 80, 86. This book is a collection of Faḍāʾil al-Shām works edited by Abū ʿAbd al-Rahmān ʿĀdil Ibn Saʾd and includes the texts of: Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī, Muhammad ibn Ahmad, 1306 (ca.)-1344, Faḍāʾil al-Shām; Rabaʾī, Ṭalʿī ibn Muḥammad, d. 1052 or 3, Faḍāʾil al-Shām wa faḍl Dimashq; Samʿānī, ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad, 1113-1166, Faḍāʾil al-Shām;
The Prophet Muḥammad himself interpreted dreams and was touched by God through them. Indeed, the “notion of reliance upon a Prophet whom God has closely guided in all his activity is further demonstrated in the many hadiths that deal with Muhammad’s dreams and his interpretation of his own and others’ dreams. One well-known tradition asserts that ‘the dreams of the prophets are wahy,’ and certainly Muhammad’s dreams were closely associated with the Revelation.”

The nexus between dreams, prophecy, and divine communication are embedded in the sunna of the Prophet and the early Islamic understanding of the significance of dreams.

Early Islamic dream manuals include those by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), whose text is the earliest extant manual. Other early dream interpreters who wrote on the subject include Muḥammad b. Sirin (34–110/654-728), whose dream manuals are not known to be extant today. Other authors include Ibrahīm b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Kirmānī (fl. late 2nd/8th century) and Abū Aḥmad Khalaf b. Aḥmad Sijistānī, the famous Saffarid amir of Sijistan (b. 352/963, d. 399/1008). al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Khallāl (fl. 4th/10th century) wrote a no longer extant biographical dictionary of dream interpreters called

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Ibn Rajab, ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Ahmad, 1336-1393, Faḍāʾ il-Shām; Asyūtī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī, Faḍāʾ il-Shām.

144 Renard writes on the location of Hūd’s grave that “…Tha’labī sets much of the story of the prophet Hūd in Mecca and locates his grave there; Kisāʾī focuses less on the Meccan connection and has him buried in Hadramawt, a region spanning the southeast end of the Arabian Peninsula (192).” Renard, Friends of God, page 192, note 9. See Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Tha’labī (d. 1035), ‘Arāʾis al-majālis fī qisas al-anbiyāʾ or Lives of the Prophets as Recounted by Tha’labī trans. William Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 105-113; Kisāʾī, Qisas al-anbiyāʾ trans. Thackston, 113, 116.


146 His father was manumitted by the caliph ‘Umar after being taken captive during the conquests in Iraq, and his mother was a slave of Abū Bakr. John C. Lamoreaux, Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 19.
Tabaqāt al-muʿarribin, who apparently recorded at least 7,500 people known for their talents as dream interpreters.\textsuperscript{147} At the close of this formative period Abū Saʿd Nasr b. Yaʿqūb al-Dīnawarī wrote his colossus of a book on the interpretation of dreams in 399/1008, which he dedicates to his Abbasid patron caliph al-Qādir Billāh (r. 381-422 /991-1031) as al-Qādirī fī ilm al-taʿbīr (Qādir’s Work on Dream Interpretation, or The Powerful Work on Dream Interpretation).\textsuperscript{148}

By the 4\textsuperscript{th}/10\textsuperscript{th} century “formalism had all but replaced the anecdote as the primary mode of expression in Muslim dream manuals,” and with the concise and formalistic dream manual of the above mentioned Abū Ahmad Khalaf b. Aḥmad Sijistānī that “we encounter for the first time in the Muslim tradition a dream manual with a format that resembles the dream manuals of an earlier, pre-Islamic past, whether that of the Hellenic tradition (Artemidorus), or those of an even more ancient past, such as the fragmentary dream manuals extant in Demotic and Akkadian.”\textsuperscript{149} However, it is also during this period that the dream manual genre expands in content and orientation as it became, in structure, more formalized.\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 17-19.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 59. In studying the transmission of dream manuals, Lamoreux studies the riwāyahs – the prefatory remarks at the beginning of works which exist in many early dream manuals in which an author lists how, when, and from whom they studied and received the material, providing a chain of authorities for the work’s transmission and functioning like an isnad – of dream manuals in Andalusia in order to study the reception and transmission of dream manuals. The names listed in riwāyahs are then useful if these transmitters are recorded in the biographical material, which they are for the case of 5\textsuperscript{th}/11\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th}/12\textsuperscript{th} century Andalusia, and Lamoreux finds that ulama who were also judges, jurists and were active in other posts transmitted dream manuals (123-129).

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 41.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 76-77.
One of the reasons for the widespread use of dream narratives in the literary sources may be that – in addition to their general saturation of early Islamic society – dream narratives contain standard phrases and motifs. This formulaic quality makes dreams viable as malleable templates on which to add particular judgments about hadith transmitters or edifying universal messages about ideal behavior or belief. Some common and relevant tropes in dreams include images of a chain for lineage, a tree emanating bright light, visions of Muḥammad, Ḵiḍr and ṣubda al in dreams, and learning things, such as memorizing the Qur’ān and hadith during dreams.

The intention of this chapter is to expand the use of local histories and integrate a discussion of dream narratives from local histories into a broader framework that encompasses the discourse of literary self-representation in the context of a localized identity. Much of the previous literature on medieval Persian local histories has focused on administrative, political, and social history. Thus dream episodes in local histories have not attracted scholarly attention because, from the perspective of scholarship of administrative, political, and social history, they appear to be curiosities. Paying serious attention to the role that dream narratives play in local histories will allow scholarship to integrate dream narratives into the mosaic framework of literatures that informs early Islamic historiography. In this sense, dream narratives are akin to the folk etymologies and foundation narratives about cities addressed in chapter 5.

A typology of dreams based on examples drawn from historical writing will frame and situate the discussion of how dream narratives in local and regional histories were presented in service of broader aims of the authors. The focus here is on the multiple

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151 Kinberg, “The Individual’s Experience,” 425-44.

152 For a treatment of dreams in the context of saints, or awliya, see Renard, Friends of God, esp. chap. 3.
ways in which dreams are manipulated and molded to serve the broader narrative arc of the literature and the aims of the author. In Robinson’s words, “imposing narrative form upon disparate materials drawn from memory, oral and written reports and documents, is itself a creative act, and the techniques the historian uses to tell his story, such as characterizing, handling time, introducing and concluding, are akin – some would say identical – to those used by fictions writers to tell theirs.” In particular, this includes a discussion of how legitimating dreams legitimate the dreamer, his associates, family, and social group, the person who was dreamed about, and the place in which the dream took place. The typology of relevant dream patterns includes polemical or sectarian dreams, premonitory dreams, and validating or legitimating dreams. The examples are drawn from Persian local and regional histories and supplemented with examples from other genres of literature, such as chronicles and biographical material. Hadith and primary and secondary literature about dream theory provide the theoretical framework and theological background for dreams interpretation.

The purpose and function of dream narratives in local and regional histories become clear only when placed in their appropriate historical and institutional contexts. By the 4th/10th century various local dynasties rose to power during the fracturing of central caliphal control of the Islamic empire. Canonical hadith collections were also compiled. These two developments provide a critical undercurrent to understanding how and why local and regional histories draw upon canonical authority (hadith) as well as non-canonical forms of authority (dream narratives). Dream narratives therefore belong in a broader discourse that addresses issues of heirship, lineage, authority, non-biological

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forms of genealogy, and legitimation. Also relevant to this broader discussion are *hadith qudsi*, which trace their *isnad* not to Muhammad but directly to God, and the figure of Khidr as a mode of non-biological genealogy that bypasses the issue of human lineage.

Certain dream accounts are polemical or sectarian. These accounts may be included in historical writing to advance the claims of the author, and they may evidence the sectarian position of the author and his environment. Polemical or sectarian dream accounts may also be included in biographical dictionaries, where they present a judgment on a person, his practice, or his theological stance. Inclusion of such material in a dream manual may reveal the sectarian biases and polemic intentions of the author.

**Tārikh-i Tabaristān**

An example of a polemical dream comes from *Tārikh-i Tabaristān* in a narrative about *abdāl* and two 'Umars who ruled as caliphs. In this dream, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. d. 23/644) was seen physically stationed a few levels under 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ('Umar II, d. 101/720). *Tārikh-i Tabaristān* was composed by Bahā al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Isfandiyār (d. after 613/1217), known as Ibn Isfandiyār, in the early part of the 7th/13th century. Both E.G. Browne, in his 1905 abridged translation of the text, and 'Abbas Iqbal, in his 1941 edition of the text, date the Ibn Isfandiyār’s composition of the text to 613/1216. Ibn Isfandiyār’s description of the circumstances of his composition of the book suggest that he was well-travelled, including time in Baghdad, Rayy, Amul, and Khwarazm, and that he composed his work partially on the basis of other texts that he came across during his travels. These sources include the no longer extant *Bawand-nāma*, composed for the Husām ad-Dawla Shahriyār b. Qārin, and *Uqūd siḥr wa qalā‘idu*
The anecdote about dreaming of abdal reads as follows:

Ibn Isfandiyar states that in Khwarazm, he heard Niqham [al-Din] Sam'ani speaking at the minbar say that in his sleep (be khwab did) he saw one of the abdal of the Messenger of God (prayers and peace be upon him and his family), in the seat of honor of the prophetic mission (dar sadr-e risalat neshaste). 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz was beside him (pahluye ou), and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was a few levels under 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz ('Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb be-chand daraje zir 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz). ‘I asked: ‘Oh Messenger of god, who is this person sitting beside you (pahluye to)?’ He answered: ‘It is ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-'Aziz.’ I asked them one by one until I reached ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and I asked ‘Oh Messenger of God, how did Ibn ‘Abd al-'Aziz reach such closeness (Ibn ‘Abd al-'Aziz chandin qurbat be-che yaf)?’ And he replied ‘He was just.’ And then I asked ‘Was ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb not more just than he?’ And he replied: ‘He ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was just in an era of justice, and this [person, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-'Aziz] was [just] in an era of oppression (jur) and injustice.’

The 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz that Ibn Isfandiyar refers to in the above story is the Umayyad Caliph known as 'Umar II, (r. 99-10/717-720), who was the great-grandson, on

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155 Of the manuscripts that Browne used in his abridged translation, there are four main ones and two supplementary ones, all of which date from the 11th to 13th century. Iqbal based his 1941 Persian edition largely on two manuscripts, one from 10th century and another from 11th century, supplementing these with later manuscripts that apparently all derive from one defective copy. Of the four main and two extra manuscripts Browne used in his abridged translation: N 1134 India Office manuscript (=N 568 in Etche’s Catalogue), dated AH 1032, is Browne’s manuscript A; Add. 7633 of the British Museum, dated, AH 1067 is Browne’s manuscript B; Or. 2778, dated AH 1237 is Browne’s manuscript C; No. 307 (=Ouseley 214) of the Bodleian, dated AH 1068 is Browne’s manuscript D. Browne also consulted a manuscript and another manuscript dated AH 1295, which belonged o the late M. Ch. Shefer, is now in the Bilbioteque Nationale at Paris. Browne, Abridged Translation, 1. Iqbal based his 1941 edition largely on two manuscripts, one from 10th century and another from 11th century, supplementing these with later manuscripts that apparently all derive from one defective copy. See also Mary Boyce, Letter of Tansar (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1968), 24.

the maternal side, of the second of the Rashidun, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, known as ʿUmar I (r. 13-23/634-644; d. 23/644). The *abdāl* featured in the dream are one of the rank of saints who, according to different sources, vary in their number, with either 40, 269, 300, or possibly even 7 at any given time; their identity as *abdāl* are unknown, and they are instrumental in maintaining the order of the universe.\(^{157}\)

It is because of the caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz’s justice that he is placed in a seat of honor next to the Prophet. It is not incidental that ʿUmar II is the caliph who is credited with repealing the stridently anti-ʿAlid practice of publicly cursing ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Hasan, and ʿUṣayn. Ibn Isfandiyār underscores and lauds ʿUmar II’s piety, in addition to his earlier praises, that his justice, knowledge, superiority, and clemency are well known (‘*ʿaḍl o ʿilm o faḍl ḥilm-e ou mʿarūf ast*’).\(^{158}\) Indeed, by claiming that while ʿUmar I was just in an era of justice while ʿUmar II was just in an era of injustice and tyranny (‘*be-rūzegār jūr o zulm*’),\(^{159}\) Ibn Isfandiyār credits the latter with persevering in a hostile and anti-ʿAlid climate of tyranny and therefore being more just.

The assertion that ʿUmar I ranks lower than ʿUmar II suggests a sectarian interpretation of the characters. It is not clear if the origin of the story is Alid, Imami Shiʿi or Ismaʿili, or Zaydi Shiʿi.\(^{160}\) The overall tenor of Ibn Isfandiyār’s text is certainly

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160 During this period the Nizari Ismaʿilis (or Eastern Ismaʿilis), led by Ḥasan-i Sabbāh (d. 518/1124), established themselves in the Caspian region and “founded a vigorous state in Persia (2),” with its center located in the mountain fortress of Alamūt in the Caspian region. According to Daftary, “The Nizārī state in Persia, which had played a perceptible role in the cultural life of the time, collapsed in the middle of the 7th/13th century, only under the assault of the all-conquering Mongols.” Concerning the beginning of the period when the Ismaʿilis become more visible, it was after “obscure and underground beginnings, lasting for almost a century, the Ismaʿili movement suddenly appeared on the historical stage shortagly after the
Alid and generally Shi’i, and the possible differences between these categories are discussed in chapter 4. The presence of Zaydi Imams in Tabaristan and the Caspian region suggests the possibility of Zaydi influence on this narrative.\footnote{161}

Tabaristan, along with cities including Qum, served as a refuge for Alids fleeing Abbasid persecution. Abū Ḥāfīm is credited with converting many locals in Tabaristan, including Mardawī (d. 323/935) who briefly formed a Ziyarid “state.”\footnote{162} Arab governors contributed to the spread of Sunni Islam in Tabaristan in the 2nd/8th century, but the presence of Alid rulers in Daylam contributed to the Zaydi influence.\footnote{163} Khan traces the beginning of Alid claimants taking refuge in Daylam to Yāhū b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Hasan, a great-grandson of al-Hasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who took refuge in Daylam in 175/791 to escape Abbasid persecution after two of his brothers were executed; more Alid sayyids migrated to Tabaristan in the mid to late 2nd/8th century from the Hijaz, Syria, and Iraq.\footnote{164} Khan argues that “Alid rule in Tabaristan was the cause of the spread of Islam and the Zaydi madhhab in the south Caspian regions,” and concludes that Zaydism was already introduced in the South Caspian by the mid 9th century.\footnote{165}


\footnote{162} Newman, Twelver Shi’ism, 35.


\footnote{164} Ibid., 258-260.

\footnote{165} Ibid., 263, 264.
In the centuries prior to Ibn Isfandiyār there had been Shi‘i activities in the Tabaristan region. During the 4/10th century, Abū Ḥātim Aḥmad b. Hamdān al-Rāzī, who later became the chief dā‘ī of Rayy, spread the Ismā‘ili da‘wa in the Caspian region by sending dā‘is to Tabaristan and Gurgan as well as Isfahan Adharbayjan. Abū Ḥātim went to Tabaristan himself around 313/925, “a sanctuary for numerous ‘Alids who had fled the ‘Abbasids,” and converted many in Daylam and Gilan, including Mardāwīj b. Ziyār (d. 323/935), who rebelled against Asfār b. Shirawahy (d. 319/931) and then founded the Ziyarid state with his capital at Rayy. 166

That the narrative includes ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb at all ranking among the abdal in the seat of honor of the prophetic mission (dar sadr-e risālat neshaste) suggests that it is not vehemently Shi‘i, because it acknowledges that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, regarded as one of the usurpers of the caliphate from ‘Alī, is seated in an elevated position. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is lowered, but he is not outright denigrated or condemned. Rather, the interlocutor is told that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was just in an era of justice, while ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was just in an era of oppression.

It is not Ibn Isfandiyār, author of Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, who dreamed this. Rather, he states that in Khwarazm, he heard Niḍḥām al-Dīn Sam‘ānī speaking at the minbar. However, Khwarazm is not known for particularly Alid or Shi‘i sentiment in Ibn Isfandiyār’s era in the 6th/12th century. On the contrary, Bosworth argues “Khwarazm became, like Khurasān and Transoxania, a bastion of Sunni orthodoxy and scholarship,” and “one manifestation of the orthodoxy of Khwarazm was, according to Ibn Faḍlān, the

166 Abū Ḥātim also converted Asfār b. Shirawahy to Isma‘ilism. Daftary, Isma‘ilīs, 120-121, 165.
customary cursing of ʿAlī at the end of the daily prayers.” The persistence of Zoroastrianism or Christianity in Khwarazm does not seem to explain such an Alid or Shiʿi bent to the dream narrative. Neither the influence of the Sunni Ghaznavids nor the Sunni Seljuks can explain this Alid or Shiʿi tone.

Who, then, is Niḍḥām al-Dīn Samʿānī, who Ibn Isfandiyār says he saw speak about this dream narrative? Niḍḥām al-Dīn Samʿānī does not appear to be the famous al-Samʿānī, Abū Saʿd ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. Abī al-Muẓaffar (al-) Manṣūr al-Tamīmī al-Marwazī al-Shafīʿī (b. Marw 506/1113, d. Marw 562/1166), who was the Arab biographer and author of the *Kitab al-Ansāb*, who was known as Tāj al-Islām (or al-Dīn) Kiwām al-Dīn, and also known as Ibn al-Samʿānī. The famous al-Samʿānī did travel widely in his study of hadith, including time in Khwarazm. The chronology makes it possible that he overlapped with Ibn Isfandiyār, although it is unclear who this Niḍḥām al-Dīn Samʿānī is based on the information Ibn Isfandiyār supplies.

Ibn Isfandiyār tells several stories in the *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan* about the caliph ʿUmar II. These other narratives also demonstrate an Alid or Shiʿi sectarian tone. The stories are polemical, and their purpose is to affirm the position of the Alids and denigrate those who have persecuted the Alids and the Shiʿa. The stories are pious and portray ʿUmar II as deeply repentant about the wrongs inflicted on the Alids by his Umayyad predecessors.

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167 C.E Bosworth, “ḴhWārazm,” *EI2*.

168 Browne dates Niḍḥām al-Dīn Samʿānī to the first half of the 7th/13th century, presumably because he is described as a contemporary of Ibn Isfandiyār, but Browne provides no other information about him.

169 I discuss these narratives in Chapter 4.
In sum, this dream about the two 'Umar – 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz – in which an abdaāl of the Messenger of God offers an explanation of their physical proximity to him, is an example of a dream that judges the two major political figures and confers legitimacy upon one over and above the other. Like dreams in the biographical literature that judge, in an oblique fashion through the scrim of a dream, the merits of individuals and theological positions, here too a dream narrative advocates the relative merit of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz over 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. The former had to strive harder to be a just man in an era of tyranny in which the latter did not have to contend. At very least it is clear that the inclusion of this kind of polemical and sectarian account couched in a dream narrative demonstrates that dream accounts can be read as social history.

An overview of the form, content, and focus of Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan places the dream narrative and other stories about Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in context. Alids, Sayyids, and the family of the Prophet are integral components of Ibn Isfandiyār’s Islamic narrative for Tabaristan. The text emphasizes several key themes: the historical independence of Tabaristan; the importance of Shi‘i Imams in the area; and that the Imams of Tabaristan are the local exemplars and interpreters of the faith who exercise religious authority and guidance. The living faḍā’il of Tabaristan – princes, patricians, rulers (such as the Ispahbads) notables (ma‘ārif), ascetics, writers, physicians (atuba), astronomers (munajjamān), philosophers (hukama), poets and sayyids – are the human counterparts to the physical excellences of Tabaristan. In addition to the emphasis on the pre-Islamic Persian nobility and the
Islamic lineage of Sayyids that form the backbone of the elite and the ruling classes of Tabaristan, Ibn Isfandiyār highlights the magnanimity of the local patricians and rulers.

There are four very broad sections with which Ibn Isfandiyār organizes his work. First is a section on the virtues and marvels of Tabaristan, and then the section – although it is not a biographical dictionary section – on the princes, nobles, doctors, hermits, writers, physicians, astronomers, philosophers, poets, and otherwise notable men. The overall organization of the work is thematic and chronological, but not entirely annalistic. Ibn Isfandiyār includes material on the various patricians and notables of Tabaristan, although these are not in a biographical dictionary entry format but are rather subsumed within the larger narratives about the qualities of Tabaristan and descriptions of its denizens and ruling families and their political and military travails. The latter parts of the work includes a significant amount of military and political history that chronicles the decline of the House of Washmgīr and the ascendancy of the Ghaznavids and the Seljuqs, as well as the revivification of the Bāwandids to their final decline and fall.

The first section concerns the foundation of the kingdom of Tabaristan, which includes its pre-Islamic history and etymologies of the region. More specifically, this first section contains a translation of the Letter of Tansar of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. ca. 139/756), itself a translation from Pahlavi into Arabic the letter of Tansar of Pars, the chief herbad under the Sasanian Ardashir Bābakān, to Jasnaštāḥ, Prince of Tabaristan.170

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170 For a translation of this text see Boyce, trans., Letter of Tansar. Ibn Muqaffaʿ translated from Pahlavi into Arabic the letter of Tansar of Pars, the chief herbad under the Sasanian Ardashir Bābakān, to Gushṭāsp, Prince of Tabaristan. There is disagreement about the authenticity and dating of the letter. The original letter of Tansar, attributed to Tansar, the chief Herbad under the first Sasanian Ardashir I (r. 224-240 CE), no longer exists (if it was truly written by Tansar in the 3rd century), as nor does Ibn Muqaffaʿ’s 8th century translation from Pahlavi (Middle Persian), into Arabic; what we have is preserved in Ibn Isfandiyār’s own translation back into Persian (New Persian) from Ibn Muqaffaʿ’s Arabic in the early 13th century in the Tarikh-i Tabaristan as well as some short sections quoted in Masʿūdī and al-Birūnī. There are
There follows a description of the initial settlement of Tabaristan and its cities. The *faḍāʾil* – both living and material – follow.

The second section chronicles the history of the dynasties of Washmgīr and Buwayh from their ascendancy to their establishment as the local rulers. This second section includes a significant amount of political and military history organized chronologically and thematically. Importantly for this project, this section underscores the Alid Sayyid elements of Tabaristan, its historical unruliness and frequent uprisings against external control, and the allegedly Shiʿi stance of the Abbasid caliphs – including Harūn al-Rashīd and his son al-Maʾmūn – and various pro-Alid sentiments that bolster the Shiʿi and the religious credentials of Tabaristan and its denizens. This section also includes material on dreams and *abdāl*, the saint substitutes with intercessory powers, who live in the world. Ibn Isfandiyār documents the Talibi Sayyids who ruled Tabaristan. The Sayyids from the house of `Alī are portrayed as the true custodians of religion and the guardians and rulers of Tabaristan.

The argument for religious legitimacy in *Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān* is more than just theoretical. Ibn Isfandiyār’s emphasis on local political and fiscal autonomy and assertion of religious authority go hand in hand. Religious legitimacy and authority furthers the claims for fiscal and political autonomy. In Ibn Isfandiyār’s portrayal, the presence of religious notables and authorities justifies the righteous fiscal and

anachronisms in Ibn Muqaffa’’s translation, including passes in which he quotes the Qurʾan and `Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib to make the letter more resonant for the Muslim audience. The letter, even if it is an anachronistic literary forgery and example of Sasanid propaganda, falls into the genre of advice literature: it is Tansar’s response to Gushnasp in which he provides guidance and advice on how to position himself with respect to Ardashir I the founder of the Sasanian empire, in which Tansar advises that Gushnasp submit to Ardashir I. Thus, whether the Letter of Tansar is based on a 3rd century original or is a 6th century “literary fiction” and piece of Sasanian propaganda, it twins Zoroastrianism and Sasanian rulership and articulates a vision of the union of religion and statehood. See esp. Boyce, 2-13, 29-33, 58, (quoting `Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib) and p. 61 (quoting the Qurʾan).
administrative localism. The region’s political and fiscal independence reinforces the image of Tabaristan as a community set apart and a haven for Alids. As Robinson notes, “history writing is a potent source of legitimacy and criticism not simply because it can deliver particular versions or reconstructions of the past. It can also reflect (or impose) ways of thinking about time, about change, about how the individual relates to the state, and the state to the world.”

Multiple times the implicit relationship between religious autonomy and administrative and fiscal freedom rises to the fore: religious authority and pious heritage are coupled with a fierce localism and assertion of fiscal and political independence.

Alids, Sayyids, and the family of the Prophet are integral components of Ibn Isfandiyār’s Islamic narrative for Tabaristan. According to Tārīkh-i Ţabaristān, the region is a place associated with the family of the Prophet and regional rulers who also served as custodians and guardians of the faith which, in this case, is largely Shi‘i. General anecdotes about Sufis, Sayyids, and or other notable Muslims set a tone of Alid piety and emphasis on the Shi‘i tradition and Sayyids associated with the region.

Ibn Isfandiyār highlights Tabaristan’s violent and anti-Arab and anti-Caliph sentiment. This is particularly clear in a narrative about the revolt of the Qārinid prince Wandād-Hurmuzd which began in 165/781, along with the Ispahbad Sharwīn the Bāwandid, against the caliph’s armies, which began during the reign of the third Abbasid caliph Muḥammad ibn Mansūr al-Mahdī (r. 158/775 – 169/785) and continued, as we see

171 Robinson, Islamic Historiography, 121.

172 These Qārinids were a local dynasty of Ţabaristān who ruled over parts of Tabaristān’s mountains areas for around 300 years from the era of Sassanid Khusraw I, known as Khusraw Anushirvan (r. 531-579 A.D.) until 225/840 until 225/840. M. Rekaya, “Ḳārinids,” EI2.
in this story, including and even after the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd (r. 170/786 – 193/809). Harūn al-Rashīd is the caliph featured in this story.

The unruly people of Tabaristan, galvanized and organized by Qārinid prince Wandād-Hurmuzd and his ally in this venture with Sharwīn Bāwand, revolt against the caliph’s forces and kill his governors. In Ibn Isfandiyār’s telling, Harūn al-Rashīd considers the revolt and slaughter justified, deeming that the people of Tabaristan revolted against an unjust governor. Harūn al-Rashīd then sends to Tabaristan ʿAbdullāh b. Saʿīd al-Harashī as the new governor, who governed for three years and four months. The purpose of the narrative is to vindicate the Alids of Tabaristan. Even the caliph, whose forces were slaughtered, acknowledges and confirms the legitimacy of the Tabaristanis.

There are other markers of Ibn Isfandiyār’s pro-Alid and anti-Umayyad stance. Ibn Isfandiyār’s description of Abū Muslim showcases the text’s pro-Alid and anti-Umayyad tone: “There was never a more wonderful story than that of Abū Muslim. To a villager of humble original and lowly position God gave so much power that he took in hand and successfully carried out one of the greatest enterprises ever planned.” Ibn Isfandiyār mentions ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib in between sections on Abū Muslim, despite the fact that they could not have chronologically overlapped. Ibn Isfandiyār’s intention is

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173 The Bawandids were a long-standing Iranian dynasty that ruled in Tabaristan for over 700 years (45750/665-1349), primarily in the mountain regions but also in the lowlands of Tabaristan which lie to the south of the Caspian Sea. R.N. Frye, “Bāwand,” EI2.

174 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 196; Browne, Abridged Translation, 140-141.

175 I have quoted here G. E. Browne’s translation, Browne, Abridged Translation, 110; Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 166.

176 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 167; Browne, Abridged Translation, 111-112.
clearly to establish and develop the validity of Alid claims and Tabaristan’s ties to the
family of the Prophet through ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

Given the form and content of the rest of Ibn Isfandiyār’s text, it is evident that
dreams are one among other signals of Alid authority and legitimacy. Dreams are a
medium that complements akhbar and other narratives and through which Ibn Isfandiyār
emphasizes the region’s historical independence, the importance of Shi‘i Imams in the
area, and that the Imams of Tabaristan are the local exemplars and interpreters of the faith
who exercise religious authority and guidance. The argument for religious legitimacy is
entwined with claims for fiscal and political autonomy of Tabaristan. This material
situates Ibn Isfandiyār’s sectarian polemical dreams about ’Umar I in its religio-social
context.

Other examples of polemical or sectarian dreams are included in dream manuals
and in biographical dictionaries. One such narrative involves Abū Bakr and a dream that
fulfills its interpretation. We may read the following material in two ways: one reading
finds it an example of sectarian polemic, while another reading finds it a warning about
the power of the interpretation of dreams and the potential negative power of dreams.

This example is a narrative related by the 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th} century Sunni polymath Ibn
Qutayba in his ʿIbārat al-ruʿyā, believed to be the earliest extant dream manual.\footnote{Lamoreaux, Dream Interpretation, 11.} In this
narrative, “a woman who came to the Prophet and told him that she saw in a dream a
beam of the roof of her house breaking down; he interpreted it by saying that her husband
would return; so it happened. After some time she saw in her sleep the same dream; she
came to the Prophet but did not meet him, and related the story of her dream to Abū Bakr. He interpreted it saying that her husband would die. And so the man dies.

We may read this account as a sectarian dream and a polemical account. According to this reading, this would not be a Sunni account, because Sunnis revere Abū Bakr as a pious person, but rather a Shi‘i story that insults Abū Bakr. According to this reading, Abū Bakr kills the husband through his interpretation of it although Muhammad’s interpretation of the same dream occasioned a happy ending. The suggestion is stark: Abū Bakr had no business interpreting the dream but did so and through his bad interpretation killed the man. When the Prophet was no longer around, Abū Bakr assumed the role of the interpreter, and he mismanaged the interpretation so badly that he killed the man. The suggestion may be that when Muḥammad had died and Abū Bakr assumed the leadership of the umma, he was unqualified. Ibn Qutayba stresses that whoever practices oneiromancy must be equipped with the appropriate skills and temperament; religious rectitude and scholarly aptitude are paired as the necessary qualifications for dream interpretation. This explanation suggests that dream accounts can be read as social history, in this case a Shi‘i story that insults Abū Bakr. The message is that those who are not qualified should neither lead nor interpret dreams.

Ibn Qutayba’s oneirocritical manual includes varied examples of dream interpretation. Some are dreams that reflect religio-political condemnation of a group (such as the khawārīj), while others support the veracity of a hadith, or explain the meaning of a peculiar word. Yet other dreams attest to how faithful a particular believer (such as Abū Bakr) was, and others explain the rise of the Umayyad dynasty and the

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resultant *fitnas*. There are also examples of dreams and their interpretations that are more focused on appropriate religious practice and belief, such as those about how the pious enter Paradise. Still other dreams warn and caution the dreamer. There are also dreams in which the dreamer hears the recitation of verses unknown to him, the content of which may be religious or worldly or both.

However, even if we do not read the dream as a sectarian narrative, it is evident that dreams can have a broadly ideological, if not necessarily sectarian, content. Incorporating a dream narrative affords the author the opportunity to offer an explanation of the dream in a manner that is in concert with this broader literary project. In the same ‘*Ibārat al-ru’yā*’ by Ibn Qutayba there are other accounts of how the Prophet interpreted his own dreams.179 The Prophet had a dream about wearing two bracelets which he removes and breaks; Muḥammad interpreted this as referencing the appearance of the false prophets Musaylima and al-Aswad al-ʾAnsī. Other examples from the ‘*Ibārat al-ru’yā*’ include prophetic dreams about the victory of the Arabs over non-Arabs, who will embrace Islam, as well as a dream about the excellence and purity of Islam.180 The dream about the bracelets confirms that Muḥammad knew that false prophets would arise and that he would defeat them. The other dreams support the superiority of Islam, Arabs, and Muḥammad’s mission.

We may also choose to read this not as a Shiʿi or Alid polemical condemnation of Abū Bakr but a warning about the power and danger of the interpretation of dreams. If

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we read it in this way, the goodness or pleasantness of the interpretation of the dream is not exclusively related to the piousness of the interpreter, although the interpreter should be pious. This example demonstrates a strong belief in the power of the interpreter.

Presenting a dream for interpretation is an invitation for the interpreter to occasion his interpretation. One must then be careful about the interpreters with whom ones shares dreams. Even a pious individual, such as Abū Bakr, can cause dreams to fulfill the negative interpretations. The implication is that the interpreter causes the event.

The interpretation of dreams occasioning the interpretation highlights the negative power of dreams. The qualifications necessary for dream interpretation stipulated by Ibn Qutayba and others then speaks to the fear of both the power of dreams and the contagion – through interpretation – of this negative power. If even someone of unimpeachable moral rectitude, such as Abū Bakr, can cause negative effects through his negative interpretation of a dream, this speaks to the power – both negative and positive – wielded by dreams, and the consequent caution with which dreams should be treated. Since the interpreter has the power, in part, to bring the events that the dream predicts to fruition by interpreting the dream, it was tremendously important that dream interpreters be familiar with the Qur'an and hadith and Islamic tradition and, amongst other qualities, that he be of sound moral character. The idea that the very interpretation of the dream can occasion the fulfillment of this explanation appears in both Jewish and Islamic oneirocritical material.\(^{181}\) It underscores belief that whoever interprets the dream can occasion the fulfillment of the particular interpretation.

\(^{181}\) Kister, “The Interpretation of Dreams.”
Dream narratives appear in both forms of local historical writing: biographical dictionaries and histories that are more focused on chronicling political events. Humphreys has described the bifurcation of local historical writing into two categories: those that are primarily biographical dictionaries and those that are chronicles of events that occurred in a particular place, such as a city or a region. Biographical dictionaries contain dream narratives about the reliability of certain hadith transmitters. In such dreams, the identity of the dreamer is usually less important; what is important is the person seen in the dream and the message the dream conveys about him. The dream is generally included in the biographical entry not of the dreamer but about the person who appears in the dream. Dreams about hadith transmitters such as Abū Hurayra (d. 57, 58, or 59/677-679), Yazīd b. Harūn (d. 206/821), Abū Zakariya Yahya b. Maʿīn (d. 233/847), ʿAlī b. ʿAsim (d. 201/816), Abān b. Abī ʿAyyāsh (d. 138/755) reflect the opinions and concerns of the hadith critics, such as an uneasiness amongst hadith critics about Abū Hurayra’s reliability as a transmitter. The dreams also evidence efforts to delegitimize or legitimize the individuals as hadith transmitters, as in the case of Yahya b. Maʿīn and a dream which unambiguously suggested that it was his relationship with hadith that raised Yahya to a blissful rank in heaven in which he was permitted to encounter God.

The above suggests that dreams functioned as validators of truth and authority similar to the way in which isnads validated the truth and authority of hadith. It is the very medium of dreams that confirms and validates its contents, much in the way that the

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182 For a discussion of these two types of local historical writing, see Humphreys, Islamic History, 132. For a more recent treatment of local history, see Robinson, Islamic Historiography, 138-142.

183 Kinberg, “Dreams as a Means to Evaluate Ḥadīth,” 80.

184 Ibid., 82-83, 88.
soundness of a hadith is accepted on the authority of the transmitters in the isnad attached to it. Despite the seeming circularity of the logic at work, the function of dreams in narratives is to signal that the content revealed in the dream is valid.

An example from classical Arabic biographical literature illustrates the use of the dream as a literary device that frames judgments of characters and theological stances. In classical Arabic biographical literature focused on piety, the contemporaries Abū Nasr Bishr b. al-Ḥārith (c. 152/767 – 227/842) and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (164-241/780-855) loom large. Both were Sunnis and pious exemplars but differed in their approaches to piety: Ibn Ḥanbal was devoted to the Sunna as transmitted in hadith, while Bishr b. al-Ḥārith abandoned his early study of hadith to become an ascetic who lived a life of intense solitude and asceticism. Bishr b. al-Ḥārith is also known as Bishr al-Ḥafī, “the barefoot,” for his dislike of wearing shoes as a manifestation of his devotion to zuhd.

The biographical literature includes reports of dreams and visions that judge the relative merits of the approaches of Bishr b. al-Ḥārith and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. Cooperson notes the case of Bilāl al-Khawwās, who “reports that he saw al-Khiḍr in a dream and asked him his opinion of the two men. Al-Khiḍr replied that Bishr had left no one like himself behind when he died. This makes him superior to the imam, who was still alive in 227/842. The imam himself, according to al-Khiḍr, was a siddīq ... This report evidently favors Bishr the ‘Sufi’ but does not neglect Ibn Ḥanbal.”185 The judgment couched in the form of dream is clear, and yet its very form – a dream in which Khiḍr, the mysterious shape-shifter and teacher of prophets, speaks to the dreamer – exempts it from controversy. Since one of Khiḍr’s roles is to initiate the faithful onto the Sufi path,

185 Cooperson, Classical Arabic Biography, 182.
dreams – and moreover dreams that stress some aspect of the Sufi path – are a natural mode in which he appears.

**Khiḍr**

Khiḍr, like the Prophet, is important as a legitimator in dream narratives. Khiḍr is an eternal being who is a source of esoteric eternal wisdom. As such, his presence in dream narratives signals privileged access to special knowledge. Al-Khiḍr (“the green”) is said to be referred to, although not identified by name, in the Qur’ān. In the story about Mūsa in 18:59-81, Mūsa meets the unnamed servant of God, who performs seemingly outrageous actions, which Mūsa could not understand, although he promised the unnamed servant he would not ask questions. When Mūsa repeatedly speaks and asks why the servant of God has performed outrageous actions, the servant of God explains his actions but leaves Mūsa. This servant of God is identified in the majority of the commentary literature as Khiḍr, although some commentaries identify the servant of God as Mūsa’s servant.¹⁸⁶

Through the identification of Khiḍr as an immortal character who has drunk the water of eternal life, this Qur’ānic story resonates with, and has been traced to, pre-Islamic sources. These sources include the Gilgamesh epic, in which Gilgamesh searches for knowledge of eternal life¹⁸⁷; the Alexander romance, in which Alexander searches for

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¹⁸⁷ Gilgamesh searches for and finally meets Utnapishtim, who survived the Babylonian Flood, in order to learn from him how to attain immortality. Utnapishtim shows Gilgamesh where to find a plant that will give him immortality, but once Gilgamesh acquires the plant, a serpent seizes it. Gilgamesh therefore does
the spring of life, and the Jewish legend of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi.\textsuperscript{188} Khiḍr and Elijah are sometimes paired together and are at other times identified as one and the same.\textsuperscript{189} The mysterious Khiḍr is given many genealogies, eras, and homes – he may live on an island or on a green carpet in the heart of the sea – and he is credited with immortality, having drunk the water of immortality.\textsuperscript{190} Sufi groups often regard him as a saint (\textit{walī}).\textsuperscript{191}

Khiḍr is an initiator onto the Sufi path. Ibn al-ʿArabī, amongst others, claim to have received a garment – symbolic of initiation into the mystical path – from Khiḍr.\textsuperscript{192} “Hypostatized as a person he represents in Sufi thought the inner light of \textit{wilāya}, parallel to, and contrasted with, the apostolic-legalistic aspects of prophecy signified by Moses.”\textsuperscript{193} Khiḍr thus represents the perfect figure from whom to receive investiture and knowledge of sacred and divine matters outside of the framework of \textit{ulama} and scholarly networks of learning and authority sanctioned by teachers. In Corbin’s words, being a

\begin{itemize}
  \item not attain immortality. Although it is speculation, has been suggested that Khiḍr’s name is affiliated with such vegetation myths and motifs.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{188} A.J. Wensinck, “al-KHaḍir (al-Khiḍr),” \textit{EI2}.


\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Ibid.}, 56.

\textsuperscript{191} A.J. Wensinck, “al-KHaḍir (al-Khiḍr),” \textit{EI2}.


disciple of Khiḍr gives the disciple a “transcendent, ‘transhistorical’ dimension,” and “Khiḍr is the master of all those who are masterless.”¹⁹⁴

Through association with an immortal master, those who claim to be initiated onto the mystical path by Khiḍr enjoy a supra-genealogical and privileged access to sacrality and sanctity. Corbin captures this sense of a link that transcends human relationships with the image of a vertical relationship. Being a disciple of Khiḍr “unites them vertically with the invisible celestial assembly, implies the idea of a tradition whose line is vertical, longitudinal (from Heaven to Earth), a tradition whose moments are independent of the causality of continuous physical time but related to what Ibn al-ʿArabi calls the jadīd al-khalq, the recurrence of the creative act, that is, the Theophany.”¹⁹⁵ Disciplines of Khiḍr are therefore released from the constraints of human time and access esoteric knowledge from an immortal teacher of prophets. Khiḍr is also associated with the abdāl, or saint substitutes within the mystical tradition, and Khiḍr is also sometimes claimed to be the head of the abdāl.¹⁹⁶

Khiḍr appears in dreams and visions in the Sufi tradition, in which dreams and visions play an important role. Trimingham observes:

The importance of dreams and visions in the whole scheme of the Sufi Path can hardly be overstressed...Visions of the Prophet and al-Khadir were the decisive point in the authorization of an illumine to strike out along his own way. They were a convenient way of obtaining permission from long-dead Sufis to teach their doctrines and awrād, thus leading some people to assume the continuity of line from al-Junaid or another early Sufi.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Corbin, Creative Imagination, 54, 60.
¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 90-91.
¹⁹⁷ Trimingham, Sufi Orders, 190.
The ability to claim knowledge of the mystical path directly from Khidr creates a parallel and even superior structure of transmission of knowledge than that gained through study of canonically acknowledged texts. Knowledge gained directly from Khidr would be superior to knowledge gained from human teachers.

In his early Persian treatise on Sufism, Hujwiri (d. uncertain, likely between 465 and 469/1072 and 1077) lists in his *Khashf al-Mahjub* ("The Revelation of the Veiled") those Sufis who were disciplines of Khidr and were initiated onto the Sufi path by Khidr. These include Abū ʿIshaq ʿIbrahīm b. Ṭadhām b. Mansūr, the early Sufi of princely heritage from Balkh, who was "a disciple of the Apostle Khidr"; Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Tīrmidhī, who "is associated with the Apostle Khidr"; Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Warrāq, who composed a work on theology, which he said was at the behest of Khidr. Other figures initiated to Sufism by Khidr include ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Maṣʿud al-Dabbāgh, who began a Sufi order called the Khadiriyya in 1125/1713 in Fez.

Most curious is the case of Abū ʿIshaq ʿIbrahīm b. Aḥmad al-Khwawās, who, when asked what wonders he had seen, replied thus according to Hujwiri:

"Many wonders," he replied, "but the most wonderful was that the Apostle Khidr begged me to let him associated with me, and I refused. Not that I desired any better companion, but I feared that I should depend on him rather than on God,

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201 Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders*, 114, 277.
and that my trust in God would be impaired by consorting with him, and that in consequence of performing a work of supererogation I should fail to perform a duty incumbent on me.’” This is the degree of perfection.  

In this instance Khiḍr is transmuted into a symbol of pious praise. Only the deserving should meet Khiḍr, and here it is Khiḍr who asks that the human al-Khawwās become his companion. The purpose of the narrative is to demonstrate that al-Khawwās had attained so lofty a station that even Khiḍr sought him out as a companion. The narrative further emphasizes the piety of al-Khawwās, who declined the opportunity to enter into a spiritually symbiotic relationship with Khiḍr because he did not want it to detract from his duty to God.

Initiation to the Sufi path by the Prophet’s spirit shares the similar qualities of an otherworldly affiliation to that granted by Khiḍr. One such figure is Uwais al-Qaraṇī, a Yemeni contemporary of Muḥammad who had not met the Prophet. The Prophet allegedly spoke about him, and Uwais al-Qaraṇī was initiated onto the Sufi path by the spirit of the Prophet in 37/657, well after the Prophet’s death. The Uwaisī ṭariqa is also generally affiliated with Khiḍr, and “initiation [into a ṭariqa] may be ‘spiritual’ – the Uwaisī-Khadir tradition – but normally it comes through guidance under a this-worldly master.”

The impact of Khiḍr and dreams is particularly pronounced in their symbiotic power. Dreams are a mode of conferring legitimacy and authority. This is the case when

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202 al-Huwārī, Kashf al-Mahjūb, 153-154. For a repetition of this same story see also pp. 290 and 342.

203 Trimingham, Sufi Orders, 12-13. Because of the case of Uwais al-Qaraṇī, “dervishes who had no direct initiator were frequently called Uwaisīs. Such attribution is late (16th century?), though as a Sufi figure Uwais was known from an early date (13).” Huwārī discusses Uwais al-Qaraṇī. See Huwārī, Kashf al-mahjūb, 83-84.

204 Trimingham, Sufi Orders, 187.
the dream includes the Prophet, although it is also the case even if the Prophet does not appear in the dream or vision. Khīḍr is a teacher of men and Prophets and a vehicle through which one can achieve special access to divine knowledge and prophetic experience. Knowledge gained directly from Khīḍr creates a parallel and even superior structure of transmission of knowledge than that gained through study of canonically acknowledged texts. Khīḍr thus represents the perfect figure from whom to receive investiture and knowledge through the medium of dreams and visions.

Dream narratives also appear in autobiographical material to promote a particular theological or sectarian stance. Abū Ja'far al-Qāyini recorded an autobiographical dream narrative that featured the Prophet in the late 4/10th century. Abū Ja'far al-Qāyini sees Muḥammad in his dream and asks his various questions about hadith, the madhhab, hadith transmitters, specific jurists, Sufism, individual jurists, and what groups are considered Muslim, and about hadith attributed to Muḥammad that after his death the community to splinter into 73 groups, all but one of which will be headed for Hell. Muḥammad answers Abū Ja'far’s questions in a way that is expansive, affirms the validity of various factions and individuals within Islam, and accommodates basically all groups except the khawārij – because they declare others unbelievers – within the fold of Islam. As Lamoreux argues, Abū Ja'far al-Qāyini “is using the device of his dream narrative to articulate a singular theological agenda, one that sought to advance an understanding of Islam that ignored and subverted many of the traditional boundaries established by the ulema.”

———. “An Early Muslim Autobiographical Dream Narrative: Abū Ja’far al-Qāyini and His Dream of the Prophet Muhammad,” in Dreaming Across Boundaries, 79.
Such an all-encompassing approach to what constituted belief in Islam and the correct and straight path undermined distinctions and boundaries articulated by the leading religious authorities. Abū Ja’far’s presentation of his theological stance in a dream in which Muḥammad appears – and indeed in which Muḥammad himself answers the questions as to what constitutes right belief and practice in Islam – argues for a specific theological stance couched in the unimpeachable framework of a dream about the Prophet. Sectarian dreams could, then, be anti-sectarian: in this account by Abū Ja’far, the Prophet sanctions essentially all sects and practices except the khawārij as belonging to correct Islam.

Dreams were a literary device used to evaluate hadith and their transmitters. Hadith scholars used dreams to establish whether the transmitter or content of a hadith was reliable. Because of the privileged position that dreams occupy as a liminal space between ordinary life and prophecy and this world and the afterlife, dreams were a medium through which truth could be established and vital knowledge could be transmitted. There are narratives of dreams that address the reliability of hadith transmitters or the matn of a hadith. Kinberg argues that the issues raised in the medieval dream narratives about the transmitters and content of hadith reflect the disputes and discussions among the hadith critics during that era. Dreams function in literary sources as a means by which to evaluate hadith and their transmitters – including hadith critics supporting or denigrating a transmitter’s reliability – and the concerns of the day.206

The dreams about individual transmitters have significant consequences for hadith transmission. This is because if a particular transmitter is validated in a dream, the

dream also validates later transmitters’ *musnads* if they transmitted *hadith* from the transmitter who appears in a dream. In the case of dreams that validate Abū Hurayra as a transmitter, these dreams validate more than just Abū Hurayra – they validate the chains of transmission of those who transmitted *hadith* from him, in one case including the dreamer of the dream in which Abū Hurayra is validated.

Dreams may confirm not only the legitimacy of a particularly *hadith* but also the validity of a theological position and an individual. The narrative recorded in *Manāqib al-imām Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal* by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) is an example of the latter. A report states that al-Shāfī’ī, prior to the Abbasid *miḥna*, saw the Prophet in a dream, who communicated to al-Shāfī’ī that Ibn Ḥanbal would be summoned to support the createdness of the Qur’ān but refuse to do that. Shāfī’ī then communicates this dream via messenger from Egypt to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in Baghdad. Ibn Ḥanbal’s position is validated in a narrative that boasts in its *isnad* not only al-Shāfī’ī but also the Prophet. A dream about Aḥmad b. Hanbal asserts a theological point. In the dream God speaks to affirm the *isnad* of a *hadith* that supports the position that the Qur’ān is the uncreated word of God. This combination of a dream and a *hadith qudsī* underscores the legitimating power of dreams.

*Hadith qudsī* are another avenue that signals authority and legitimacy. Here there are *isnads*, but their ultimate source is God. Graham argues that “The Divine Saying represents a body of material that appears to have been seen originally as being closer to

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207 Kinberg, “Dreams as a Means to Evaluate Ḥadīth,” 81.

208 Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 150-151.

209 Kinberg, “Dreams as a Means to Evaluate Ḥadīth,” 93, 95.
the Qur’anic revelations than to the prophetic pronouncements of Muhammad that form the core of the Hadith (and to which the Divine Saying is now considered to belong).”²¹⁰

Graham continues:

If these Sayings are documents of early Islam, their very existence at least suggests that the early Muslim understanding of divine word and prophetic word was a primarily unitive one. This unitive understanding gradually faded in the face of an increasingly rigid bifurcation of the verbal inheritances of the Prophet’s mission into the two ‘closed’ corpora of Qur’an and Hādīth.²¹¹

As such, hadith qudsi trace their source to divine authority and form part of the unitive body of pronouncements that were the Qur’anic revelations and prophetic utterances.

When hadith qudsi appear in the Islamic tradition is contested. Schimmel suggested that the number of hadith qudsi increased later in the tradition with the influence of Sufism. Schimmel argues, “mystical thinkers and poets made use of certain traditions that cannot be verified before the tenth or even the eleventh century. At the same time, the number of so-called hadith qudsi—traditions that contain some extra-Koranic divine revelations – grew along with the Sufi influence on Muslim piety.”²¹²

Like Sufis gaining investiture directly from Khiḍr, here we have the divine utterance of God. In this sense hadith qudsi are a degree removed even from prophetic hadith in that their source is God. In contrast, Graham argues for an earlier dating for hadith qudsi, and argues that “it is possible to collect from early and ‘classical’ Hādīth sources a variety of

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²¹¹ Ibid., 3.

²¹² Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions, 221.
Divine Sayings, most of which in all probably date from the first century and a half of Islam."213

Despite the difference in scholarly opinion on the dating of hadith qudsī, Graham importantly uncovered the plasticity and dynamism of this early period. It is helpful to keep in mind that early iterations of Muslim tradition did not draw hard lines between divine word and prophetic word that would later develop when we consider the porousness, dependence, and resonance of dreams with other genres of religious literatures and sciences, such as hadith, dream interpretation, and tafsīr of Qur’anic terms. The authority of dreams – the content of the dream, the legitimacy of the dreamer, and the message conveyed about the person, place, concept, or event seen in a dream – was deeply related to other modes of legitimation, including hadith qudsī, that have their ultimate source in divine revelation and inspiration.

If we accept that the literary lives of dreams and their interpretations were a contested political space, then the claims of polemic and legitimacy can be seen clearly in their historical context. The Prophet is seen in a dream, and the judgment of the dream-world Prophet can elevate or denigrate a Muslim’s standing. Ibn Kathīr’s Tafsīr transmits a narrative in which the Prophet elevates the status of Sufyān al-Thaurī. Yazīd b. Ḥakīm saw the Prophet in a dream and asked the Prophet about Sufyān al-Thaurī, and the Prophet gave a favourable opinion about him. The Prophet can also disapprove: “Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Farrā” saw the prophet in a dream and asked him about the hadiths reported by al-Qāsim b. Ḥabd al-Rahmān on the authority of Abū Umāma; the Prophet

213 Graham, Divine Word, 81.
disapproved of them.” Scholars and leaders were as active in the realm of reverie in their pursuit of religious legitimacy as they were in their waking hours. Ibn Qutayba’s ‘Ibarat al-ru’ya contains examples of dreams that reflect various partisan differences, including dreams that denounce ‘Ali, support ‘Uthmān, or praise Abū Bakr. This could be an example of developed theological disputes being retroactively justified in the later literature.

A premonitory dream is another type of dream narrative that appears in local historical writing. In the case of Ibn al-Qūṭiyah’s Tārikh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus, we have a dream featuring Muḥammad in which the Prophet predicts that Seville will fall out of Muslim control. The Prophet Muḥammad reaches out to the Amir ‘Abd al-Rahmān II (206-238/822-852) through a dream to inform him that Seville will fall.

Tārikh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus

Ibn al-Qūṭiyah writes:

After the building of the Great Mosque of Seville was complete, ‘Abd al-Rahmān II had a dream in which he entered the building, to find the Prophet Muḥammad – peace and praises be upon him – lying in the prayer-niche, dead, and wrapped in a shroud. The dream caused him to awake in distress, so he asked those who interpreted dreams for an explanation. They told him ‘This is where his Faith will die.’ Immediately after that the capture of the city by the Vikings occurred.


The dream does not offer a moral, ethical, or otherwise justifying reason for why the city of Seville should fall out of Muslim control, but it does communicate truth. The narrative power of this dream becomes evident when we consider numerous hadith, with reference to Qur’anic passages, which state that dreams are part of prophecy. This includes hadith in which the Prophet heartens his followers who are concerned that there is no prophecy after Muhammad by telling that there will remain good tidings or good news (mubashshirāt), and these good tidings are the dreams (ru’yā) of the Muslims, and these constitute part of prophecy. These good tidings (mubashshirāt) refer to Sura 10:63-64: “Those who believe and obey God, for them is good news (al-bushrā) in the life of the world and in the life to come. There is no changing the words of God. That will be the great triumph.”216 Once the Prophet Muhammad died, it would be through dreams that the faithful would be granted prophetic guidance in their sleep. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī includes the following hadith. The Prophet said: “Nothing remains of prophecy except mubashshirāt [good tidings],” and when asked “what are al-mubashshirāt?” he answered “al-mubashshirāt are good dreams” (“Lam yabqa min al-nubūwwa illa al-mubashshirāt, qālū ‘wa mā al-mubashshirāt? ’qāla al-ru’yā al-ṣāliha.”)217

The widely transmitted prophetic hadith that a good dream is one of forty-sixths part of prophecy has many variant traditions, which place dreams as 1/90, 1/70, 1/50,


1/44, 1/60, 1/49, 1/44, 1/45, 1/24, 1/25, 1/76, 1/40 1/46, 1/76, 1/26 part of prophecy.

The variant traditions of this hadith demonstrate that though the particulars are debated, the idea that dreams are part of prophecy is evident and diffuse within the Islamic tradition. Such hadith are the basis for medieval oneirocritical works, such as the Kitāb Ta'bīr al-ru'yā by Ibn Qutaybah.

Tirmidhī includes in his Sunan a prophetic tradition transmitted on the authority of Abū Hurayra, which states that a good dream of the virtuous man is one 1/46th part of prophecy. Tirmidhī includes variations of this tradition with different isnads, some of which cite dreams as a different part of prophecy, including an indeterminate part of prophecy (juz’ min ajzā‘) and 1/40 part of prophecy. The tradition begins: “Idha iqtaraba al-zaman lam takad ru’yā al-mu’min takdhibu wa asdaquhum ru’yā asdaquhum ḥadīthan wa ru’yā al-muslim juz’ min sitta wa arba’īn juz’an min al-nubuwwa,” which then continues to elaborate on the three different kinds of ru’yā. These are “al-ru’yā al-ṣaliha,” which are “bushrā,” or good tidings or good news from God indicated in the Qur’an – “al-ladhiha āmanū wa kānū yattaqwana, lahum al-bushra fī al-ḥayat al-dunya wa fī al-akhira” in Sura Yūnus, or Sura 10:63-64; bad dreams which sadden the dreamer are from Satan, “al-ru’yā min tahžīn al-Shaifān”; and the third type of dream is what

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220 Ibn Qutaybah, Kitāb Ta'bīr al-ru'yā. The work opens with a discussion of prophetic hadith on the interpretation of dreams, including the widespread tradition that the good dreams (ru'yā) of the righteous man (al-rajul al-ṣaliḥ) are one of 46 parts of prophecy (for example on page 25).


222 Tirmidhī (d. 892), Sunan al-Tirmidhī, vol. 2, Kitāb 30 al-ru'yā, Bāb 1, hadith 2439, p. 585.
man’s own mind suggests to himself, “al-ruʾyā mimma yuḥaddithu bihā al-rajul nafsahu.”  

These hadith give credence to dreams as having legitimating power and being a part of prophecy. In this way the authority enjoyed by dreams is akin to the legitimating power of hadith. As people, places, and ideas lauded by Muḥammad in hadith were legitimate, so too were dreams in which Muḥammad acknowledged, praised, or accepted a person, place, or practice. Moin argues:

A majority of these hadith traditions served to legitimize the prophetic nature of dreams. Thus dreams, especially those in which the Prophet appeared, took on a power to legitimate a particular position – ideological, religious, cultural – similar to that of a hadith tradition, because if Muḥammad appeared to a Muslim in a dream, it was the Prophet himself and not Satan trying to inspire a ‘confused dream.’... In this qualified way, early Muslim society seems to have granted dreams the power of legitimation in Islamic discourses. 

Early dream manuals, such as those of Kirmānī and Ibn Qutayba, often included chains of transmission of the dream manual and knowledge about the interpretation of dreams, and “the manner in which the dream lore of the formative period was transmitted closely parallels the distinctive manner in which the muḥaddiths and early ulema transmitted other forms of knowledge.” Dreams ranked with hadith as providing privileged access to the Prophet and a form of authorization from him.

The idea that dreams are related to prophetic experiences was extant in pre-Islamic and relevant non-Islamic traditions. In pre-Islamic Arabia the soothsayer (kaḥīn, pl. kuhḥān), who allegedly spoke in rhyming prose (saj), acted as an interpreter of

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223 Tirmidḥī (d. 892), Sunan al-Tirmidḥī, vol. 2, Kitāb 30 al-ruʾyā, Bāb 1, hadith 2439, p. 585.

224 Moin, “Partisan Dreams and Prophetic Visions,” 419.

225 Lamoreaux, Dream Interpretation, 42.
dreams and omens, and the “pre-Islamic notion that discourses of divination, poetry and prophecy were linked through rhyme was absorbed into Islam... [which] enabled the dream and the poem to serve as literary devices whose very form could at times signify prophecy, foreknowledge, or a higher moral authority originating from another world.”

Interestingly, the early Islamic dream interpreter Ibrahim b. ʿAbd Allah al-Kirmānī (fl. late 2nd/8th century) apparently credited his ability to interpret dreams as handed down to him in a dream – literally in the form of a mantle given to him – from the prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) during a dream encounter.

The Greeks had developed theories of dream interpretation, and during the flourishing Abbasid translation movement famously championed by the caliph al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833), Oneirocritica, by the 2nd century Greek scholar Artemidorus, was translated into Arabic during the caliphate of al-Maʾmūn. Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥāq (d. 260/874), a Nestorian Christian physician, translated the Greek oneirocritical text by Artemidorus, The Interpretation of Dreams, in the 9th century. Though this work is a translation from the Greek, Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥāq sometimes interjects, at times attempting to frame Artemidorus’ references to the Hellenistic pagan gods into something more monotheistic by, for example, sometimes changing Artemidorus’ references to gods into angels.  

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227 Lamoreaux, Dream Interpretation, 26.
228 Moin, “Partisan Dreams and Prophetic Visions,” 418.
230 Lamoreaux, Dream Interpretation, 8-9, 47-51.
though in a different form from the Islamic tradition. In some cases that Miller describes, “dreams were seen as appurtenances of a divine sensibility,” and “in the most immediate sense, dreams were phenomena of language as well as of psychic imagination and divine intention.”

Importantly, recent scholarship has demonstrated the tremendous differences that could exist between the original Greek text and its ostensible Arabic translation. That Muslim authors were aware of Greek authors does not mean that they read or propagated accurate translations of the originals. Hansberger recently documented such a calculated loss in translation in his study of the Arabic translation of Aristotle’s *Peri tēs kath hypnon mantikēs* (Greek) or *De divinatione per somnum* (Latin), rendered in English as *On Divination in Sleep* or *On Prophecy in Sleep*. The *Peri tēs kath hypnon mantikēs* or *De divinatione per somnum* – part of Aristotle’s psychological writings of the *Peri aisthēseōs* or *Parva Naturalia*: (*On the Senses and Their Objects; On Sense and Sensible Objects*) – does not subscribe to the idea of God-given dreams and gives natural explanations for veridical dreams. However, the Arabic version of the text, known as *Kitāb al-Hiss (al-Hāss) waʾl-mahṣūs*, differs significantly from the original Greek text in that the Arabic version suggests that Aristotle believed in God as the source of veridical dreams.

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231 Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, 39.

232 For a discussion of *Peri aisthēseōs*, commonly referred to in western scholarship as *Parva Naturalia*, along with commentary and introduction to the work and the Greek text, see Aristotle, *Parva naturalia*: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary by Sir David Ross (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955). The now commonly used title *Parva Naturalia* dates from the end of the 15th century, and Ross prefers Aristotle’s summary of the material as more accurately descriptive: “‘the phenomena common to soul and body’ (1).”

233 A partial version of a 17th century Arabic manuscript was discovered in the 1985, and Hansberger argues that this manuscript is the version that was read and referenced to by medieval Muslim and Jewish authors. Rotraud E. Hansberger, “How Aristotle Came to Believe in God-given Dreams: The Arabic Version of *De divinatione per somnum*,” in *Dreaming Across Boundaries*. 
the interplay between Islamic ideas and other concepts of dream interpretation, Lamoreux argues that the Islamic corpus of dream materials demonstrates knowledge of multiple forms of dream interpretation: “regional materials were absorbed into the Islamicate discourse on dreams: not just Hellenistic materials but also lore from India and ancient Persia.”

When we place the dream in *Tārīkh Iftitah al-Andalus* in the context of the broader corpus of hadith literature which asserts that dreams are a part of prophecy, we have a prophetic and premonitory dream in which Muḥammad predicts Seville will fall out of Muslim control. By presenting the fall of Seville as predicted in a dream featuring Muhammad and therefore as part of prophecy, the fall of Seville becomes something inevitable. It is part of history that has already been determined as something that will occur. This dream sequence furthers the structure of the narrative by providing an explanation for the loss of Seville.

Ibn al-Qūṭiyah follows the premonition about the impending loss of Muslim control over Seville with a curious anecdote about a beautiful youth who battles the *Majūs*, or what David James translates as “Vikings,” in an epic 3-day battle in defense of the Great Mosque of Seville. Ibn al-Qūṭiyah writes:

The elders of Seville related how the Vikings set their arrows on fire and aimed them at the roof of the Great Mosque. Whatever ignited fell to the ground, and the marks of those arrows can be seen on the roof to this day. When they failed to burn the mosque, [the Vikings] piled wood and straw mats (*husur*) in one of the aisles and tried to make the fire to reach the ceiling. Then a youth (*fata*) came from the direction of the prayer-niche and forced them out of the mosque, and

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234 Lamoreaux, *Dream Interpretation*, 173.
held them off for three days until the attack on them took place. According to the Vikings, he was a young man of great physical beauty.²³⁵

This unnamed beautiful youth is credited as a corporeal apparition of faith who appears from the direction of the prayer-niche and defends the Great Mosque of Seville against the *majus* who attempted to burn the mosque. David James, in his translation, considers this an angelic figure and speculates, “This is probably a legend of local origin in Seville indicating that the invaders were repulsed by an angel. Perhaps the story has its basis in information given by the Viking prisoners. Some Vikings remained in al-Andalus after having been captured in 230/844 and converted to Islam.”²³⁶ This interpretation seems possible. It is worth noting that Muḥammad is often described as beautiful, and the juxtaposition of this description of the unnamed beautiful youth with the image of Muḥammad dead, lying in the prayer-niche of the Great Mosque is suggestive.

We may consider whether this beautiful youth is the Archangel Michael, given that he is the patron saint of soldiers in the Christian tradition and his position as an angel mentioned alongside the angel Gabriel in Qur’an 2:92 (“Say: ‘Whoever is the enemy of God and His angels and apostles, and of Gabriel and Michael, then God is the enemy of such unbelievers’”).²³⁷ In the Biblical tradition the archangel Michael is the protector of Israel, in the Eastern Christian church he is one who cares for the sick, and in the Western

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Church he is the patron saint of soldiers and “head of the heavenly armies.”238 In the Christian tradition, God’s appointment of Michael as the guardian angel for the chosen people first indicated Israel and later the Christian church.239 The Archangel Michael battles the dragon and leads angels against it in Revelation 12:7-9, defeating “that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.”240 As Keck notes, “as military struggles became moral ones, so could Michael’s defeat of Satan, at once military and moral, be easily invoked.”241

The Archangel Michael also appears as a beautiful youth. Referring to Qur’an 11:69-70242, Corbin notes that the commentary literature has suggested the angels who appeared to Abraham were “the Angels Gabriel, Michael, and Seraphiel, who appeared as youths of great beauty.”243 In the medieval Christian theology angels generally were understood as beautiful, and “appeals to what is beautiful constituted an important element of medieval angelic hermeneutics.”244 Especially given the connection of Ibn al-Qūṭṭīyah with the Goth’s of al-Andalus, Michael as this beautiful youth seems particularly possible: “In the West, Michael was venerated as the head of the heavenly armies and the


241 Keck, Angels & Angelology. On Michael battling the dragon, see 38, 45, 48, 51, 139, 168, 170, 181, 201-203.

242 “Our angels came to Abraham with good news, and said: ‘Peace on you.’ ‘Peace on you, too,’ said Abraham, and hastened to bring a roasted calf. When they did not stretch their hands towards it he became suspicious and afraid of them. They said: ‘Do not be afraid. We have been sent to the people of Lot.’” Ali, Al-Qur‘ān, 11:69-70.

243 Corbin, Creative Imagination, 315 note 74.

244 David Keck, Angels & Angelology, 69.
patron of soldiers. This veneration may be traced to a popular cult arising from an alleged 5th or 6th-century apparition of Michael during the distress caused by invading Goths (on the coast of southeastern Italy, Gargano or Monte Sant Angelo).”

Thus, while the neither the real nor suggested identity of this figure is known, what is clear is that this beautiful youth is nevertheless some sort of corporeal apparition of faith, particularly since he appears from ‘the direction of the prayer-niche.’

Premonitory dreams also feature in medieval chronicles. Such dreams can foreshadow the events of a caliph’s reign and even anticipate his downfall or death. An account that describes the death of the Abbasid caliph Harūn al-Rashīd in Tus demonstrates the literary structure that dreams provided within the broader historical narrative. While in the Syrian town of Raqqa, the caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809) dreamt of an outstretched arm reaching towards him and holding a handful of red soil. Harūn “then heard a voice tell him, ‘Your end shall be in that land (turba).’ When al-Rashīd asked, ‘where is it [i.e., the soil]?’ the voice answered ‘In Tus,’ and then disappeared.”

Several years later, when Harūn al-Rashīd is in Tus, he remembers this dream. Agitated, he has his servant Masrūr go fetch some of the soil from the area so that he may inspect it. When Masrūr brings the soil, Harūn al-Rashīd recognizes that it was Masrūr’s arm that he saw in his dream. Saddened, he cried, and died there three days later.

The third and final type of dream in this typology is the legitimating dream. The Tārikh Iftitāh al-Andalus by Ibn al-Qūṭiyah (d. 977) includes a dream narrative that

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245 “Michael, Archangel,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

confers validity on the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus by Tārīq ibn Zīyād through a
dream in which Muḥammad appears, and Narshakhi recounts a story in Tārīkh-i Bukhara—
about the Prophet Muḥammad visiting the city of Bukhara in a dream of one of the city’s
denizens. This type of dream validating dream or legitimating dream grants individuals,
actions, and places a type of privileged access to the Prophet. This type of dream can
validate a single action or process that occurred, such as the Islamic conquest of al-
Andalus by Tārīq ibn Zīyād, or something on-going, such as the version of the reading of
the Qur’an common in the city of Bukhara. Legitimating dreams function on multiple
levels to legitimate specific individuals – the dreamer and the person featured in the
dream – as well as local traditions of Bukhara, such as the recitation of the Qur’an known
in the area, and the city of Bukhara itself.

Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus

Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus by Ibn al-Qūṭḥyāh (d. 977) includes a dream narrative
that features Muḥammad and confers legitimacy on the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus
by Tārīq ibn Zīyād. This dream is part and parcel of the narrative function of dreams that
confer legitimacy upon an action, person, place, object, or belief. The Islamic conquest
of al-Andalus was by Tārīq ibn Zīyād, who was allegedly incited by Yulīyān [Julian], a
Christian merchant, and then commanded by Musa ibn Nusayr who invaded during the
reign of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik [r. 86-96/705-715].

Ibn al-Qūṭḥyāh writes that Tārīq ibn Zīyād entered al-Andalus in Ramadan, 92
[June 711] because a Christian merchant named Yulīyān [Julian], who travelled between
al-Andalus and the Land of the Berbers, instigated the invasion. Much of this narrative is
polemic: it argues that Lūdharīq [Roderik], the army commander under the last king of
the Goths, Ghūṭaša [Witiza] and slept with Yuliyan’s [Julian’s] daughter.247 When the
daughter tells her father Yuliyan [Julian] about this seduction, he allegedly incited Tāriq
ibn Ziyad to invade. Ibn al-Qūṭīyah relates the events and the subsequent dream as
follows:

Yuliyan [Julian] met with Tāriq and incited him to come over to al-Andalus,
telling him of its splendor and the weakness of its people and their lack of
courage. So Tāriq wrote to Musa ibn Nusayr and informed him of that,
whereupon Musa told him to invade. Tāriq mustered [his troops]. While he was
on board sleep overcame him and whilst asleep he had a dream in which he saw
the Prophet Muhammad [fa-kāna yara fī naumihī] – peace and praises be upon
him. He was surrounded by his followers from Makka and Madina who were
armed with swords and bows. The Prophet passed by Tāriq and said, ‘Go on with
your venture.’ And Tāriq slept on, dreaming of the Prophet and his Companions,
until the ship reached al-Andalus. He took the dream as a good omen and told it
to his men [fa-`istabshara wa bashshara ashābahu].248

This dream falls into the class of legitimating dreams, but it differs from
legitimating dreams in the local histories of Persia because it legitimates the event of the
Muslim conquest of al-Andalus, but not al-Andalus or its denizens. What is lauded here
through prophetic legitimation is the conquest and the process of making al-Andalus
Muslim. The Iberian Peninsula is not – in contrast to the model demonstrated in Tārīkh-i
Bukhārā – sanctified ground. Rather, the Arab Muslim conquests of al-Andalus are
sanctified. Whereas those dreams and visions of the Prophet that appears in a Persian

247 The polemical context to this was that Yuliyan [Julian] begged out of Lūdharīq’s command to visit him,
since Yuliyan [Julian]’s wife had just died and he would have nobody else to take care of his daughter;
Lūdharīq subsequently requested to Yuliyan [Julian] that he bring his same daughter to Lūdharīq’s palace,
where he proceeded to sleep with her. Ibn al-Qūṭīyah does not explicitly state that Lūdharīq raped this
daughter, although the language suggests that Lūdharīq indulged his evident attraction for this daughter:
“fa-wa-q ʾat ʾayn Lūdharīq ʾalayha f-istahsana biha fa-nalaha.” Ibn al-Qūṭīyah, Tārīkh ʾiftīḥāh al-Andalus,
76.

248 Here I have used David James’s published English translation. Ibn al-Qūṭīyah, Early Islamic Spain, 52.
Ibn al-Qūṭīyah, Tārīkh ʾiftīḥāh al-Andalus, 76-77.
local histories clearly sanctifies the inhabitants and the particular place, this dream of the Prophet confers validity for a specific event that is the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus by Tāriq ibn Ziyād.

_Tārīkh-i Bukhārā_

There is a curious story recounted in _Tārīkh-i Bukhārā_ about the Prophet Muḥammad visiting the city of Bukhara in a dream of one of the city’s denizens. In tying the city of Bukhara to the legacy of the Prophet through the dream, Narshakhī posits a powerful form of non-biological lineage and heirship to the Prophet and his legacy.

_Tārīkh-i Bukhārā_ is a local Persian city history. The text has an interesting history that is appropriate to its geographical and intellectual position in early Islamic history. It is a Persian translation of the Arabic original by Narshakhī, and the Persian text is simultaneously an abridgement of the original Arabic and an extension of it with new material. _Tārīkh-i Bukhārā_ was originally written in Arabic by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ja’far ibn Zakariyya ibn Khaṭṭāb ibn Sharīk al-Narshakhī, from the village of Nasrāk in the vicinity of Bukhara, who dedicated it to the Samanid amir Nuḥ ibn Naṣr (r. 331-343/943-954) in 332/943 or 944. The book was translated into Persian by Abū Naṣr Ṭolmad al-Qubavi in 522/1128-9 because, as he claims in his translation, people did not want to read the Arabic, and because his friends asked him to translate it into Persian. Qubavi extended the history covered to the year 365/975. The Persian translation was then abridged in 574/1178-9 by Muḥammad ibn Zufar ibn ‘Umar, who also added to the work from other texts.

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249 Narshakhī, _The History of Bukhara_, xii.
When Narshakhī composed the text in Arabic and dedicated it to the Samanid amir Nūḥ ibn Naṣr at the beginning of that amir’s reign, Bukhara and the Samanid court were in a state of crisis. Naṣr b. Āḥmad, who was Nūḥ ibn Naṣr’s father, was swayed by the Ismaʿīli, ʿaṣīs, and converted to Ismaʿīli Shiʿism at the end of his life. This inspired a backlash, in which Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Musʿabī, who was Naṣr b. Āḥmad’s vizier, and some others were killed. After his father’s death, Nūḥ ibn Naṣr attempted to reverse the course of Ismaʿīli ascension two years into his reign (r. 331-343/943-954) and purged the ʿaṣīs and killed Ismaʿīli converts. However, there continued to be mistrust of the Ismaʿīli and their daʿwa and suspicion at the court of who might have Ismaʿīli sympathies. Royal titulature was a form – albeit not discussed in this dissertation – that was used as a mode of legitimation, and Nūḥ ibn Naṣr minted coins with the new titles al-malik al-muʿayyad min al-sama (the King who Receives Divine Aid from Heaven), possibly during a brief period of exile from Sughd. Legitimation and how to demonstrate it was a concern that resonated on many levels and not just with the author of Tārīkh-i Bukhārā.

Several Sahaba are mentioned in Tārīkh-i Bukhārā in addition to a connection with the Prophet through dreams. The author of the Tārīkh-i Bukhārā states that his work

250 The ʿaṣīs credited with this is Muḥammad b. Āḥmad al-Nasafi (or al-Nakhshabī). He was executed by Nūḥ ibn Naṣr in Bukhara in 332/943 soon after Nūḥ became Amir following his father’s death. Daftary, Ismaʿīlīs, 122-123.


252 Ibid., 324-325. “The intention behind Nūḥ’s public declaration of this innovative title was clear. Expelled from his capital by a pretender who enjoyed the endorsement of the newly enthroned Abbasid caliph, Nūḥ was forced to seek a new form of words which would encapsulate his superior entitlement to the Samanid throne… while the reference to unmediated contact with the heavens maintained the all-important claim to divine sanction for this authority as king (325).”
will contain not just information about ḥadīth but also about the traditions on the superior qualities of Bukhara, which are transmitted from the Prophet and his Companions. The author says he will limit the men he covers in this book because mentioning all of the notables is too extensive a task and that “the group which we have mentioned are among those of whom the Prophet said, ‘The learned men of my faith are (equal) to the prophets of the sons of Israel’.”

In the city of Bukhara, amongst the most prominent denizens of the city, there was a man named Khwaja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ al-Bukhari. It is through Khwaja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ al-Bukhari that Narshakhi binds the city of Bukhara to the Prophet through the medium of dreams. Of the several anecdotes and praiseworthy stories about Khwaja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ al-Bukhari, the most interesting is that of his interaction with the Prophet. Narshakhi describes him as “an ascetic (zāhid) as well as a man of knowledge (ʿālim),” who “went from Bukhara to Baghdad and became a student of Imam Muhammad Hasan [or perhaps Ḥusayn] Shaibani … He was one of the honored teachers of Bukhara.”

There is some confusion about Khwaja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ al-Bukhari’s identity. This Khwaja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ’ name was either Aḥmad ibn Ja’far (known by his kunya Abū Ḥafṣ and who had many followers), or perhaps Abū Ḥafṣ Aḥmad ibn Ḥafṣ ibn Zarqan ibn ‘Abdallah ibn al-Jarr al-ʿAjili al-Bukhari, who was born in 150/767.

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253 Narshakhi, Tārīkh-i Bukhara, 3-4; Narshakhi, The History of Bukhara, 3-4.
254 Narshakhi, Tārīkh-i Bukhara, 7; Narshakhi, The History of Bukhara, 6.
255 Narshakhi, Tārīkh-i Bukhara, 77-81; Narshakhi, The History of Bukhara, 56-59. Mudarris Razavi notes that another manuscript lists the imam’s name as Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shaibani.
Alternatively, he may even be ʿUmar ibn Maslama al-Ḥaddād, who died about 264/877.256 According to Narshakhī, “He died in 217/832 and his ashes are by the new gate which is well known. It is a place where prayers are answered. The mound is called the hill of Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ. There are mosques and monastery-cells there. Adjoining it live attendants. The people consider that earth blessed.”257

Despite the confusion in the texts about his identity, what is evident is that Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ was one of the notable scholars and ascetics in Bukhara during his era, and this acknowledged piety is the source for his encounter with the Prophet in dreams. For the purposes of this study, a composite identity for Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ need not necessarily be troubling. As Brockopp recently claimed, it is exemplary individuals, in contrast to their more average counterparts, who are credited with so much contradictory material precisely because of their importance to various parties and interests.258 Narshakhī claims:

It is related from Muḥammad ibn Salām Baikandī259, who was an ascetic and scholar, that in a dream [“goft ke be kwāb didam”]260 he had seen the Prophet [may God give him mercy and peace], in Būkhāra, in the bazaar of Kharqan. The area from the beginning of the quarter of the Magians to the section of the


259 Frye, *History of Bukhara*, 139-140, note 212. About Baikandī, Frye references *Ṭārīkh Samarqand*, foil. 49b, 51a, for information that Baikandī was a noted story teller; Frye also sites Cf. Yaqūt, 6, 665 and Samānī, 100 a.

dihqāns, was called the bazaar of Kharqan in olden times. He said he saw the Prophet sitting on that same camel, which is mentioned in tradition, with a white cap on his head. A large crowd was standing before him showing delight at the coming of the Prophet. They said, ‘Where will we lodge the Prophet [may God bless him]?’ Then they lodged him in the house of Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ. (He said) he saw the Khwāja Abū Ḥafṣ sitting before the Prophet and reading the Book. For three days the Prophet remained in the house of Abū Ḥafṣ, while he read the Book and the Prophet listened. In those three days he never once corrected him, for all was correct. Today the home of the Khwāja does not exist, although several times people re-built it; but traces of it still remain. His prayer-cell also remains in that house, and prayers are answered there.261

In this narrative the dream both bestows legitimacy to the dreamer, the man who appears in the dream, and to Bukhara and its religious practices. Sites of holiness bestow and receive meaning through dreams. The implication of the dream is that the dream occurred because Bukhara is blessed – the virtuousness of Bukhara and its denizens causes the dream to be dreamed in Bukhara and about Bukhara. Muḥammad appears in the bazaar of Bukhara – no sacred place – and is lodged by a local denizen, Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ. In this dream the Prophet listens to Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ’ reading of the Qurʾan, and in three days never once corrected it, for all was correct. The dream sanctions the reading of the Qurʾan by Abū Ḥafṣ as legitimate. Furthermore, Muḥammad ibn Salām Baikandī, the dreamer, is authenticated as good Muslim who has a dream about the Prophet, and has therefore participated in an event that connects him to the prophetic legacy.

Relevant when considering this dream, in both its proximity in geography and chronology, is the Samarqand Codex of the Qurʾan that allegedly dates from the era of ʿUthmān but whose legend brings it to Samarqand in the latter half of the 15th century. This Samarqand Codex shows peculiarities. It may be that during the 10th century, when

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261 For this excerpt I have used Frye’s published translation. Frye, History of Bukhārā, 57-58; Narshakhī, Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, 79-80.
Tārtkh-i Būkharā was composed in Arabic by Narshakhī, and during the 12th century when Abū Naṣr Aḥmad al-Qubavī translated the work into Persian, that the reading of the Qurʾān common in Bukhara evidenced differences from Qurʾān readings elsewhere. The 10th century is also the time when Iran reached a critical point of conversion. Perhaps not only the ulama, but anyone with a vested interest in the legitimacy and prestige of Bukhara as an Islamic city – including its Samanid and other later rulers – felt the need to defend and authenticate the reading of the Qurʾān common in Bukhara as a legitimate one, despite any differences there may have been with other readings.

Jeffery and Mendelsohn documented the orthographic particularities of the Samarqand Codex of the Qurʾān, the composition of which they place in Iraq and probably Kufa in the 3rd/9th century.262 The legend of the codex is that it belonged to the third caliph ʿUthmān and was the Qurʾān he was reading when he was murdered, although other codices also boast the same pedigree, all purportedly showing ʿUthmān’s blood on its pages. It was given as a gift to a discipline of Khoja Aḵrār – who apparently lived in Tashkent in the second half of the 15th century and was perhaps a Naqshabandī pīr, and whose name was Ubaidallah – when his disciple cured an unspecified caliph in Constantinople with a prayer taught to him by Khoja Aḵrār. The codex was first in Tashkent but then moved to Samarqand when Khoja Aḵrār built his mosque in Samarqand.263


263 Ibid., 175-176.
Working off the photographic reproduction published in 1905, Mendelsohn first despaired in 1940 that the original codex was lost sometime after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and he and Jeffery elaborate on this still-lost manuscript in their 1942 article, which focuses on the orthography of the Samarqand codex. Based on the orthographic particularities of the text, Jeffery and Mendelsohn conclude, “one can thus safely date the Codex earlier than the time of al-Dani (d. 444 AH) by whose time most of these minutiae [of orthography] had become fixed. The fact that its peculiarities are of the Basra-Kufa circle suggest that it must date from a time when the tradition of those Schools was beginning to take its characteristic form, and this would point to the third Islamic century.” Jeffery and Mendelsohn place the composition of the Codex to a center in Iraq and probably Kufa in the 3rd/9th century.

The dream related by Muḥammad ibn Salām Baikandī about Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ describes Abū Ḥafṣ’s reading the Qur’an before the Prophet for three days. The statement that the Prophet did not once in those three days correct Abū Ḥafṣ signifies that the Prophet accepted as correct the recitation of the Qur’an common in Bukhara. We may understand this narrative as an authentication of the local version of recitation of the Qur’an in Bukhara through a dream in which the Prophet approves. This type of religious

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265 Al-Dani (b. 371/981 or 982 in Cordova, d. Dāniya 444/1053) is Abū Ṭāmīr ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd h. ʿUmar al-Umawī al-Dānī, a Maliki lawyer and Qur’an reader who is particularly noted for his knowledge of the science of Qurʾān readings. Ed(s), “al-Dānī, Abū Ṭāmīr ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd h. ʿUmar al-Umawī,” EI2.

266 Jeffery and Mendelsohn, “The Orthography of the Samarqand Qur’an Codex,” 195. Jeffery and Mendelsohn compare the orthography of the Samarqand Codex against a study published by Shebunin in 1901 of an ancient Qur’an codex in Cairo. It is on the evidence of a comparative study with Shebunin’s study and indication from the Samarqand codex orthography that the details of orthography had not yet been fixed at the time it was composed that they date the codex to the third Islamic century and probably to Kufa in Iraq.
knowledge, legitimated in a dream, authenticates the authority of the dreamer (Muḥammad ibn Salām Baikandī) the pious exemplar seen in the dream (Khwāja Imam Abū Ḥafṣ) as well as the religious practices generally and specifically the reading of the Qurʾan in Bukhara. By extension, this dream sanctions and sanctifies the city of Bukhara itself and the learning of the religious sciences, such as the hadith and Qurʾan, that occurs in the city.

By dreaming the Prophet into Bukhara and into an encounter with a notable and pietistic local scholar, Baikandī and Narshakhī confer onto his city a connection with the Prophet that transcends the boundaries of time and waking consciousness. The dream is a powerful tool for connecting Bukhara to the divine experience and prophetic legacy. As established earlier in this chapter, because of prophetic hadith about dreams and interpretations of the Qurʾan, it essentially becomes an unimpeachable claim when someone claims to see the Prophet in dreams.

This narrative evidences Narshakhīʾs move to bind the city of Bukhara to the Prophet through the medium of dreams. In tying the city of Bukhara to the legacy of the Prophet through the dream, Narshakhī argues for a powerful form of non-biological lineage and heirship to the Prophet and his legacy. Heirship and legitimacy through non-biological lineage through dreams is one phenomenon among many that assert legitimacy and authority for a community and a location. Other modes of legitimation presented in local histories, which I cover in the following chapters, include tying the city to key figures in early Islamic history, claiming sacred etymologies for the city, and developing narratives about shrines and tombs of saints and other important Muslims located in the region.
Prophetic *hadith* vouchsafe the veracity of a dream in which Muḥammad appears.267 Other characters – average denizens of the city – may not enjoy any such guarantee, but their legitimacy seems to be guaranteed by the very medium of dreams, which transmit truth. Abū Hurayra transmitted the Prophetic *hadith* that whoever sees the Prophet in a dream has seen him in wakefulness, and Satan cannot take the Prophet’s form. The Prophet is said to have stated: “Who sees me in a dream sees me in waking life, because Satan does not take my appearance (‘*Man ṭa’i fi al-manām fa-sayara ṭa’i fi al-yaqūţha, wa lā yatathalhu al-Shayṭān bī*”)268 Bukhari includes in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* other variations of this tradition, some of which include elements about dreams being 1/46th of prophecy.269 Alternate interpretations include the possibility that if this *hadith* refers to contemporaries of the Prophet who have not emigrated to Medina, then they will see the Prophet in Medina, and that if it refers to generations after the Prophet they will see him in the next world.270 Shi‘ī *hadith* add that, unsurprisingly, Satan cannot take the form of

267 For a discussion of this tradition, see: Leah Kinberg, “Literal Dreams and Prophetic *Hadith*.” Kinberg finds this *hadith* in the following collections: *Musannaf Ibn Abī Shayba*, 11/55-56; *al-Musannaf* by ‘Abd al-Razzāq (Beirut, 1970), 11/215; *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* (Beirut, 1957), 175; Muhammad b. Sa‘d, *Kitab al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr* (Leiden, 1905-1915), 1 (2)/125; *Tabaqat al-Hanūbīla*, 2/218; *Ṭūrṭkh Baghdād*, 10/35, 284, 454, 8/333. Kinberg, who has worked extensively on dreams and oniromancy in the Islamic tradition, succinctly summarizes the logical process by which seeing the Prophet in a dream is the equivalent of seeing him in the flesh: “Since there is no major difference between the physical presence of the Prophet and the visionary one, words delivered by either of these means may have the same authority. Furthermore, since the vision of the Prophet in a dream is equal to actually meeting with him, a dream is capable of determining the community’s day-to-day life in the same way as a *hadith*… Not only is the appearance of the Prophet in dreams equal to meeting him personally, a dreamer cannot be misled by the image of the Prophet. Hence, drawing conclusions from dreams or following messages arrived through this medium is considered safe (286).”


269 *al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Kitāb 92 al-ta‘bīr, Bāb 10, hadith 7080, p. 1415. For example, “*Ibnu‘nā fi al-manām fa-qad rā‘ānī, fa-inna al-Shayṭān lā yatathalhu bi‘ wa ru‘ yā al-mu‘min juz‘ min sittā wa arba‘ān juz‘ an min al-nubuwā – “Whoever sees me in sleep has seen me, for Satan cannot appear in my form, and the dream of the believer is 1/46 part of prophecy.”*

the Shi'i imams, but surprisingly claim that Satan cannot even assume the figure of anyone who is merely Shi'i either.271 Canonical Sunni collections also include prophetic hadith which state that, if one has a bad dream, one should spit three times to the left.272

There are hadith that prohibit lying about seeing the Prophet in dreams. The formulae of these hadith are similar to and often paired with similar prohibitions about lying about hadith. There are many traditions in the canonical hadith collections that give a firm warning against lying, on the pain of the impossible task of having to tie a knot between two grains of barley at the end of times on the Day of the Resurrection (“man tahallama kadhiban kallafa yaum al-qiyamat an ya'qid baina sha'iratayn wa lan ya'qid bainahumā”).273 Such prohibitions also appear in the other canonical collections.274 Bukhārī, for example, includes a similar hadith on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, that whoever lies about a dream – “man tahallama bi-hulm lam yarahu” – will be punished with the same impossible task to tie a knot between two grains of barley (“kallafa an yaq'id baina sha'iratayn”).275 More explicit prophetic hadith warn against


272 For example, see Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī (ca. 821-875) Ṣaḥḥ Musli̱m/Abī al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Nisābūrī, 2 vols. (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Jam'iyat al-Maknaz al-Islāmī, 2000), vol. 2, Kitāb 43 al-ru'ya, Bāb 1, hadith 6034 p. 976.


lying about the Prophet and affirm that Muḥammad seen in a dream must truly be
Muḥammad, for Satan cannot take his form. Such a hadith transmitted on the authority
of Abu Hurayra from the Prophet states, “whoever tells a lie against me intentionally,
then let him occupy his seat in Hell-Fire.”

Given what amounts to unquestionable legitimacy in receiving prophetic guidance
through dreams, such a prohibition was obviously necessary. Kinberg reasonably argues
that the existence of hadith forbidding hadith-forgery and dream-forgery are evidence
that both hadith-forgery and dream-forgery were problems at the time these hadith came
into circulation, and they were such grave problems because of the influence that both
hadith and dreams exercised.

The suggestion that good dreams are to be shared and bad dreams kept to oneself
provides a theological basis for promulgating good dreams. These good dreams include
dreams in which the Prophet appears, such as the above dream about the Prophet
appearing in Bukhara in a dream. If Muḥammad is seen in a dream, then it has to be the
real Prophet, and this is therefore a good dream that comes from God.

There are hadith that encourage a Muslim to spread good tidings by telling others
about good dreams (manāmāt ṣāliḥa) and keeping bad dreams (adgāt ahlām) to oneself.
Good dreams come from Allah and should be spread, while the dreamer should keep bad
dreams to himself. The phrase (adgāt ahlām) is used in Qurʾan 12:44 (Yusuf, Joseph)

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277 Kinberg, “Literal Dreams and Prophetic Hadith,” 287. Given Kinberg’s skeptical views of hadith,
following Juynboll, we would assume that Kinberg would date the era in which these hadith forbidding
dream-forgery came into circulation to some point after the lifetime of the Prophet.

278 Ibid., 289-290.
and 21:5 (al-Anbiya, The Prophets). In the former, Yusuf Ali and Pickthall interpret “adgāt ahlīm” as “A confused medley of dreams” and “Jumbled dreams,” respectively. Ahmed Ali translates the words as “confused dreams.” In the latter surah, Yusuf Ali and Pickthall interpret it as “medleys of dream” and “muddled dreams,” respectively, and Ahmed Ali translates the passage as “confused dreams.”

A refrain that emerges from canonical hadith about dreams is that bad dreams are caused by Satan, and one should not share these dreams. In a hadith related in Ibn Mājah’s Sunan, a man approaches the Prophet to tell him about a bad dream he had. The Prophet responds by saying that if one has a bad dream it is caused by Satan toying with him, and that he should therefore not tell anyone about it: “idha la’iba al-Shaitān bi-ahadikum fi manāmihi fa-lā yuhaddithunna bihi al-naṣ.” Muslims’s Ṣaḥīh includes various hadith in which the Prophet states that one should not tell others of bad dreams, which are the caused by Satan.

The issue of dreams about the Prophet becomes a closed loop, the legitimacy of which cannot be doubted: if the Prophet is seen in a dream, then it is the same as seeing the Prophet in waking life, and this Prophet must be the real Prophet Muḥammad, since the devil cannot take his form. Since the Prophet who appears in a believer’s dream is the true Prophet, he will not mislead the believer. Every believer at every time in every place may be guided by the Prophet. If the Prophet is seen in a dream, it is the real


280 Muslim, Ṣaḥīh Muslim, Kitāb 43 al-rū’ya, Bāb 3, p. 980.
Prophet, whose appearance is not an illusory vision but is a good tiding from the Prophet himself. In the story above, the Prophet had as good as come to Bukhara.

It is most productive to approach the above dream narrative in *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* within the broader mosaic framework of the religio-literary milieu and discourse of the era. Scholarship on this text has passed over this episode in silence because it seems to say so little about political, administrative, and fiscal history, which has commanded a larger share of scholarship on this text. However, the narrative is put to productive use if we consider it as a genuine artifact of literary self-representation. The narrative captures the impulse of the author to portray Bukhara as a privileged site in Islamic history. Narshakhi or his later translators clearly strove to embed Bukhara deep into the framework of piety that would resonate on multiple levels.

Here is a narrative that transcends the narrow strictures of biological lineage to the Prophet and expands it to a direct encounter with the Prophet in the far reaches of Khurasan. This episode demonstrates that, at least in *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, we have an example of the author forming links with foundational moments and characters in Islamic history. Narshakhi binds the Prophet to the city of Bukhara in a relationship that creates a non-biological pedigree for the city. Like Baikandi, believer at every time in every place has the potential to be guided by the Prophet Muḥammad. Prophetic guidance is ever-present, unconstrained by the boundaries of time or place. Since the Prophet who appears in a believer’s dream is the true Prophet, he will not mislead the believer.

Legitimating dreams can also take the form of miraculous learning that occurs in dreams. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Kutāmi once learned a portion of *hadith* from the *Muwatța* of Malik ibn Anas in a dream by writing down the *hadith* in a dream lesson; he found when
he woke that he had indeed memorized the *hadith*. Kutāmī also reported to Sadafī that as a child he saw the Prophet in a dream. The Prophet embraced the seven-year old Kutāmī and touched his mouth with his right hand and his breast with his left hand. As the Prophet did this he recited verses 87:6 (*Al-ʿAʿlā*, The Most High) and 54:17 (*Al-Qamar*, The Moon). In this verse God promises to help memorize the Qurʾan: “We shall make you receive (the Qurʾan) so that you will not forget it (87:6)” and “Easy have We made the Qurʾan to understand: So is there any one who will be warned?” The Prophet then gave Kutāmī a drink of water. After this, Kutāmī could easily memorize the Qurʾan, and he memorized passages in his dreams.281

The dream gives Kutāmī unmediated access to the Prophet. By learning the Qurʾan directly from Muḥammad in the dream, Kutāmī enjoys a form of privileged access to the Prophet from whom he learns the Qurʾan directly through his embrace. There can be no doubt the recitation of Kutāmī must be correct. Though others may study the Qurʾan and *hadith* with esteemed teachers, there is no greater teacher than Muḥammad. Like Sufis who are initiated onto the mystical path through Khiḍr, and thereby bypassing the constraints of human networks of learning, Kutāmī learns the sacred text from the best teacher of all.

Dream narratives in biographical dictionaries may also legitimate an individual and the people, practices, deeds, beliefs, and places with which he is associated. Dreams confirm the religious authority, practice, or theological stance of an individual or community or delegitimize or question the position of others. These types of dreams occur in the biographical literature. Dream visions of the Prophet also occur in

281 Renard, *Friends of God*, 77.
autobiographical literature of the *manaqib* genre, in which an author provides first-person accounts of his achievements. This phenomenon is not confined to the medieval period, as Katz notes that “Beginning in the fifteenth century, and continuing through the nineteenth, North African Islam in particular seems to have spawned an ever-increasing number of prodigious seers of the prophet who wrote about their visionary experience.”  

In addition to dreams in which the sleeper sees the Prophet, there are also dreams in which Companions and Successors appear. Despite the context provided by the hadith that only dreams in which Muḥammad appears are guaranteed to be true and not from Satan, these dream manuals and local histories nevertheless include dream narratives in which the point of the dream is more that it is as a symbol and legitimating device rather than a form of prophecy from the Prophet. For example, Malik b. Dīnār had a dream in which he saw al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, the famed pious mystic and early Sufi. “al-Ḥasan told him that he was guided by God’s grace to the abode of the righteous in reward for his sorrow and weeping in this world. He accordingly said: ‘The longer the man’s sadness in this world the longer is his joy in the life to come’.” This dream confirms the piety of the dreamer, Malik b. Dīnār, and rests for its power in large part on the acknowledged piety of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.  

In another dream that Ibn Qutayba related in his compendium, the dream affirms the piety of the dreamer, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and other pious exemplars.  

Ḥafṣa bint Rāshid was moved by the death of her neighbor Marwān al-Muhallimī. She then saw him in a dream and asked him what God’s decision about him was.

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283 Kister, “The Interpretation of Dreams,” 82.
He told her that he had been introduced into Paradise, that he had then joined the ‘People of the Right’ (ashāb al-yamīn) and been finally raised to ‘those near the Presence’ (al-muqarrabūn). When asked whom he had met in Paradise, he answered that he had seen there al-Hasan (al-Baṣrī), Maymun b. Siyāh, and Muḥammad b. Sīrīn. 284

Just as having a famous pious Successor such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī legitimizes a city in a local history by tying a prestigious believer to the land, seeing such a pious figure in a dream legitimizes and confirms the piety of the dreamer. Also legitimated are the reputation and religious practice of the other pious exemplars – including the noted early dream interpreter Muḥammad b. Sīrīn – who are named in the dream.

Critical to the legitimating power that dreams wielded in early Islamic society was the idea that dreams convey truth. Dreams can convey truth independently of the Prophet’s appearance in them. Dreams function as a screen through which the dreamer can access authentic truth, whether it be in the form of the dead speaking from dār al-haqq or the Prophet blessing the believer with a dream as a form of continuation of prophecy. This is illustrated by the case of the deceased giving guidance in dreams. For example, two friends talk about death and agree that whoever dies first appears in his friend’s dream to tell him about the experience of dying and the afterlife. 285 Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728), an early dream interpreter, stated that because the dead are in the dār al-haqq, what the dead communicate to the living through the medium of dreams is also haqq. 286

284 Ibid., 82, 84.
Authors of the chronicles employed such dreams to enrich the structure of the narrative and for edifying purposes, a subject on which El-Hibri has written eloquently.  

Dynasties began to routinely commission dynastic histories from the 12th century onwards, though earlier dynasties also commissioned works. Medieval dynasties, including the Buyids and the Ghaznavids with Sultan Maḥmūd, incorporated dream narratives into their narratives describing the origin of their dynasties. Likewise, dream narratives shaped the stories about the beginnings of the Safavids and the Ottomans. In the Persian literary tradition, dreams functioned as a literary device in the epic *Shāhnāma*.

Dreams also functioned as a literary device in theological literature. Through dreams authors could address critical issues and potentially controversial arguments. By couching a discussion of non-orthodox views on the comparative values of the Qurʾān and the hadith in an oblique way through dream narratives, an author could address or raise critical points.

Other forms of legitimating dreams occur in the pilgrimage guide (*ziyārat*) genre.

These dreams, along with those that explicitly occur in a specific place – such as the

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289 See Mahallati, “The Significance of Dreams,” 156.

290 Sholeh Quinn, “The Dreams of Shaykh Saff al-Dīn in Late Safavid Chronicles,” in *Dreaming Across Boundaries*, 222.

291 For an article-length treatment of this issue, see Kinberg, “Qurʾān and Hadīth: A Struggle for Supremacy as Reflected in Dream Narratives,” in *Dreaming Across Boundaries*. Kingberg argues that dreams as a polemic device for either support of Qurʾān or hadith reveal the debate that occurred at the time, and that the existence of contradictory messages in different dreams points to a historical dispute... Had there been agreement about the relative value of the Qurʾān and the hadīth, this issue would not have been raised in dreams (41).”
dream in Bukhara – both bestow religious significance to a place and simultaneously receive holiness. Dreams and visions communicated information about the waking world to the dreamer, including the location of the burial places of saints or martyrs. Sites of burial of a saint could be discovered or rediscovered in dreams. This is the case with the “rediscovery” or “discovery” tombs, such as that of the tomb of the Prophet Daniel in Samarqand, Prophet Ayyūb in Bukhara, and the tomb of Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib near Balkh in Mazarisharif in the 6th/12th and again in the 9th/15th century.292 Dream encounters with saints were a way of establishing a shrine, and “Egyptian pilgrimage guides contain stories of encounters with saints which were recorded posthumously.”293 The practice of dreams or visions revealing the place of burial of saints and martyrs is also evident in the Christian tradition, such as the vision that revealed to Ambrose the burial location of Protašius and Gervasius.294

Conversely, shrines could also be the site of dreams about sacred people. Medieval dream narratives of those who do ziyārat to the grave in Najaf of Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib portray Imam ʿAlī as appearing alive and very active. Indeed Imam ʿAlī is seen doing the following:

chastising his enemies, doing battle against those who would desecrate his grave, granting protection to those who seek refuge at his grave, demanding of visitors to fulfill the pledges they have made to his grave, foretelling the visitor’s future, diving the identity and religious affiliation of the visitor, returning stolen objects

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292 Jurgen Paul, "The Histories of Samarqand,” 80. For history about the shrine of ʿAlī in Mazarisharif, where the tomb of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib was twice “discovered,” see McChesney, Waqf in Central Asia.

293 Meri, “The Islamic Cult of Saints,” 34.

to their owners, demanding of Shi‘i that they pay their debts, and confirming the authenticity of a disputed tradition.295

The sacrality of ʿAlī’s shrine provides fertile ground for dreams in which the Imam appears. The dreams of Imami ʿAlī reinforce and reconfirm the sanctity of his shrine and grant the dreamer privileged access to the Imam through a dream.

This chapter argued that dream narratives in local and regional histories were molded and presented in service of broader aims of the authors and the larger narrative of the particular local history. A typology of relevant dream narratives recorded in local histories included polemical or sectarian dreams, premonitory dreams, and legitimating or validating dreams.

The examples of polemical or sectarian dreams have drawn on Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, dream manuals, and biographical dictionaries. Premonitory dreams focused on a dream about Seville falling out of Muslim control in Tārīkh Ifītāḥ al-Andalus. In the category of legitimating and validating dreams, there is the dream that validates the conquest of al-Andalus in Tārīkh Ifītāḥ al-Andalus and a dream adduced in Tārīkh-i Bukhārā in which the Prophet appears in Bukhara to approve of a local pious exemplar’s reading of the Qur’an. Dream narratives appear in biographical dictionaries, and dreams are also the site of miraculous learning. Situating dream narratives within the broader social, political, literary, and sectarian developments of the era, as well tracing the relation of dreams to the corpus of Qur’an, hadith, and commentary literature, is critical.

to discerning the function and purpose of dreams in local and regional histories. Furthermore, pre- and non-Islamic traditions of dream interpretation provide a broader context for Islamic oneiromancy. It is also possible to draw a parallel between the legitimating function of dreams and the role that Khiḍr plays as a legitimator in the Sufi tradition.

The following chapter considers narratives about Sahaba, Tabiʿun, Sayyids, and their traditions as mechanisms of legitimation in Arabic and Persian language city and regional histories from the 4th/10th – 7th/13th centuries. The chapter explores the multiple ways in which Sahaba, Tabiʿun, Sayyids, and their traditions function as legitimating narrative devices, and suggests that through them authors posit a powerful form of lineage and heirship to the Prophet.
Chapter 4: Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, and Hadith as Tools of Legitimation

Marhaban, our brothers from the people of Qum... God has a sanctuary, and that is Mecca. And the Prophet of God has a sanctuary, and that is Medina. And Commander of the Faithful ʿAlī has a sanctuary, and that is Kufa. And we have a sanctuary, and that is the city of Qum. Know that soon a woman of my descendants, whose name is Fa‘īma will be buried in Qum, and everyone who does ziyarat to her will find he or she certainly goes to heaven.296

– Attributed to Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣadiq in Tarikh-i Qum

This chapter considers narratives about Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, and their traditions as mechanisms of legitimation in Arabic and Persian language city and regional histories from the 10th –13th centuries. This chapter explores the multiple ways in which Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, and their traditions function as legitimating narrative devices, and suggest that through them authors posit a powerful form of lineage and heirship to the Prophet. It aims to uncover the contexts and functions of literary content about Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, and traditions they relate and to incorporate this material into the broader mosaic framework of literatures that encompasses discourses of legitimacy and literary self-representation.

Claims of heirship or association with the Prophet vis-à-vis Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, and their traditions are one amongst multiple literary strategies employed in local and regional histories to forge links with foundational moments and characters in history. This literary framework of heirship and legitimacy also includes seeing the Prophet, Companions, abdal, and pious characters in dreams (chapter 3), sacred etymologies involving Muḥammad, Gabriel or Qur’anic moments (chapter 5), and

296 Qummi, Ṭarikh-i Qum, 573.
narratives about the tombs of saints and other important Muslims located in the city or region (chapter 5).

In highlighting the variegated articulations of early Perso-Muslim literary self-presentation in local and regional histories through the lens of Sahaba, Tabiʿun, and Sayyids, the aim is to underscore the vibrant and regionally differentiated expressions of Islamic piety and identity. These sources portray highly localized Muslim Persian identities. Despite the centralizing forces of the developing normative Sunni understandings of Islam as articulated through the canonical hadith collections during this era, these city and regional histories demonstrate how local variations of Muslim identity were articulated and what aspects they emphasized.

The geographical work Kitāb aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrīfat al-aqālīm (Best divisions for knowledge of the regions) by Muqaddasī (b. ca. 946) is a colorful example of the rich variety of Islamic practice and is rife with descriptions of local customs and practices. By turns Muqaddasī denigrates, praises, and observes the divergent Muslim religious customs and beliefs across the Islamic empire. Some of the different local customs that Muqaddasī catalogues include variant readings of the Qurʾan, local funerary practices, different rituals of communal prayer, the preponderance of the varied schools of law according to region, localized Ramadan rituals, Muslim names popular in particular regions, and local lore that claims a special relationship with a prophet, such as the alleged existence in a town of the coffin of the prophet Daniel.297 Following Muqaddasī’s lead, this chapter explores the diversity of Islamic identity and practice by

zeroing in on the narrative material about Sahaba, Tabiʿun, Sayyids, and their traditions in local and regional histories and examining how this material as functions as legitimating narrative devices.

This chapter considers how binding a city or a region to Sahaba, Tabiʿun, and Sayyids and the hadith they transmitted amplified the city or region’s legitimacy in the context of broader issues of genealogy, heirship, and authority. The main sources examined here are Tārīkh-i Qum by Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Qummi (d. 1015 or 16), Tārīkh-Bayhaq by Ṭalā al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Zayd Bayhaqī, known as Ibn Funduq (d. 1169 or 70), the anonymous 5th/11th century Tārīkh-i Sīstan, and Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan by Ibn Isfandiyār (d. after 613/1217).

This chapter adheres to a functionally skeptical methodology that understands traditions adduced in local and regional histories as literary artifacts of early Islamic social life and cultural production. This methodology treats hadith in literary sources as avenues through which we can access the issues that concerned the learned classes when the narratives were produced. The historicity of traditions – whether the Prophet actually stated or performed what later transmitters say he did, or the date a particular hadith came into circulation – is irrelevant for this project. What matters is what the authors of local and regional histories sought to accomplish, argue, debate, and demonstrate by including these traditions in their historical writing. Paying special attention to the relationship between cities and hadith and highlighting notable tropes allows scholarship to read local histories and the hadith contained in them a mode of social history.

This chapter agrees with the position that, as a genre and practice, hadith could not be contained within the canonical works. Rather, hadith was continuously reshaped.
Despite – or perhaps because of – its highly elevated status, *hadith* was an expansive and permeable genre despite the strict and elaborate standards of ‘ilm al-rija’l and Islamic scholarship that developed to organize it. As Humphreys argued:

All this scholarship and all these institutions never quite established a closed canon of *hadīth*. There came to be a stable core, defined by the *Sahihayn* or (more fuzzily) by the Six Books, but outside these limits the corpus of *hadīth* in circulations seems to have been remarkably plastic. From the moment *hadīth* first emerged as a clear-cut genre, early in the second *hijri/eighth* century, it could never be confined within the fences of the formal collections.\(^{298}\)

The traditions included in the local and regional histories in this study do not always include their full *isnads*, and canonical acceptance is clearly not the point of their inclusion.

*Hadith* also crossed the boundaries of genre. The image of porousness is productive in conceptualizing the movement of *hadith* through and within disciplines of writing. In the 3\(^{rd}/9\)th century “*hadīths* permeated the religio-ethical writings of Ibn Qutayba, Ibn Abī al-Dunya,” as well as historical writing, such as Ibn ʿAsakir’s *Tarikh madīnat Dimashq*. Moreover,

*hadīths* could even be cited as models of rhetorical eloquence. In these contexts – what we might call the public rather than the scientific realm – authors and compilers did not always feel constrained to stick to the rigorous and exceedingly complex criteria elaborated by ‘ilm al-*hadith* between the third *hijri/ninth* and seventh *hijri/thirteenth* centuries. Many of their citations are of very dubious ancestry.\(^{299}\)

Local histories contain traditions not canonized through their inclusion in the *Sahihayn* because these traditions adduced here serve different ends: to bind a city or region to

\(^{298}\) Humphreys, “Borrowed Lives,” 73.

\(^{299}\) *Ibid.*, 73.
foundational moments and people in Islamic history and record the local traditions that
were important to that community’s self-representation.

**Sahaba, Tabiʿun, Sayyids, and hadith**

Notable early Muslims brought prestige to a city by his or her association with the
location by living, visiting, teaching hadith, dying, or being buried there. In the case of
the Prophet Muḥammad, Khiḍr, and abdāl, associations with the city can take the form of
visitations in dreams or visions. In Jurgen Paul’s observations about a 15th century
Persian language history of Samarqand, the *Qandiyya-yi khurd*[^100], a “translation” into
Persian by an anonymous author, he notes:

> A tendency to boast the coming of Very Important Persons (as Qutham b. al-
> ἘABBās) to the city in question, or claiming to have been conquered before the
> neighbors were (in Samarqand by Saʿīd b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān) in order to add some
> luster to one’s home own town, a tendency evident even in pre-Mongol times, if
> not right from the start, was turned into traditions that these figures were buried
> “with us” (or, in the case of Qutham, even living “with us”). Thus, authors kept
> embroidering on the canvas handed down to them by previous writers.^[301]

We do not know the extent to which this tendency was evident in the 11th century Arabic
*Qandiyya* histories that Jurgen considers, but this characteristic is manifest in local
histories from elsewhere in Persia considered here. It is evident that the propensity to

[^100]: 146
[^301]: 146

[^100]: 146
[^301]: 146

[^300]: 146
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[^301]: 146
absorb early or pivotal characters in Islamic history into the foundational stories and identity of the city continued for centuries during the medieval period.

As associates of the Prophet, the Sahaba and Tabi’un who were dispersed within the nascent umma and orally transmitted the hadith of the Prophet were profoundly important. As the local and regional histories addressed in this dissertation show, local histories focus on Sahaba who visit, live, teach, or die in a particular area. In contrast, there is no similar type of discussion or emphasis in these same texts about the identity of the first person who brought the Qur’an to the region. The closest thing to this is the dream encounter of the Prophet in Bukhara with a local denizen who for three days correctly recited the Qur’an to the Prophet.

Local hadith that were eventually excluded from the canonical collections but are adduced in Persian local histories are one manifestation of the local umma existing the within the larger global umma. Hadith, these texts suggest, were regionally differentiated during the time these texts were written and translated, which is largely during the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th to 7th/13th centuries. In contrast, there is no similar treatment of regionally differentiated Qur’ans. Rather, we have instead an insistence in Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, couched in a dream narrative, that the Qur’an recitation there is the correct one. While heterogeneous hadith posed no problem, heterogeneous Qur’ans were very much a problem. While other texts may speak about the first person who brought the Qur’an to a place, the texts examined in this dissertation do not, and they imply that heterogeneity of hadith was acceptable in a way that a heterogeneous Qur’an was not. Given that these texts show no similar move to prove that hadith in circulation in these cities and regions
were the canonically accepted ones, this suggests that the homogenization of the Qur’an as an absolute and closed corpus occurred earlier than it did for the hadith.

Central to the emphasis in local histories on Sahaba, Tabi’un, and notable individuals is the importance of genealogy and lineage. Genealogies – sacred, invented, or based on clientage – were a well-practiced way of establishing legitimacy. The importance accorded to genealogy extended, in chronology and geography, far beyond the Arab tribal emphasis on lineage. Genealogy need not be literally understood as a bloodline. Central to this dissertation is the argument that genealogy should be broadly understood to include not only biological lineage and the fictive legal genealogies of mawla clientage, but also those that are supra-biological. These supra-biological genealogies of heirship include Sufis being initiated onto the mystical path by Khidr, the Prophet appearing to an individual in a dream or a vision, and signs and symbols in the material culture and in the literary sphere meant to indicate a cultural, literary, or intellectual heritage.

Flood’s theoretical argument about markers of identity in his study of premodern cultural geography is applicable here.302 Similarly, genealogy can also be signaled through various media, including architecture, literature, clothing, actions, language, etymologies, and mythologies. Beyond the recording of data, the semiotic function of

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302 To observe the geographic reach of this impulse to assert a genealogical connection with Islamic legitimacy we may consider the example of the Delhi sultanate. During the Delhi sultanate that emerged in the wake collapse of the Ghurid sultanate around 1206, sultan Iltutmish (d. 633/1236) desired to form an Indian Muslim identity, and in this he sought to develop the mosque as the physical site where Indian-Muslim lineage coalesced. Thus, “the mosque became the locus for an agglomeration of signs that sought to project the authority of the Sultanate while shaping the identity of the Muslim community of northern India. The endeavor was indeed to construct a genealogy for the sultanate that addressed the dialectical nature of Indian Islamic identity... asserting a relationship with the wider Islamic world while accommodating and appropriating the signs of an Indian past.” Flood, Objects of Translation, 14.
Perso-Muslim genealogical claims in local histories is to firmly place the region into the Islamic narrative.

Literary production and material culture converge in their use and creation of historical memory and legitimizing genealogies. Flood argues:

This image of the objectivized past embedded in the material present finds a ready point of comparison in medieval Arabic and Persian historical writing, ‘in which older texts were continually being reproduced or embedded in new ones’ that encompassed and built on them ... This textual paradigm could be extended to encompass the material correlates of valorized quotations by those engaged in the business of creating usable pasts and fictive genealogies in the thirteenth century.303

Local histories evidence a concerted effort to assert genealogies – to Muhammad, his descendants, Companions, and other exemplars and saints – as a means of signaling an Islamic heritage and asserting a pedigreed past.

The core of this chapter is an exploration of the literary mechanisms that signal forms of heirship. Inventive studies on issues of heirship and genealogy in Persia have recently been published.304 Through simultaneous actions of forgetting the Sasanian pre-Islamic past and remembering and recasting the role of Persia and Persians in the pre- and early Islamic past through tradition, Persian Muslims melded memory of the Persian past to their Islamic present in order to authenticate and recast their identity as Muslims.305 Forgetting and remembering were selective and deliberate processes.

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304 Sarah Bowen Savant, “‘Persians’ in Early Islam,” Annales Islamologiques 42 (2008): 73-92. In a study of conventions of lexical practice regarding the terms and concepts of “Persia” and “Persians” in early Islamic Persia, Savant convincingly documented a shift in how the terms were used. The change in how the terms were used and what they referred to demonstrated a reconfiguration and a “re-imagining of Iranian social identities” and new ideas about Persia and Persians.

305 Savant, “‘Persians’ in Early Islam,” 74-76, 89. An example of this dual action of forgetting and recasting is that during the early Islamic period in Persia, the term Fārs, and not Irān or Irānshahr, became
Tradition is a broad term in which Savant includes whatever is transmitted, which therefore includes not only *hadith* and historical reports (*akhbar*), but, borrowing from Shils, “anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present.”

Remembering or recasting Persians’ early ties to Islam includes various elements. These include the presence and roles of Persians in Arabia and during the conquests, Islam’s antique origins in Persia, the Prophet speaking of Persia, Salman al-Farisi, the Persians’ warm reception of Arabs and Islam, Prophetic *hadith* about Persia, and the pre-Islamic prophetic progenitors of the Persians. The latter is particularly interesting since, in claiming descent from earlier prophets such as Noah or Qur’anic characters such as Adam, the Persians’ antique origins prefigure the arrival of Islam and their reception of Muhammad. This embeds the Persians deep into prophetic and therefore Qur’anic heritage. In claiming that Persians are descendants of prophets is to claim a pre-Islamic monotheistic heritage. “This idea of *islām* before Muhammad’s Islam placed the new religion, and its followers, within the history of Near Eastern monotheisms,” and Persians were, in a sense, Muslims before Islam. This asserts a continuation of Persian piety from the pre-Islamic to the Islamic period.

Massignon earlier documented the relationship of Salman al-Farisi to Persian Islam and to Shi‘i thought, and Daftary more recently examined the role of Salman in

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306 Savant, “‘Persians’ in Early Islam,” 77.

307 Savant, “‘Persians’ in Early Islam,” 79.
Isma‘ili thought.\textsuperscript{308} Salman al-Farisi was one of the four Sahaba who came to be known as the four pillars of the early Shi’a.\textsuperscript{309} On a Shi’i hadith that Salman, taken into Muḥammad’s household, was from the house of the Prophet (“Salman minna Ahl al-Bayt”), Massignon concludes that this came from a longer sentence uttered after the death of Salman “and placed in the mouth of an Imam, in that of ‘Alī or of Bāqir,” and that from the end of the 1\textsuperscript{st}/7\textsuperscript{th} century the concept that Salman had become a member of the Ahl al-Bayt, the notion of “Salmanian adoption [by the Prophet] had, among the Shi‘ite conspirators a ritual value which supposed his participation even in the inspiration of the Prophet.”\textsuperscript{310}

As the power and symbolic importance of Salman developed, mashḥads for Salman sprung up, which Massignon argues are not attested before the 6\textsuperscript{th}/12\textsuperscript{th} century. The Fatimids supplied their patronage to build mashḥads for Salman, though Massignon argues that Salman’s real tomb is located in Mada’in (Ctesiphon) near the Taq-i-Kisra, a site traditionally considered to be the palace of the Sasanian King Khosrow I (r. 531–579).\textsuperscript{311} As a Persian and particularly notable Sahaba, Salman granted all Persians a kind of privileged access to the Prophet. This relationship of Persians to the Prophet through

\textsuperscript{308} Daftary, Isma‘ili, 37, 99, 100-101, 394, 454. On the relationship between Imami Shi‘ism and Sufism in Persia, Daftary argues that “Twelver Shi‘ism developed its own rapport with Sufism in Persia during the period stretching from the fall of Alamut to the rise of the Safavid dynasty (454),” beginning with the works of Sayyid Haydar Amuli, the Twelver “theologian, theosopher, and gnostic (‘arif) from Mazandaran who died after 787/1385.”

\textsuperscript{309} The three other Companions are Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari, al-Miqdad b. al-Aswad al-Kindi and ‘Ammar b. Yasir. Ibid., 37.

\textsuperscript{310} Louis Massignon, Salmân Pâk et les Prémices Spirituelles de l’Islam Iranien; Salmân Pâk and the Spiritual Beginnings of Iranian Islam, Translated from the French by Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala (Bombay: J.M. Unvala, 1955), 10 and 12, respectively.

\textsuperscript{311} Ibid., 15, 1.
Salman, though not actually genealogical, formed a link and type of expansive heritage linking Persians to the Prophet.

As Savant documents, al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) transmitted traditions that place Persians as descendants of the first Persian king Gayūmart (Kayumars) who was simultaneously also Adam, Adam’s progeny, or Noah’s grandson. Al-Ṭabarī also provided other possible ways in which Persians belonged to Noah’s family. Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawai (d. c. 281 or 282/894-895) includes both mythical Iranian characters and heroes – Farīdūn, Īraj, and Manūchir – in the Persian genealogy, and accommodates the prophetic lineage by making everyone descendants of Noah. Similarly, in Tārīkh Jurjān, or Kitāb ma’rifat ‘ulama’ ahl Jurjān by al-Saḥmī (d. 1035), the author situates Jurjan (Gurgan) as a place where Saḥba settled and that the etymology of Jurjan derives from a person named Jurdān, who was a descendant of Noah, thus embedding the very ground of Jurjan into pre-Islamic mythic history.

Persian and Turkic dynasts used genealogies to legitimate their rule. Such genealogies were the “stock-in-trade of the arriviste eastern Iranian dynasties that emerged after the weakening of centralized caliphal authority.” Local dynasties in Persia starting in the 3rd/9th century asserted claims of connection to an Arab-Islamic past beyond those forged through wala’, or the relationship of clientage, to include tribal affiliations, relations to Saḥba, and descent from early Muslims. Bosworth dates the end of the compulsion to automatically try to connect to the imperial and mythical Persian

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312 Savant, “‘Persians’ in Early Islam,” 77-78.

313 Robinson discusses this episode in Islamic Historiography, 141. See also Ḥamzah ibn Yūsuf Saḥmī, (d. 1035) Tārīkh Jurjān, aw, Kitāb ma’rifat ‘ulama’ ahl Jurjān (Hyderabad, Deccan: Matba’a’t Majlis Dāʿirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmānīyah, 1967).

314 Flood, Objects of Translation, 92.
past as ending in the 5th/11th century. This roughly coincides with the period of local dynasties. During the 4th/10th to 7th/13th centuries, “the unified state was replaced by a commonwealth of regional polities,” though there were many forms of dynasties of Arab, Turkic, and Persian descent, and “their ties to Baghdad were tighter or looser, depending largely on distance and ambition.”

These genealogical claims served multiple functions. “Intended for consumption both at home and in the wider Islamic world, these genealogies addressed the heterogeneous nature of that world, on occasion asserting descent from both the Arab tribes of early Islamic Arabia and the Persian heroes of the Shāhnāma, the Book of Kings.” The audience for claims of legitimacy and prestigious lineage was domestic and foreign, local and universal. Dynasts commissioned for themselves the history they desired, and projected their pedigree onto their reign and as their outward image.

One of the local dynasties, the Ghurid sultans – who reigned in what is Khurasan, modern Afghanistan, and northern India during the 6th/12th and 7th/13th century – claimed a strange Islamo-Persian legitimacy, descending from Zahak (Dhahhāk) of the Shāhnāmah on the one hand and converted to Islam by ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib on the other. Ghurids claimed Arab tribal connections as well as ties to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib. All this is despite the fact that it was the Ghaznavids who introduced Islam into the mountainous region of Ghur in Afghanistan in the 11th century. The Ghurid court historian Fakhr-i

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316 Robinson, Islamic Historiography, 139.
317 Flood, Objects of Translation, 92.
318 Ibid., 92.
Mudabbir Mubarakshah traced the Ghurid genealogy back to Azhd Zahak (Dahhak), the mythological despot, whose descendants took refuge in Ghur when Zahak (Dahhak) was overthrown. The Ghurid historian Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani (d. 7th/13th century) suggested that the founder of the Ghurid dynasty, Shansab or Shanab (Gushnasp), was converted to Islam by ‘Ali b. Abi Talib from whom he received an investiture patent (‘ahd) and a standard (liwa). The Ghurid Amir Fulad b. Shansab allegedly fought alongside Abu Muslim in the Abbasid revolution.319

The Tahirids and Buyids claimed both an Arab-Islamic past and a Persian lineage. Masudi records the claims of the 9th century Tahirids – who patronized scholarship in Arabic – to be descended from both the Persian Rustam b. Dastan while simultaneously claiming to be related to the Arab tribes of Khuza and Quraysh. Likewise, the Daylami Buyids laid claims to both an Arab-Islamic past and Persian and Zoroastrian heritage, evidenced in titular claims such as ‘Ajud ad-Daula’s adoption of the imperial title Shahanshah. 320

Local dynasties, Bosworth argues, more strongly asserted connections to the Iranian epic past, Sasanian imperial past, or to the Persian land, than they did to claims of an Arab-Islamic past, since it was likely easier to assert a Persian connection than an Arab tribal or prophetic connection. This applies to the Samanids, Ghaznavids, and Daylami Buyids. Some claims to a Persian aristocratic past were true. Claims of the Samanids, who originated from the dihqan class and had marriage ties to Persian royalty,

320 Ibid., 56-57. “...this ambivalent attitude towards the relative desirability of Arab or Persian lineage reflects the currents of thought and the uncertainties of this century of transition, in which the Persians had already reached the highest pinnacles of political influence in the state and were now challenging the social dominance of the Arabs (56).”
were true, while claims of aristocratic origins by the Daylamis and Saffarids were untrue. The Turkish Ghaznavid dynasty – Sebuktigin, the founder of which was formerly a member of the Samanid military slave institution – quickly became Persianized and created Persianized genealogies. The Tariqhi Mujadwal of Abu l-Qasim 'Imadi quoted by the Ghurid historian Juzjani supplies Sebuktigin with a genealogy that traces his lineage over six generations to the last Sasanian king Yazdigird III (r. 11-30/632–651, d. 30/651). The great dynasties of Turkish chieftains who rose to power roughly contemporary with the Ghaznavids, including the Qarakhanids and the Seljuqs, did not draw initially on claims of a Persian past, but this was because they relied on Turkish support.

Tariqhi Qum

Qum became, over the centuries, a center of piety and power, and the literary representation of Qum furthered the position of the city as a religious center. Tariqhi Qum was originally written in Arabic in the 10th century by Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn

321 Ibid., 55, 58. “We know of no attempt to connect the Samanids with the Arab heritage, but it was generally accepted amongst the Samanids' contemporaries that the family was of aristocratic, if not royal, Iranian origin. Saman-Khuda, the earliest attested member of the family, was a dihqan from the Balkh area of Tukharistan, who in the eighth century was converted to Islam and served one of the last Umayyad governors of Khurasan. Biruni, followed by subsequent sources such as Ibn al-Athir, says that there is “universal agreement” that the Samanids descend from Bahram Chubin. Bahram Chubin, son of Bahram Gushnasp, led a revolt against the Emperor Hormizd IV in 590 and temporarily occupied the imperial throne himself as Bahram VI. His family of Mihran claimed descent from the Arsacids, hence his bid for the throne and his displacement of the Sasanids (58).”

322 Ibid., 61-62.
Hasan Qummi, although that text is now lost and survives only in the form of a later Persian translation made in 1402-3.\textsuperscript{323}

Among the characteristics of Qum that appear time and again in various contexts of this text, be it in reference to fiscal or administrative history, it is Alid independence, fiscal rebellion, and a tendency to chafe under centralized control which loom large. The text contains repeated descriptions of violence and violent discontent about taxes in Qum, before and after the redistricting of Qum into a separate city independent of Isfahan.\textsuperscript{324}

The Persian translator Ḣasan b. Ṭāhir b. Ḣasan b. Ṭāhir al-Malik Qummi includes a series of praise for his patron, Isma`īl b. `Abbād b. al-`Abbās b. `Abbād to whom the book is dedicated, about his kindness, generosity, and the charitable provisions he made for the people of Qum. The patron, Ibn `Abbād, Abu l-Qāsim Ismā`īl b. `Abbād b. al-`Abbās b. `Abbād b. Ahmad b. Idrīs (b. 326/938 d. Rayy, 385/995), was a vizier to the Buyids Aḥmad al-Dawla, Fakhr al-Dawla, and Mu`ayyid al-Dawla, and was also noted as a man of letters.\textsuperscript{325} In patronizing the Persian translation of the work on Qum, the vizier Ibn `Abbād inserts himself into the narrative of the city as not only a vizier who supported the

\textsuperscript{323} In 805-6/1402-3 Ḣasan b. Ṭāhir b. Ḣasan b. Ṭāhir al-Malik Qummi translated the Arabic work into Persian for Ṭāhir b. Ṭāhir b. Muhammad b. Ṭāhir as-Safī. This work was done under the patronage of Isma`īl b. `Abbād b. al-`Abbās b. `Abbād, waṣīr to the Buyid Fakhr ud-Dawla b. Rukn al-Dawla (r. 366-387/976-997), to whom he dedicates the translation. I base my study on this Persian translation. The translated manuscript was then copied in 837/1433 in the city of Qum. The editor Muhammad Rizā Anṣārī Qummi states that the extant manuscripts of the Persian translation of Ṭārikh-i Qum he has seen originate from two sources. The manuscripts on which the text is based have some special characteristics, including numerous letter substitutions, which the printed edition retains, along with the occasional use of Arabic words instead of Persian ones, and variant spellings of proper nouns. Some of the most common of these letter substitutions are the use of the letter ḥām instead of chi, kāf instead of gaḥ, hamza with a kasra instead of a yē, bā instead of pe, dha instead of da, connection of the letter baa with the noun instead of using baa+ha, use of the taa marbūta instead of a full tā, use of ba+alif instead of be (ba+ha), eliminating/not including the ibn in names, the letter alif in the middle of a name. Qummi, Ṭārikh-i Qum, 66-61, 64, 4, 63-67.

\textsuperscript{324} Qummi, Ṭārikh-i Qum, 72-82.

recording and transmission of history but as someone who also supported the *ulama* and the material well-being of the city. Ḥasan ibn Mūsā al-Bābūrī[^326] notes, bestowed his munificence upon the Alids of Qum, scholarly endeavors, and the *ulama*. Charitable gifts included building *qanats* or *karīz* water channels and improving irrigation by bringing streams of water from outside the city to within it. Other provisions included support of literature, arts, and learning by creating *awqāf* for learning and knowledge and for the use of the writing of books[^326]. In his sponsorship of the work Ibn ʿAbbād become entwined with the scholarly, religious, and material development of Qum in the literature about the city. In this way Ibn ʿAbbād both supports the pietistic virtues of the city and is a beneficiary of the legitimacy and authority accorded to Qum.

The author offers three reasons he completed the research for the *Tarīkh-i Qum* and why he was instigated to compose it. These were firstly to collect reports, stories, and information, including those about the virtues of Qum. Secondly, he did this so that the people of Qum know the reports (*akhbar*) about Qum, because people have forgotten them. Thirdly, he did this because he wanted to write a book recording the reports (*akhbar*) of Qum, much in the way that Ḥāmza al-Īsfahānī[^327] (Abū ʿAbdullah Ḥāmza ibn Ḥasan Isfahānī) (280-360 /893 or 4 – 970 or 71) wrote the *Kitāb-i Isfahān*, while no such work existed for Qum[^327]. This is particularly relevant since Qum was administratively once part of Isfahan. In this section the author quotes his brother [Abū al-QāsimʿAlī b.

[^326]: Ibid., 7-11.

[^327]: Ibid., 19-26.
Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Kātib] who did much research on the *akhbar* of Qum and wanted a book about these but was not able to produce such a volume.\(^{328}\)

The author’s goal is to collect and record information about the Talibi Shi’a, the Arabs, and the Iranians (*ʿajam*) of Qum, and to praise them, and to, as Ḥamza of Isfahan did in his book *Kitāb-i Ḯifāhān*, relate stories about the people of Qum.\(^{329}\) Some of these efforts were interrupted during the period when the author was not in Qum.\(^{330}\) The translated Persian work includes only five chapters out of the original twenty, but Persian translator provides at the beginning of his work chapter summaries, in which he describes the contents of the extant chapters and the 15 lost chapters.\(^{331}\) These summaries permit us a rough idea of the contents and form of the lost Arabic original.

Scholarship on *Tārīḵ-i Qum* has been surprisingly spare. Lambton wrote an article on the *Tārīḵ-i Qum* in 1948, titled “An account of the Tārīḵi Qumm,” but little work has been done on the text since then. Lambton’s main interests were the economic and political history of Qum and, to a much lesser extent, the systems of water distribution.\(^{332}\) Shimamoto applied a religious studies methodology and used Mircea Eliade’s idea of a “center” of a religion to determine why, in Eliade’s terminology, Qum

\(^{328}\) The original author’s (Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan Qummī’s) brother, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Kātib, was at some point the governor [*ḥākim*] of Qum. See Lambton, “An account of the Tārīḵi Qumm,” 586.

\(^{329}\) Qummī, *Tārīḵ-i Qum*, 25.


\(^{331}\) Qummī, *Tārīḵ-i Qum*, 29-36.

\(^{332}\) Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 322. She underscores the changing character of Qum over the centuries: though its fame now rests on its status as a holy shrine city, in the medieval era was Qum referred to both the city and the province to which it belonged as the central city, and these two were administratively indistinct.
is a religious “center” for Shi‘i Islam. No work has yet looked at the literary forms and tropes Tārīḵ-i Qum contains or examined how they function as literary devices securing authority and legitimacy for the region.

Tārīḵ-i Qum includes financial and administrative information about Qum and its constituent and surrounding villages, including information about tax revenue and water distribution. This includes significant information on the tax revenues and revenue assessments for Qum, its administrative changes – such as its split from Isfahan, the district to which it originally belonged – and administrative boundaries, such as descriptions of villages that belong to the district of Qum, and the distribution of water in Qum. Chapter 1 includes material about Qum’s conquest, its borders, boundaries, and measurements. Access to water and its apportionment was clearly an issue in Qum, and there is information about Qum’s water channels (kārīža), streams, rivers, water-mills, and the divisions of the water-mills’ water. There is, notably, information about Qum’s famous Zoroastrian fire-temples (ateshkade-hā). Chapter 2 includes agricultural and administrative information, such as changes in the measurement of agricultural land for the purposes of determining the annual kharāj to be levied on it. Chapter 3 focuses on the Talibi Shi‘a who settled in Qum and about their virtues (faḍā'il) and on the children of ‘Alī ibn Abī-Ṭalib and Fāṭima, and the infallible imams. Chapter 4 concerns the coming to Qum and nearby Āve of the Arabs from the family of Mālik ibn ʿAmir Ash’ari

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334 “Dar an ke Qum ra chand noubat masahat karde-and).” On the term masahat, see page 283 note 1. It refers to the measurement of the amount of the agricultural land in order to determine the amount of the annual kharaj tax levied on it (andaze giri-e was’at zamin-ha-ye keshavarzi, be mandhur-e ta’ain miqdar-e kharaj saliyane har zamin). Qummī, Tārīḵ-i Qum, 283.

335 For the chapter summary, see Ibid., 30.
and their settlement in Qum. The final extant chapter contains *akhbar* about the Arab Muslim Ash’aris coming to Qum, and the virtues related about them.

The no longer extant chapters are described as containing a broad range of information. This included genealogical information of prominent Arabs and their descendants, the *ulama* and the elites, as well as political history, and information about the caliphs, rulers, and administrators of Qum. There was more financial and tax information, as well as sections on *hadith* about Qum, the writers and litterateurs affiliated with Qum, as well as the Jews and Zoroastrians in Qum and the surrounding areas. This work seems to have taken a turn towards a universal history in its latter sections, and included material on the wonders of the world (*ʿajāʾib-e dunyāʾ*), and the lives of the prophets, *akhbar* about the nations (*umam*) from Adam to the era of the *hijra* of the Prophet, the *sunan* of the Arabs and their virtues as well as their lives and idols during the Jahiliya. It also concerned the special characteristics of the Quraysh and the Banī Hisham, and Mecca and Medina, and rare *akhbar* (*akhbar nadire*) from amongst the narratives of the Shiʿa and others.336

Most relevant for this study is the form and content of extant material about the descendants of the Prophet in Qum, the settlement of the Ash’ari Arabs in Qum, and the faḍāʾil of these groups of individuals as well as the physical and non-human virtues of the city and region. This chapter focuses on ways in which the author and translator of the *Tarīkh-i Qum* bind the city to key moments and characters in Islamic and cosmic history.

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336 For a chapter summaries of both the extant and lost chapters, see *Ibid.*, 29 – 36. The information about the caliphs, rulers, and administrators of Qum included those who were *wali*, *hakim*, *sāhib*, *qudāʾ*, and *mutawalliyan* from amongst the Arabs and non-Arabs; faḍāʾil about the ‘Ajam [Iranians] who were in Qum in ancient and contemporary periods. The was material, now lost, about the writers and litterateurs who were in Qum and their compositions, and information about the poets, philosophers, engineers, and astronomers/astrologers (*munajjam*), scribes, papermaker (*warrāq*).
and to prophetic authority by constructing and identity for the city based on its Alid inhabitants, Ash'ari Arab Alid progenitors, and considerable number of sayyids.

On the historical origins of Qum, the dominant picture is that it was an Alid haven and destination to which Ash'ari Arabs migrated in the 8th century in larger numbers after initial Arab settlement on the eve of the 7th or dawn of the 8th century. According to this view, Alids migrated in the early and mid 8th century from Iraq into other lands, including Qum. It is from Kufa that the initial Arabs from the Ash'ari tribe migrated to Qum under the leadership of Ahvās (or Ahwās) b. Sa'd, an event which Shimamoto traces to the year 82/701. The text contains a number of stories about the genesis of the city, in which Ash'ari Arabs, lead by Talha ibn al-Ahwās al-Ash'ārī, established a garrison near what would become the city of Qum as early at the middle of the 1st/7th century.

The precise dates of the Arab conquest are contested, but what is clear is that the author posits an identity for Qum that has several firm pillars: its is overwhelmingly Alid, populated in large part by Ash'ari Arabs and their descendants, retains a strong sense of fiscal and political independence from the caliphal seat, and is a refuge and sanctuary for the Shi'i. Even the physical land of Qum is imbued with its Ash'ari Arab heritage: all 6 of the midans mentioned are named after one of the Ash'ari Arabs who settled in Qum, as are all 4 of the bridges mentioned are named after or were built by one of the Ash'aris who settled in Qum.


338 Qummī, Tārīkh-i Qum, 67-71.
\textit{Tārīkh-i Qum} catalogues the virtues, or \textit{faḍāʾil}, of Qum. These virtues form a common thematic link between \textit{Tārīkh-i Qum} and other city histories written elsewhere in the Persicate world. These virtues are comprised of living \textit{faḍāʾil} which are the descendants of the Prophet – overwhelmingly Alid – and \textit{ulama} in Qum, as well as natural virtues and excellences of the land, and the utterances made by the Prophet, his family members, or Companions that are recorded in \textit{hadith}.

Andrew Newman recently argued that certain \textit{hadith} collections during the formative period of Twelver Shi’ism evidence the milieu in which they were compiled and highlight issues that were particularly pertinent for those communities at that time. The Ash’ari Qummi \textit{isnads} of the \textit{hadith} collections indicate who were in positions of religious authority and prominence at the time. Relevant are two Twelver Shi’i collections of traditions of the Prophet and Imams, \textit{Kitāb al-Maḥāsin} of Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Barqī (d. 274-80/877-94) and \textit{Baṣaʿir al-Daraqūṭī} of Muḥammad b. al-Hasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummi (d. 290/902-3) both compiled in Qum in the later 3rd/9th century. These collections, through the foci on certain theological, practical, and leadership issues addressed in the traditions, evidence the besieged nature of Qum – under threat from the caliphal center in Baghdad as well as regional political forces and in contest with other Shi’i groups, namely the Zaydis and Isma’ilis\textsuperscript{339} – during the 3rd/9th centuries when the work was compiled.\textsuperscript{340} Notable among these theological and

\textsuperscript{339} The Isma’ili \textit{da’wa} had spread to the al-Jibal region, including Qum, by this time. Daftary notes, “Ismā’iliism spread also in many parts of west-central and northwest Persia, the region called al-Jibal my the Arabs; like Rayy, Qumm, Kāshān and Hamadān. It was shortly after 260 A.H., when the Qarmatī leaders of Iraq were at the beginning of their activities, that the central leaders of the movement dispatched \textit{dā’is} to the Jibal; and later the \textit{dā’wa} was extended to Khurasan and Transoxiana.” Daftary, \textit{Ismā’ili}, 120.

\textsuperscript{340} Newman, \textit{Formative Period}. A third work, \textit{al-Kaftī ilm al-Dīn} of Muhammad b. Ya’qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940-1), was assembled in Baghdad in the early 4th/10th century. \textit{al-Kaftī} was a collection with many
leadership issues is the emphasis in *Baṣāʿir al-Darajāt* on the Imams’ miraculous knowledge and the stress in al-Barqī’s *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin* on the traditions of the Imams as the crucial reference on matters of doctrine and practice.341

The marked abundance of Ash’ari Qummis in the *isnads* of the collections points to the community’s prominence in religious authority in Qum. al-Ṣaffār’s *Baṣāʿir al-Darajāt*, compiled after al-Barqī’s *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin*, includes a greater proportion of Qummi traditionists and particularly the Ash’aris, which Newman convincingly argues indicates the increasing involvement of Ash’aris in religious, political, social, and economic authority in Qum. The compiler al-Ṣaffār was himself an Ash’ari *mawla* and a companion of eleventh Imam, al-Ḥasan al-‘Askari.342 *Isnads* included in the traditions of Muḥammad b. Ya’qub al-Kulaynī’s (d. 329/940-1) *al-Kāfī fi Ḥilm al-Dīn*, targeted for the Twelver Shi’i community of Baghdad, also include a significant number of Ash’ari Qummis.343

Akhbar and traditions about the virtues (*faḍāʿil*) of Qum and its areas and inhabitants are marked by pronounced emphasis on the area’s Shi’i and Sayyid identity,

Qummi transmitters compiled in Baghdad in the early 4/10th century and was directed for an Imami community in Baghdad; Newman argues that al-Kulaynī’s *al-Kāfī* was a Qummi response to Baghdadī rationalism. See chap 6. Whereas Baghdadi hadith emphasized rationalism, Qummi ḥadīth emphasized centrality of al-ʿAql [*reason*] and al-ʿIlm and the critical importance of the Imams as the source of doctrine and practice.


342 Ibid., 67.

343 Ibid., 45. The curious phenomenon sometimes seen in ḥadīth – that the farther distanced from actual the event the more elaborate the recollections become of it – is demonstrated in the case of Qummi ḥadīth collections. Shimamoto observes, “The traditions thus accepted increased in number as time progressed. Though we count some twenty traditions in *Tarikh-i Qumm*, written at the end of the 10th century, the number was inflated up to forty or maybe more in the Safavid work *Kh. B.* [*Khulasat al-buldan*], written in the middle of the 17th century.” Shimamoto, “Origin of Qum,” 108.
through such characters as Shīʿī Imams – especially ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib and Imam Riḍā –
the angel Gabriel, Iblīs, Jesus, and the Prophet Muḥammad.344 One report that binds Qum
to prophetic authority is an exchange between ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib and Abū Mūsa al-Asħārī.
Abū Mūsa al-Asħārī asks Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib: “What city is the healthiest city, and
which city is in the best position, since discord (fītan) and hardship (mīḥan), and anarchy
(harj o marj) have become evident?” Imam ʿAlī dismisses Khurasan, Jurjan/Gurgan,
Tabaristan, and Sijistan, and states that the “healthiest (salāmattarīn) place is the capital
of the district of Qum (salāmattarīn mouḍaʿa haʿ qasba ye Qum bāṣhad), from which a
person’s best defenders and supporters (anṣār o yāvarān) emerge, such as one’s father
and mother, and grandfather and grandmother, and uncle and aunt. And that area is
called Zahra.” Here apparently is a stream, and “everyone who drinks from there is rid of
pain and suffering (az dard or ranj khulas yābad).” ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib continues, “This
area [called Zahra] is the place that Gabriel was given that command.”

The Imam continues to quote Sura ʿAl-i ʿImrān 3:48-49, and evokes the bird that
God created out of clay, breathed into, and turned into a bird as Jesus breathed new life
into the Bani Israil.345 Imam ʿAlī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā drank from this spring, and
commanded ghasl at that location, and from that station Abraham’s ram, and the staff of
Moses, and Solomon’s ring emerged.346 Here are multiple elements that signal

344 Qummī, Tārīkh-i Qum, 256-280. On the Shīʿī Imams see, for example, 259-261, 262, 266, 269, 277,
279; on Iblīs, 259; on the angel Gabriel, 261, 262; on Muḥammad, 266, 259-280.

345 The above quoted Sura ʿAl-i ʿImrān 3:48-49 reads in English in Pickthall’s translation as: “And He will
teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And will make him a messenger unto
the Children of Israel, (saying): Lo! I come unto you with a sign from your Lord. Lo! I fashion for you out
of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by Allah's leave.”

346 Qummī, Tārīkh-i Qum, 256-257.
heightened religious importance: Qum is linked to Qur’anic characters and moments, Shi’i Imams, and the revelation of the Prophet.

Descendants of the Prophet and Talibi Sayyids constitute the living faḍā’il of Qum and are the focus on the latter sections of the Tārīḵ-i Qum that remain available to us.  

al-Qummī catalogues the Talibi Shi’is who settled in Qum and their virtues. This is a lengthy section of the work, which essentially begins with the most prominent Alids and then provides what amounts to a register of their descendants affiliated with Qum. We have information on the children of ‘Alī and Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet, and the number of their children, their ages, and how old they were when they died, including the vast majority of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib’s children – essentially other than Hasan, Ḥusyan, and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya – who played no significant historical role. The author opens with information about ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib, which emphasizes his Hashemite lineage, his relationship to Muḥammad, and his marriage to Fāṭima. The author reckons that ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib’s total number of the male and female children (ḏhukūr or anāth) totals 28 children.

al-Qummī catalogues the descendants of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib, including those Sayyids descending from Hasan and Ḥusayn. This exhaustive list extends to the infallible Shi’i Imams, including how long they lived and when they died, and the length

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347 Talibi sayyids refers to members of the family of the Prophet who are descendants of Muhammad’s paternal uncle Abū Ṭalib (d. ca. 619) through his sons ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib (d. 40/661), the first Shi’i Imam, and Ja’far (d. 8.629). Daftary, Isma’īlīs, 57-58.

348 Qummī, Tārīḵ-i Qum, 489. This number is at odds with modern scholarship, which suggests that he fathered 14 sons and 19 daughters by nine wives and multiple concubines. L. Veccia Vaglieri, L. “‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib,” EI2.

349 Qummī, Tārīḵ-i Qum, 492 – 678.
of their imamate, and the locations of their tombs. The author also describes some of the Talibis (tālibiye) who came and settled in Qum (be-Qum āmadand o watan sākhtand)\textsuperscript{350}, and a presentation of their virtues (fadīlat-ha-ye iṣhān), which are transmitted from the Prophet and his family. By sheer force of numbers the author underscores the notion that Qum is a city endowed with the living descendants of the Prophet, thus granting Qum and its environments a privileged place on the map of Islam.

An unambiguous Islamic identity dominates but does not erase Qum’s pre-Islamic heritage. The author includes material on the pre-Islamic life of Qum, in which individuals and characters such as Ardashīr, Afrasiyāb, and Kay Khusraw\textsuperscript{351} factor in along with characters from the Islamic era. The author describes Zoroastrian fire-temples (āteshkade-ha) in the district of Qum.\textsuperscript{352} The tenor of Qum is an overwhelmingly Islamic one that is nevertheless laid over an acknowledged and accepted pre-Islamic one. There is no forgetting or failure to remember the region’s pre-Islamic past. Rather, for Qum there is a conscious overlaying of an Islamic heritage over the region’s Sasanian legacy.

Reports about Ashʿari Arabs and their virtues constitute another bulk of the Tarīḵ-i Qum that remains.\textsuperscript{353} The format of the text includes ḥadīth, poetry, and an emphasis on the Prophet. This includes multiple stories about these Ashʿari Arabs being spoken to by the Prophet, including traditions rendered in Persian and Arabic. Ashʿari Arabs are the direct ties of Qum to Islam and the Prophet. In sections containing akhbar

\textsuperscript{350} Ibid., 536.

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid., For example, 209-210, 229-230, 229-230, 233-235, 241, 242.

\textsuperscript{352} Ibid., 249-255.

\textsuperscript{353} Ibid., 741 – 851.
about the Ash‘ari Arabs who came to Qum, Prophet that is emphasized, whereas in previous sections it was the Shi‘i character and the legacy of the Imams in Qum.\textsuperscript{354}

Places such as Qum are not inherently sacred but are made so, and the self-presentation of Qum in the literary sources is one of the strategies of sanctification and sacralization. The argument for religious legitimacy prophetic sanctification in these traditions related in \textit{Tārīkh-i Qum} are more than just literary embellishments. In the case of \textit{Tārīkh-i Qum}, the religious legitimacy articulated through Sahaba, Tabi‘un, Sayyids, and their tradition also furthers the case of what was happening in terms of fiscal and political autonomy. These claims of religious, on the one hand, and administrative autonomy and Alid sentiment go hand-in-hand. In both cases, the bases for Qum’s legitimacy and authority are enmeshed with pivotal moments and characters in Islamic history.

\textit{Tārīkh-i Bayhaq}

\textit{Tārīkh-Bayhaq} is a mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century Persian local history that falls chronologically between the composition of the original \textit{Tārīkh-i Qum} in Arabic and its later translation into Persian. Critical to the city’s literary self-representation is a focus on the city’s ties to Sahaba or Tabi‘un, even in cases where that link is potentially tenuous or fictional. An example of a Sahaba affiliated with Bayhaq by the author illustrates how the author focuses on early Islamic figures as central to the city’s virtues and merits and thus amplifies Bayhaq’s legitimacy and prestige.

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid., 776 – 851.
Bayhaq was the district to the west of Nishapur in Khurasan and was essentially a tax-district, which contained 390 villages during the Tahirid era (c. 205-78/821-91), but whose fortunes declined during the Mongol Il-Khanid period (1256–1353) to the point where it only had a meager forty villages. The author of Tārīkh-Bayhaq is Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī bin Abī al-Qāsim Zayd b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, also known as Ibn Funduq or Farīd-i Khurasan. Ibn Funduq was born in 490/1097 or in 493/1100 in a village in Bayhaq and died in 565/1169. This places him at the tail end of the Seljuq and into the period when the Oghuzz and then the Khwaresmshah took power in Khurasan. Ibn Funduq was of Arab descent, tracing his ancestry back to Khuzayma b. Thabī, one of the Companions of the Prophet. His ancestors were of the elite that migrated to Bayhaq in the late 10th and early 11th centuries. Ibn Funduq apparently wrote Tārīkh-Bayhaq in 563/1167, two years before his death, during the rule of Mu'ayyad al-Dawla Ay Aba (d. 659/1174), who controlled Khurasan after Sanjar (Mu'izz Al-Dīn Sanjar (477 or 479-552/1084 or 1086 – 1157).

Those who were in a position to write historical texts and who enjoyed patronage had the benefit of a scholarly apparatus to support the project and had some sort of self-

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360 Pourshariati, “Local historiography,” 140-143.
conscious identity about their participation in history. Ibn Funduq’s Tārīkh-i Bayhaq laments in the 12th century that people of his generation are not interested in history and do not learn from its lessons, and that this is one of the reasons he was moved to write the history. The writer is not merely a bystander to history but a conscious participant in shaping, recording, and defining it.

In the faḍā’il section of the Tārīkh-i Bayhaq, Ibn Funduq identifies 7 Companions, 2 Successors, and 12 other notables who are not explicitly identified as a Sahaba or as Tabi‘un. One of the Companions is al-‘Abbās bin Mīrđās al-Sulamī, a renowned poet who converted to Islam before the conquest of Mecca. Strikingly, the Tārīkh-i Bayhaq claims the Companion al-‘Abbās bin Mīrđās al-Sulamī as one of its own, having died in the district, although no other source associates him with Bayhaq.

Al-‘Abbās bin Mīrđās al-Sulamī (d. after 23/644 and born approximately in 570)362 was one of the Companions of the Prophet, a warrior of the Banū Sulaym, and a prominent poet classified as one of the mukhādram poets who lived both during the Jahiliya and during the Islamic period.363 Al-‘Abbās is cited in al-Balādhurī and Khalīfa b. Khayyāt as collecting the zakāt alms tax from the Banū Sulaym on behalf of the Prophet, and he is purported to have been an envoy from the Prophet to the Arabs of Bādiya sent to persuade them to participate in the battle of Tabūk.”364

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363 Renate Jacobi, “ Mukḥādram,” EI2.

The data about al-ʿAbbās is so slim that it is not even clear what his full name is. Despite the paucity of factual data, the sources paint a vibrant portrait of him. There are two particularly famous stories about al-ʿAbbās: the first is his demand for more spoils of war after the Battle of Hunayn. This event is famous because Ibn Hisām, in his Sīra of the Prophet, devotes significant attention to the incident when al-ʿAbbās rebuked the Prophet for what he considered an unfairly meager share of the booty. The Prophet gave some men many camels but gave al-ʿAbbās b. Mirdas only a few, so that al-ʿAbbās retorted with a tart poem in which he demanded from the Prophet a greater share of the spoils of war. Muhammad subsequently complied with this demand. The second notable story about al-ʿAbbās is his conversion to Islam. The third more general characterization of al-ʿAbbās is that he abstained from drinking even before his life as a Muslim.

Tarīkh-i Bayhaq largely echoes these claims. However, what is notable is that, in contrast to the other biographic sources, Tarīkh-i Bayhaq claims al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdas as one of its own. Writing in the mid-12th century, a good 500 years after al-ʿAbbās’ death, Ibn Funduq claims that al-ʿAbbās is buried in Khosrojard, one of the chief towns of the

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365 The following is according to Seyyedi: his kunya is alternatively Abū al-Faḍl and Abū al-Haytham. His great grandfather's name is listed as Abū 'Āmir or Abū Ghālib b. Rifā' a b. Hāritha. This information is found in Ibn Ḥazm, Jamharat ansāb al-'Arab, 263; Ibn' Abd al-Barr, al-Istīʿāb fī maʿrifat al-ʿasāb 2/817; al-Marzubānī, Muʾjam al-shuʿarāʾ, 102. Blachère (Histoire de la littérature arabe, 274–275) estimates that he was born around 570. Abū 'Ubayda identifies as his mother al-Khansāʾ, the famous female Arab poet (see Abū al-Faraj, al-Aghānī 14/285, 301). On the other hand, some sources claim that all of Mirdas’s children, except for al-ʿAbbās, were al-Khansāʾ’s children (Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī, Simt al-laʾīf, 1/32). Seyyedi, “Al-ʿAbbās b. Mirdās,” Encyclopaedia Islamica.

Ibn Funduq claims that al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās had children in Khosrojard and that his descendants are called the children of Mirdās. The descendants include shaykh Abū ʿAla al-Husayn bin Abī al-Qāsamak Mirdās, who was the hadith teacher of his generation and transmitted many hadith from the shaykh of Aḥmad bin ʿAlī bin Faṭima al-Bayhaqi.368

However, if al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās is associated with any place in the biographical sources, it is with desert area surrounding Basra. Ibn Saʿd writes: “And Muhammad bin ʿUmar said: ‘al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās did not live [in] Mecca, and neither did he live in Medina, and he engaged with military expeditions with the Prophet, and he returned to the country of his tribe369 and he settled in the Bādiya area near Basra and would go often to Basra, and the people of Basra spoke about him. The rest of his children were in the Bādiya [area] of Basra and a tribe descended [in] Basra.”370 Al-ʿAbbās allegedly visited Basra frequently and, we would infer, taught traditions of the Prophet.

Mizzī (654/1256 – 742/1341) also places al-ʿAbbās in Basra.371 His student Ibn Hajar concurs and claims “he settled in the Bādiya area near Basra.”372 There is nothing

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367 Bayhaq was conquered by the Muslim armies led by ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿĀmir in 30/650-1. Lambton, “Bayhaq,” EI2.


369 “Qoumihi”


in the *Ṣira* by Ibn Hisham that would imply that al-ʿAbbās died or settled in Khosrojard or anywhere in Bayhaq.\(^{373}\)

All the sources do agree or imply that wherever he settled, al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās taught *hadith*. He appears in the *isnads* of several collections of canonical *ḥadīth*, including the *Sunan of Abū Dawūd*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.\(^{374}\) Several sources claim that al-ʿAbbās retired to Bādiya\(^{375}\) after the memorable events of his career such as the battle of Hunayn, but a number of *ḥadiths* transmitted by him suggest that he visited the Prophet several times over a long period of time.\(^{376}\) Al-ʿAbbās is consequently venerated as a Companion and traditionist.\(^{377}\) The content of the *ḥadith* are varied and unremarkable. One, for instance falls into the tradition of *adab*, or general behavior or etiquette, and is the following: “Narrated Ṭābiʿ ibn Mirdās: The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) laughed [and] Abū Bakr or Ṣaḥḥāb said to him:

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‘May Allah make your teeth laugh!’ He then mentioned the tradition.\textsuperscript{378} Mizzi, in \textit{Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl}, mentions this hadith along with others in his entry on al-‘Abbās.\textsuperscript{379}

As a Companion who enjoyed firsthand knowledge of the Prophet, people would have asked al-‘Abbās to teach and transmit hadith. Most sources claim that al-‘Abbās did this in Basra and its environs. If al-‘Abbās visited the Prophet a number of times over the intervening years\textsuperscript{380}, then it might be possible that he visited Bayhaq or Khosrojard during these years and taught hadith there, although it is only the \textit{Tārīḵ-i Bayhaq} that asserts that he visited or settled in Khosrojard.

It is possible that Ibn Funduq and the hadith transmitters of Bayhaq cottoned onto al-‘Abbās bin Mirdās and inserted him into the isnads of hadith taught in Bayhaq, thus guaranteeing for Bayhaq the legacy of prophetic authority through association with a notable Companion. This is not to imply malicious deception. It is entirely possible that by the mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century, when Ibn Funduq wrote the \textit{Tārīḵ-i Bayhaq}, al-‘Abbās had been a part of the isnads of hadith transmitted there for centuries. Perhaps, for all intents and purposes, what was once myth functioned as reality. \textit{Tārīḵ-i Bayhaq} claims that al-‘Abbās visited Bayhaq, while the other biographical sources clearly state that he settled in the Bādiya area near Basra.

If it is clear that an author such as Ibn Funduq, as well as his Iranian contemporaries, chose to identify particular Sahaba with a city in order to gain religious

\textsuperscript{378} \textit{Sunān} Abū Dawūd, entry 5236, Book of al-\textit{Adab}, Bāb 169, part (\textit{juz’}) 2, page 873 (or 872).

\textsuperscript{379} Mizzi cites the same hadith but cites \textit{Sunān} Abū Dawūd, entry 5234 (instead of 5236).

legitimation and prestige through a connection with the Prophet, then it is still unclear why an author would choose a specific Companion. Why choose al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās? There are a number of speculative arguments. One hypothesis is that the lore in Bayhaq formed around al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās al-Sulami because of his name: there was once somebody in Bayhaq with the Arab name Mirdās, and since al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās was a relatively famous Companion, the descendents of whoever the Bayhaqi Mirdās really might have been latched onto al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās al-Sulami and claimed him as their progenitor. We can understand this as a kind of folk lineage, in which an Iranian individual and his descendents gained legitimation through their lineage with a well-known Companion. Ultimately, we do not know why Ṭārīkh-i Bayhaq associated al-ʿAbbās with the area. However, it is the mythic construction that is relevant here. If al-ʿAbbās bin Mirdās al-Sulami lived and died in the region, the entire district of Bayhaq would be legitimized through the living faḍāʾil that were the descendents of al-ʿAbbās who graced the city by their presence.

The Ṭārīkh-i Bayhaq focuses on al-ʿAbbās as a legitimator for his role as a Companion who was a link to the Prophet. The context of the legal tradition that was developing during the 9th through 12th centuries is largely irrelevant for the veneration of al-ʿAbbās, since he did not have a particularly notable reputation as a hadith transmitter. He is not in the isnads of a huge number of hadith, and while revered as a transmitter and Companion, he is not amongst the most prominent of the Companions who transmitted hadith. This demonstrates that for his alleged descendents in Bayhaq, the legal issue was irrelevant: what made al-ʿAbbās an important person was not his transmission of certain hadith, some of which were eventually included in what became the canonical
collections, but rather his proximity to the Prophet through his position as a Companion. What mattered was al-‘Abbās’s role as a Companion who enjoyed proximity to the Prophet and, through that connection, tied Bayhaq to the Prophet.

Nishapur was a prominent city of religious significance while Bayhaq was just a tax district with a string of villages, and it would therefore make sense that a person of religious knowledge who visited Bayhaq would also travel further east and visit Nishapur. To visit Bayhaq without continuing onto Nishapur would be analogous to a pilgrim visiting Jeddah but neglecting to continue onto Mecca. If al-‘Abbās visited or lived in Bayhaq, we would expect him to appear in the ṭabaqāt of Nishapur. However, al-‘Abbās does not appear in the ṭabaqāt of al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī. Of his descendants, the only named individual listed in the Tārīkh-i Bayhaq is shaykh Abū ‘Ala al-Husayn bin Abī al-Qasamak Mirdās, who was a hadith teacher who transmitted hadith he learned from the shaykh of the sunna Aḥmad bin ‘Alī bin Fāṭima al-Bayhaqī. Neither al-‘Abbās’s descendant nor the descendant’s hadith teacher has an entry in the tabaqat of al-Ḥākim in Nishapur.381 This silence furthers the likelihood that the historical al-‘Abbās may not have had any ties to Bayhaq.

It would be both natural and logical that in a milieu of increasing piety and urban identity, both urban lore and Ibn Funduq would identify the Mirdās in Bayhaq with al-‘Abbās in Mirdās al-Sulamī. Whether he really was al-‘Abbās bin Mirdās al-Sulamī, we will never know, but it is unlikely. What is important is that Ibn Funduq tied the region of Bayhaq to Islamic legitimacy through a Companion of the Prophet.

Tārīkh-i Sīstān

Binding a location with a pious exemplar, even if the case is somewhat tenuous, also occurs in other local histories. A text almost contemporary with Tārīkh-i Bayhaq, the anonymous 5th/11th century Tārīkh-i Sīstān claims the famous Successor al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (b. 21/642 Medina, d. 110/728 Basra) for Sistan by portraying him as a foundational member at the moment of the city’s establishment as an Islamic city; this secures prophetic legacy and Islamic legitimacy for Sistan. Tārīkh-i Sīstān is an annalistic work and a Persian urban history. The anonymous author offers anecdotes about al-Ḥasan’s presence in the city and claims that al-Ḥasan had a massive administrative role in making that region Muslim and establishing Islamic institutions there.

According to the text, “ʿAbd al-Rahman [ibn Samora] built the congregational mosque of Sistan, and [al-]Ḥasan [al-]Baṣrī constructed the miḥrāb. For three years [al-]Ḥasan [al-]Baṣrī sat most of the time in the congregational mosque of Sistan, and the people of Sistan studied with him.” Additionally, the text credits [al-]Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with having a foundational role in establishing Sistan as an Islamic city. In the section about the arrival of Rabīʿ al-Haresi in Sistan as its administrator in the Year 46/666-667, the text claims, “Upon his return to Sistan, [Rabīʿ al-Ḥarethi, the administrator] set up a treasury with secretaries, accountants, a collector of taxes, regulators of accounts, inspectors, and other trustworthy officials. All this was the work of [al-] Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,

who came here [to Sistan] with Rabī‘. Rabī‘ would do nothing until he asked him [al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī].”

Insertion of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī into the isnads of Sistan occurred despite the fact that he was not highly regarded as a transmitter. In fact, al-Ḥasan was accused by Ibn Sa’d of transmitting hadith from people he had never met as well as changing the wording (although not the meaning) of hadiths. Ibn Sa’d includes a tradition from Yahya b. Sa’id al-Qattān that he heard that the hadith that al-Ḥasan transmitted was from a book. Another tradition has Abū Hurayra emphasize the importance of wudū’, a tradition which al-Ḥasan transmitted with significantly different wording, although with the same essential meaning; Abū Hurayra transmitted a hadith stating what whoever changed wudū’ would go to hell, whereas al-Ḥasan transmitted this hadith by stating “Never omit wudū’ (lā ada’uhu abadan)." Despite the number of hadith al-Ḥasan is said to have transmitted from Abū Hurayra, Ibn Sa’d includes a tradition which states that al-Ḥasan never heard hadith from Abū Hurayra. Dhahabi also transmits a statement by Ibn ‘Awn that al-Ḥasan transmitted the meaning of traditions: “Kāna al-Ḥasan yarwi ṣbil-ma’ana.” Al-Ḥasan was apparently also known for talīs, for transmitting from vague


384 Suleiman Mourad, Early Islam Between Myth and History: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.110H/728CE) and the Formation of His Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006), 47.

385 Ibn Sa’d, Kitāb al-Tabaqāt al-kabīr, vol 9, p. 158. For the entry on al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see pp. 157-178.

386 Ibid., vol 9, p. 159. For the entry on al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see pp. 157-178.

387 Ibid., vol 9, p. 159. For the entry on al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, see pp. 157-178.

and weak transmitters, i.e., of transmitting traditions with a concealed defect in the

*isnad*.\(^{389}\)

Al-Ḥasan was not included in *isnads* because of his renown as a transmitter but because of his increasing prestige. Suleiman Mourad, who has recently written on al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s sanctification in later historical literature, builds his argument on a claim that Juynboll made decades ago, the principle of which applies more generally to Companions and Successors who became prominent: “[al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī] cannot possibly be identified with *hadith* transmission on any measurable scale, if at all. But as his fame spread, a rapidly increasing number of people falsely claimed, especially after his death, that they had heard traditions with him.”\(^{390}\) Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was desirable as a foundational member of Sistan not because he was a venerated traditionist, but because of his increasingly pietistic credentials and his religious prestige.

This phenomenon of latching onto a pious exemplar who wields religious prestige and authority is certainly not limited to local historical writing. This clearly occurs in the biographical literature as well. In a recent article Brockopp argued that the contradictory materials in the biographical accounts of early pious characters, particularly those who become very important, are significant in that they reveal how the characters were cast and recast in different molds that emphasized different roles – such as legal expert, Sufi, philosopher, or theologian, in the case of Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) – depending on the author’s aim and focus. The plurality of portraits in the biographical material of an early exemplar, such as Saḥnūn b. Saʿīd (d. 854) suggest that, while in “a strict


\(^{390}\) Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 50.
historicist sense, most of these tales do not hold up to scrutiny,” nevertheless “their pluriform nature renders them adaptable to a wider variety of circumstances than would a simple, uniform vision of a man.”391 It is exemplary individuals, in contrast to their more average counterparts, who are credited with so much contradictory material precisely because of their importance to various parties and interests. In the case of Saḥnūn b. Saʿīd, his stature and status increases in the years after his death, and thus the biographical material written 200 years after this death becomes paradoxically more elaborate than the material written by a student of a student.392 Similarly, the incorporation of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī as a foundational member of Sistan was not due to any venerated positions as a traditionist, but because of his increasing religious prestige and pietistic authority.

*Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*

A century after Ibn Funduq composed *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, Ibn Isfandiyar penned his *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, a regional history of the land on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.393 In its description of the region, *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān* includes distinctly pre-Islamic Persian characteristics, Islamic characteristics, and those that are neither explicitly pre-Islamic or Islamic. The Islamic characteristics of the region that the author stresses – a strong and sustained emphasis on the family of the Prophet, Alids, and Shiʿi Imams –


392 Ibid., 117-118.

393 For a discussion of the history of this *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
secures prophetic legacy and Islamic legitimacy for Tabaristan. Additionally, the dual focus on the related phenomenon of Tabaristan’s fierce independence and its propensity to revolt and resist control by caliphal forces stresses the particularly local dynamics of the region in relation to the caliphal center. *Tārīkh-i Tabaristān*’s treatment of Sahaba, Tabi’un and Sayyids evidence the dynamic of Ibn Isfandiyār’s negotiation of the literary sphere by making what is global – belonging to the Muslim *umma* – local and Persian without erasing or suppressing a fierce localism.

Ibn Isfandiyār’s dual emphasis on pre-Islamic local and Talibi Sayyid elements should be seen in the context of the political balance of power. A host of forces ruled Tabaristan, including local dynasts, Alid sayyids, external dynasties, and Arab governors ruling the region for the caliphate. *Tārīkh-i Tabaristan* describes multiple uprisings and repeated resistance to external dynasties and forces that attempted to control it. Pre-Islamic local nobles and Alid Sayyids, along with other local families who carried less influence, were the leading local dynasts in medieval Tabaristan. There is numismatic

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394 The definition of who precisely, was part of the Ahl al-Bayt changed over time. Daftary argues that in the “formative period, though the imams who succeeded al-Husayn continued to come chiefly from amongst the ’Alids, the Prophet’s family was still defined more broadly in its old tribal sense. It covered the various branches of the Banū Ḥashim, the leading Quraysh clan, regardless of direct descent from the Prophet Muḥammad himself. The Ahl al-Bayt, then, included the progeny of Muhammad through Fāṭima and ’Alī as well as those of his two paternal uncles; not only the Tālibids, the descendants of Abū Tālib (d. ca. 619) through his sons ’Alī and Ja’far (d. 8/629), but even the ’Abbasids, the descendants of al-’Abbās (d. ca. 32/653) who had embraced Islam only in 8/630).” The narrowing of Ahl al-Bayt into a more restricted group came during the ’Abbasid era. “It was later, after the accession of the ’Abbasids, that the Shi’īs came to define the Ahl al-Bayt more restrictively to include only the descendants of the Prophet through Fāṭima, known as the Fāṭimids (covering both the Ḥasanids and Ḥusaynids); while the bulk of non-Zaydī Shi’īs had come to acknowledge chiefly the Ḥusaynid Fāṭimids. The latter definition was the one adopted by the Twelver and Isma’īlī Shi’īs.” For the Zaydi Shi’īs, “The Zaydīs originally maintained that the imamate might legitimately be held by any member of the Ahl al-Bayt, though later restricting it to the Fāṭimids. This was under the condition that the claimant possessed the required religious learning along with certain other pious qualities; he would also have to be able to launch an uprising (*khurūj*), as Zayd [b. ’Alī] was to do, against the illegitimate ruler of the time (70).” Daftary, *Ismā’īlīs*, 57-58, 69, 70.

evidence that various local, external, and central powers minted coins in Tabaristan.

These include Arab governors appointed by the caliph, and from the 3rd/9th century, Alid dāʿīs and Samanids. In the later periods the competing dynasties of the Buyids, Samanids and Ziyarids all minted coins. There is also coinage issued by the local Bawandid ispahbad rulers.396

Local dynasties during this period established control elsewhere in Iran, and these dynasts included the Tahirids, Saffarids, Samanids, Ziyarids, Ghaznawids, Seljuqs, Khwarazmshahs, Mongols, Sarbadars, Timur, and later the Safavids. Local families of pre-Islamic origin (such as those of Gushnasp, the Sasanian prince Kāwūs son of Kawādh, Anūshirwān, Zarmihr, Gil Gawbara, the Bawandids – allegedly descended from Kāwūs – the Ziyārid Kābūs b. Wushmagīr, the Qārinids – including Māzyār – who descended from a brother of Zarmihr, the Paduspanids, and the Baduspanids).397

Some Caspian and Khwarazmian dynasties can be traced back to the Sasanian period. These dynasties include the Baduspanids (45-1006/665-1599) in Gilan and Tabaristan, who traced their origin to Gāvbāra, who was appointed governor of the Caspian regions by the last Sasanid Emperor, Yazdigird III (632-651). Gāvbāra’s sons were the progenitors of dynasties in Gilan and Tabaristan: the Dabuyids (40-144/660-761) and the Bawandids (45-750/665-1349), who traced their genealogy to Bāw, who

396 Those who minted coins include Arab governors appointed by the caliph (such as Khālid b. Barmak in whose name coins are issued from 150/767, as well as Umar b. Ṭālāʾ, who issued coins from 155/772). From the 3rd/9th century there is also evidence for coins minted by the ruling Alid dāʾīs (including al-Hasan b. Zayd b. Muhammad, Dāʾ al- Kabīr [q.v.], from 253/867). Dynasts who acknowledged the suzerainty of the ‘Abbasid caliphate, such as the Samānids (who controlled Ṭāmul from 289/902), minted coinage with Sunni markings. V. Minorsky.; R. Vasmer, “Māzandarān,” EI2.

was “either the Ispahbad of Tabaristan appointed by Khusrau Aparvīz (591-628) or a leading Zoroastrian of Rayy.”

Rulership in early medieval Tabaristan was characterized by only intermittent caliphal control of the region from 22/644. The terrain of Tabaristan explains to some extent the multiform emphasis on pre-Islamic Persian as well as Alid Sayyid dynasts, as well as the recurring theme of local autonomy and rebellion that runs through Tārīḵ-i Tabaristan. The mountainous region of Tabaristan, generally known from the Seljuq era onwards as Mazandaran, runs along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, and lies between Gilan and Daylam to its west and Gurgan (Jurgan) to the east.

The Abbasids only succeed in asserting greater control over Tabaristan in 144/761. Tabaristan was ruled by the Sayyids until the Buyids (334 – 447/945–1055) took control of the region. Tabaristan was only intermittently under successful caliphal rule, at least during this period of the Abbasid caliphs al-Mahdī (third Abbasid caliph, 126 or 127-169/743-5-785, r.158-169/775-785); the brief reign of his son Mūsa al-Hādī (r.169-170/785-786) who succeeded al-Mahdī upon his death and pursued policies hostile to the Alids, unlike his father; and then al-Mahdī’s other son Harūn, the fifth and anti-

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399 On the Alid influence and Caspian Zaydi community in the region see Madelung, “Abū Ishāq al-Šāḥī,” 17-57. For a description and analysis of Tabaristan, see LeStrange, The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate, 368-376. Daftary notes that during the late 5/11th century, “Daylam, a stronghold of Zaydi Shi‘ism, was not only out of the reach of the Saljuqs, but it had also been penetrated by the Ismā’īlī da‘wa.” This is the era of Hasan-i Sabbāh (d. 518/1124), the leader of the Nizari state in Persia based in Alamut. Daftary, Ismāʿīlīs, 338.


Alid Abbasid caliph who took the title al-Rashīd (b.149/ 766 or earlier in 145/763, d. 193/ 809; r. 170-193/786-809). Ibn Isfandiyār emphasizes the historical independence of Tabaristān. He characterizes Tabaristān as serving as a refuge and a stronghold of kings self-sufficient in its products, blessed in its fecundity, and its strength. The famous and the powerful alike took refuge in the court of Ispahbad ’Alāʾ al-Dawla ’Alī b. Shahriyar b. Qarīn. In later periods Tabaristān became an Alid and Shi’i stronghold.

Despite Ibn Isfandiyār’s propensity to emphasize Tabaristān’s Alid ties, his text includes faḍāʾil from both the Islamic and pre-Islamic era, and other virtues concern the virtues and marvels of Tabaristān. The natural virtues of the region include the fertility of the land, the excellent merchandise Tabaristān produces and its material mineral wealth, the health and beauty of the women, the absence of harmful animals and plagues, the lack of poverty, and, suggestively, the light taxes. Tabaristān’s pre-Islamic Persian characteristics are notable for the lack of effort the author displays in eliding or

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402 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārtkh-i Tabaristān, 185-189; Browne, Abridged Translation, 128-132.

403 To this end Ibn Isfandiyār includes a story about Shahr-Khwāstān, a rich man, who chides the Farrukhan, the great Ispahbad, who had essentially claimed that he the Ispahbad had brought material wealth, progress, and trade to Tabaristān, by proving that Tabaristān had enjoyed all these things before the arrival of Farrukhan the Ispahbad. Shahr-Khwāstān proves that Tabaristān does not depend on other countries for imported goods and actually existed in self-sustaining comfort and nobody else coveted Tabaristān; it is only after the Ispahbad brought attention to Tabaristān, Shahr-Khwāstān claims, that people covet Tabaristān and the region has problems. Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārtkh-i Tabaristān, 76-78; Browne, Abridged Translation, 30-32.

404 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārtkh-i Tabaristān, 107-108; Browne, Abridged Translation, 58-60.

405 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārtkh-i Tabaristān, 76-89; Browne, Abridged Translation, 30-42.

406 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārtkh Tabaristān, 76-81; Browne, Abridged Translation, 30-34. There are also fantastical and superstitious sounding stories, such as the place where when there is a drought, people throw crushed onions, at which point it rains but the person who crushed the onions dies; marvelous, odd or unusual things (ʿajāʾīb) such as the village where people die early and don’t live past 20 years; and even an alleged dragon in Tabaristān. Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārtkh Tabaristān, 88-89; Browne, Abridged translation, 40-42.
portraying them in ways that are Islamically acceptable. These include: the existence of wagers and gambling\(^{407}\), wine parties\(^{408}\), recourse to tales, some of them mythical stories about the pre-Islamic characters and kings of Tabaristan in the region’s foundational narratives\(^{409}\), and the inclusion of characters and tales, some of them mythical – such as the story of Rustam-i-Zāl, and the story of Rustam slaying Suhrah and then allegedly burying him in Sarī.\(^{410}\)

*Tārīḵ-i Tabaristan* brims with Islamic characteristics, especially those that emphasize the region’s Shi‘i credentials and ties to Alid Sayyids. There is a section devoted the Sayyids of the house of the Prophet who ruled in Tabaristan.\(^{411}\) As in other Persian local histories, Ibn Isfandiyār mentions famous or notable Muslims and the places they visited, such as Imam Ḥasan b. 'Alī visiting a place called Maṃṭūr.\(^{412}\) Ibn Isfandiyār includes anecdotes that include notable pious Muslims, such as the noted ascetic and proto-Sufi al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.\(^{413}\) Ibn Isfandiyār’s literary repertoire includes references to Abrahamic narratives, like that of Sāmīrī’s golden calf.\(^{414}\) Beyond the general Islamic characteristics of the rulers of Tabaristan it is the specifically Alid Sayyid ties that Ibn Isfandiyār underscores. Spectacular and generous gifts lavished by the Ispahbad, the


local ruler of Tabaristan during Hajj season, included gifts to multiple shrines of members of the house of the Prophet, the poor, and the amirs of Mecca. One of the main purposes of this list is clearly to underscore the spectacular generosity of the Ispahbad towards the shrines of the Shi‘i Imams and other pious generations.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyar, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 120; Browne, Abridged Translation, 70.}

Tabaristan chafed under central control. Ibn Isfandiyar’s emphasis on local political and fiscal autonomy and assertion of religious authority go hand in hand. In Ibn Isfandiyar’s portrayal, the presence of religious notables and authorities justifies the righteous fiscal and administrative localism. The region’s political and fiscal independence reinforces the image of Tabaristan as a community set apart and a haven for Alids.

Ibn Isfandiyar documents numerous instances in which Tabaristan revolts against the caliph in outbursts of violent anti-Arab and anti-caliph sentiment. Many of the disputes were over the levying and collection of taxes. Ibn Isfandiyar includes Aḥmad ibn Ḫanbal (164-241/780-855) in a context that attests to the historical independence of Tabaristan and its propensity to revolt and resist invasion and control, particularly when incited over its fiscal administration. In a particular year there was a large earthquake, and Aḥmad ibn Ḫanbal suggested that Tabaristan should be taxed more heavily, because Tabaristan had not surrendered to caliphal control willingly with a treaty but had been subdued by force.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyar, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 182; Browne, Abridged Translation, 125.}

All this made for much resentment and violence. According to Ibn Isfandiyar, “A day was then fixed on which the people of Tabaristan should make a general massacre of...
all Arabs and servants of the Caliph. This was done; and so thoroughly were the Tabaristanis in accord that women who were married to the followers of the Caliphs dragged their husbands out of their houses by their beards, and delivered them over to the executioners, so that in all Tabaristan not an Arab was left.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyar, \textit{Tārkh-i Tabaristan}, 183; Browne, \textit{Abridged translation}, 126.} The caliph al-Mahdī heard of this uprising and arranged a retaliatory attack, and yet the caliph’s forces were defeated by the people of Tabaristan. Such a description is symptomatic of Tabaristan being a region that was only intermittently governed by central caliphal rule for a long time and became the base of the Daylamī Shi‘is.

Ibn Isfandiyar also describes the revolt of the Qārinid prince Wandād-Hurmuzd\footnote{These Qārinids were a local dynasty of Tabaristan who ruled over parts of Tabaristan’s mountains areas for around 300 years from the era of Sasanian Ḫusraw I, known as Ḫusraw Anushirvan (r. 531-579 CE) until 225/840. M. Rekaya, “Ḳārinids,” \textit{EI2}.} along with the Ispahbad Sharwīn Bāwandid, against the caliph’s armies. This revolt began in 165/781 during the reign of the third Abbasid caliph Muḥammad ibn Mansūr al-Mahdī (r.158 – 169/775-785) and continued after the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd (r. 170 – 193/786-809). Harūn al-Rashīd is the caliph featured in this story. The unruly people of Tabaristan, galvanized and organized by Qārinid prince Wandād-Hurmuzd and his ally in this venture with Sharwīn Bāwand\footnote{The Bāwandids were a long-standing Iranian dynasty that ruled in Tabaristan for over 700 years (45-750/665-1349), primarily in the mountain regions but also in the lowlands of Tabaristan which lie to the south of the Caspian Sea. R. N. Frye, “Bāwand,” \textit{EI2}.}, revolt against the caliph’s forces and kill his governors. In Ibn Isfandiyar’s telling, Harūn al-Rashīd considers the revolt and slaughter justified, deeming that the people of Tabaristan revoluted against an unjust
governor, and therefore had reason. Harūn al-Rashīd then sends to Tabaristan ʿAbdullāh b. Saʿīd al-Harashi as the new governor, who governed for three years and four months.\(^{420}\)

The argument for Tabaristan’s autonomy here is more than just theoretical. In the case of Tabaristan, the religious legitimacy and authority also furthers the case of fiscal and political autonomy. These claims of religious and administrative autonomy go hand-in-hand. When we consider the disintegration of authority the Abbasid caliphate, the rise of the Buyids and their occupation of Baghdad in 333/945, and the proliferation of local dynasties, we can see how Ibn Isfandiyār argues for the legitimacy and rightful autonomy of Tabaristan. As Robinson describes, “What role now remained for the caliph and whose (such as provincial governors) whom he had appointed? What about those who had usurped his power by defeating one of these governors, and who now paid allegiance to him? How were Muslims to conduct themselves in this new world? The historians had a part in answering these questions.”\(^{421}\) By portraying the caliph as agreeing with the people of Tabaristan that they were saddled with an unjust governor against whom they reasonably revolted, Harūn al-Rashīd explicitly agrees with the region’s claims of greater political agency and autonomy and implicitly supports the region’s religious independence and fierce localism.

*Tārīkh-i Tabaristān*, like *Tārīkh-i Qum*, demonstrates both Alīd loyalism and Shiʿi allegiance. However, Alīd loyalism and Shiʿi political commitment cannot necessarily be conflated. Respect for the Prophet and his family transcended sectarian divisions. Alīds were respected, admired, and held in high esteem by Sunnis and partisans of ʿAlī alike.


\(^{421}\) Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 139.
Alids were “a blood aristocracy without peer,” and Alids held undeniable prestige. “Notwithstanding religious or political affiliations, the descendants of the Prophet through his daughter Faṭima and his cousin ʿAlī, thus known as the ʿAlids, came to be held in high esteem even by those who rejected their claims to the leadership of the Muslim community.” Alid loyalism cannot be conflated with Shiʿi allegiance, since Sunnis venerate members of the Prophet’s family.

Upon leaving the Hijaz Alids settled in various cities including Nishapur, Hamadan, Qum, Rayy and Samarqand, and despite their actually not generally technically exercising political power (which went to caliphs) or religious authority (which went to scholars, who were not necessarily descendants of the Prophet) in Khurasan on the basis of their prophetic lineage, they were nevertheless socially powerful and Alid families emerged as local elites. There were multiple layers of authority solidified by kinship ties of marriage, scholarly religious prestige exercised by the ulama, local pietistic movements and individuals, and the local class of the patrician elite. The power that Alids commanded should be seen as one – if extremely prestigious – pole among many parities vying for authority.

The mystical tradition also demonstrated an affinity with the family of the Prophet. “It is a well-known fact that many of the Sufis – and many of the pious Sunnites in general – felt a kind of sentimental allegiance to the family of the Prophet without

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422 Bulliet, *Patricians*, 234.


424 *Ibid.*, 43-69, especially 44-50. Alids and sharifs were more active in Syria during the 10th and 11th centuries as, for example, qadis. “At least in the Islamic East until the end of the eleventh-century, there are very few ʿAlid qadis, and even fewer ʿAlid families who held this office for more than one generation (as came to be fairly common in many medieval Islamic cities for non-ʿAlid families of judges),” 47.
believing in Shia doctrines. The veneration of ʿAlī was widespread among the Muslims, and he was often regarded as an important link in the spiritual chain leading the Sufi masters back to the Prophet. Widespread, too, was the veneration of sayyids, Muhammad’s descendants through ʿAlī and Faṭima. Though Qum and Tabaristan are both Alid and Shi’ā, a strong veneration for the family of the Prophet need not indicate a sectarian stance.

Ibn Isfandiyār further emphasizes not only Tabaristan’s Alid loyalism but also its Shi’ā allegiance. This is apparent in multiple places, and particularly when he discusses the ending of the early ʿUmayyad practice of cursing ʿAlī, Faṭima, Hasan and Ḥusayn under the caliphate of ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Azīz (ʿUmar II), whom he credits with restoring property to the descendents of Faṭima. Ibn Isfandiyār’s favorable portrayal of ʿUmar II contrasts sharply with his depiction of previous caliph Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 96-9/715-17), whom accuses him of impiety and vanity. Ibn Isfandiyār’s portrait of caliph Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik – who had upheld the practice of cursing ʿAlī and his family – is of a grotesquely vain man, with unguent dripping from his beard. Ibn Isfandiyār also portrays Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik as fundamentally un-Islamic in his alleged proclamation in a khutba to rule as a youthful king instead of a caliph. Ibn Isfandiyār relates, via his source Ibn ʿA’ishah, that a week after this impious khutba, caliph Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Malik was dead.426

425 Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, 82. The khirqa, or mantle presented to a Sufi as his initiation to the mystical path, also has symbolic ties to the Prophet. In Schimmel’s worlds, “A distinguished role was given to Muhammad’s family as well – the Sufi khirqa was sometimes interpreted as inspired by the mantle in which the Prophet had wrapped his family members, and the Sufis thus became ‘members of his family.’ The veneration of the Prophet’s family, common in Shia Islam, can be found in Sufi circles as well, and the reverence shown to sayyids, his descendants, is part of this veneration (222-223).”

Even in sections primarily concerned with the political and military history of Tabaristan, Ibn Isfandiyar highlights the activities of the Alids and the Sayyids. In one case a Sayyid from the house of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib called Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and known as Sāhib al-Fakhkh was involved during the Abbasid Caliphate of al-Mahdī in a battle in a revolt in the Hijaz at a place called Fakhkh. Sāhib al-Fakhkh was killed, along with many of his party, by the caliph’s forces. Ibn Isfandiyar incorporates this story – which does not even take place in Tabaristan – to highlight a Sayyid specifically descended from the house of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib, their propensity for rebellion, and the marginalization they suffer at the hands of the caliphs.

Ibn Isfandiyar ’s depiction of al-Maʿmūn as clearly Shiʿi is another device that develops the pro-Alid stance of the Tārīkh-i Tabaristān. Ibn Isfandiyar portrays al-Maʿmūn – a controversial caliph for his institutions of the mihna – as Shiʿi. Ibn Isfandiyar gives an explanation for al-Maʿmūn’s and his father Harūn al-Rashīd’s anti-Shiʿi actions as being political and not religious. Ibn Isfandiyar also presses the claim that Harūn al-Rashīd was also a professed Shiʿa. According to Ibn Isfandiyar, al-Maʿmūn informed Sindi b. Shāhak and others that he was Shiʿi: “Man tashshīʿa az pedar-e khīz Harūn āmoukhtam.” To this, Sindi b. Shāhak and others retorted in Arabic that al-Maʿmūn’s rather Harūn al-Rashīd killed members of the family of the Prophet: “Hūwwa

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427 Musā al-Kazīm in his quietist policy who allegedly refused to support Husayn b. ʿAlī, who was known as Sāhib al-Fakhkh. Daftary writes on Sāhib Fakhkh that “This Hasanid, a grandnephew of ʿAbd Allāh al-Mahd, revolted in the Hijaz during the short caliphate of al-Hāḍī (d. 169-170/785-786), and was killed at Fakhkh near Mecca, together with many other ʿAlīds, in 169/786.” Daftary, Ismāʿīlīs, 95.

428 Ibn Isfandiyar, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 181-182; Browne, Abridged Translation, 124-125.

To this al-Maʾmūn replies—here in Arabic—that he killed them for political reasons, ‘for the state is a barren mother’ (‘lianna al-mulk ‘aqīm’). Ibn Isfandiyār aims to clearly establish both al-Maʾmūn and Harūn al-Rashīd as a Shiʿi and also to explain their actions in a way that would not call into question devotion to the Alid cause. Ibn Isfandiyār also accuses and condemns al-Maʾmūn for his complicity in presumably killing Imam al-Riḍā for political reasons—for his ties to mulk. Ultimately, Ibn Isfandiyār simultaneously praises and condemns al-Maʾmūn in this episode for harming Shiʿas, although he allegedly professed Shiʿi faith.

Shiʿi Imams loom large in the Tārīkh-i Tabaristān. Ibn Isfandiyār frequently refers to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and delivers some sayings attributed to ʿAlī in the context of a section about Khārijites. Ibn Isfandiyār underscores the Alid underpinnings of Tabaristan and firmly grounds this regional history in the context of Alid piety and belief.

The visionary qualities of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib also factor in the Tārīkh-i Tabaristān. Ibn


431 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 202; Browne, Abridged Translation, 144.

432 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 203-204; Browne, Abridged Translation, 144.

433 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 199-205; Browne, Abridged Translation, 143-144.


435 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 159; Browne, Abridged Translation, 101-103.
Ibn Isfandiyār notes that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib had foreseen in his writings (dar malāhīm az ou khabar dāde bud436) the appearance of the Sayyid-i-Burqāʾ or “the Veiled Sayyid”, also known as Sāhib al-Zanj, or “the Leader of the Ethiopians.”

Ibn Isfandiyār includes stories not just about the Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib437, but also about the 4th Imam ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib (Zayn al-ʾAbīdīn). One such narrative is about tawakkul, or total reliance on God, and sets a pious and tone at the beginning of the text. Zayn al-ʾAbīdīn stood mournfully in Medina when a figure dressed in white appeared before him. The anonymous interrogator asked Zayn al-ʾAbīdīn why he was sad, and the fourth Imam found that he had no reason to be. The fourth Imam realized that God never disappoints one who trusts fully in God and never denies what a believer asks of Him. When he realized this, his questioner disappeared.438

The 5th Imam Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī, known as al-Baqir, also figures in the text. In one such story he visits Umayyad caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʾAzīz (r. 99/717 to 101/720), known as ʿUmar II and generally regarded and portrayed as a pious caliph who studied with the muhaddithun of Medina and governed Medina in frequent consultation with the fuqaha of the city. When al-Baqir visits ʿUmar II as part of the latter’s open invitation for those who feel they have been wronged by the Umayyads to visit him and be compensated, ʿUmar II breaks down into tears in a burst of repentant sorrow. ʿUmar II

436 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabarīstān, 244; Browne, Abridged Translation, 180.

437 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabarīstān, 54-55; Browne, Abridged Translation, 12-13.

438 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabarīstān, 53; Browne, Abridged Translation, 11.
is portrayed as repentant, despondent and weeping for the wrongs the Umayyads have inflicted on the Shi’a, Alids, and family of the Prophet.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 53-54; Browne, Abridged Translation, 12.}

The living \textit{faḍā’il} of Tabaristan are the living counterparts to the physical excellences of Tabaristan, and both ground the other narratives of the military and political history of Tabaristan in the early parts of Ibn Isfandiyār’s work.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 90-94; Browne, Abridged Translation, 42-47.} The living \textit{faḍā’il} of the region are critical to the claims to Islamic legitimacy and authority that Ibn Isfandiyār develops. These living \textit{faḍā’il} includes notables\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 122; Browne, Abridged Translation, 73-74.}, learned men\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 122-125; Browne, Abridged Translation, 74-76.}, Imams\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 125-130; Browne, Abridged Translation, 76-80.}, saints and ascetics\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 130-135; Browne, Abridged Translation, 80-85.}, sages and philosophers\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 135-137; Browne, Abridged Translation, 85-86.}, and to a lesser extents writers and scribes,\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 130; Browne, Abridged Translation, 80.} physicians and poets\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 137; Browne, Abridged Translation, 86.}, and astronomers.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 137; Browne, Abridged Translation, 87.} In all cases Ibn Isfandiyār emphasizes the learning, piety, human capital in terms of religious scholars and pious men of the region. Connections with the family of the Prophet are particularly emphasized within these groups.
In Tabaristan the local imams, the living faḍāʿil of the region, are the local exemplars and interpreters of the faith who exercise religious authority and guidance.\textsuperscript{449} As Robinson argues for the case of Ĥarīkh Jurjān and the emphasis laid in the introductory sections on the Sahaba, a pre-Islamic prophetic genealogy, and the generations of the traditionists of Jurjan:

the point was to assert the orthodoxy of provincial learning, by anchoring the provincial learning undertaken by non-Arab converts to Islam in the heartland of Arabia... By positing the continuous transmission of authoritative teaching from master to pupil over several generations, a local prosopography of the tabaqāt variety functions to link one of a multiplicity of branches (usually the local tradition of jurists) to a single trunk (Prophetic sunna as it was explicated in Medina, Basra, Kufa, and Baghdad – the centers of eighth- and ninth-century learning, which produced the legal schools’ eponyms).\textsuperscript{450}

As the faḍāʿil of the region, the local imams of Tabaristan provide a legitimating link of learning to the Prophet and to the generations of now disparate ulama who have transmitted prophetic traditions and knowledge. One of dominant characteristics of the living faḍāʿil is their propensity to extreme generosity.

Ibn Isfandiyār highlights the outstanding generosity of the Ispahbad Husām al-Dawla wa al-Dīn Ardashīr b. Husayn (567-602/1172-1206).\textsuperscript{451} The Bawandid Ispahbad Husām al-Dawla wa al-Dīn Ardashīr b. Husayn is portrayed as sympathetic to the Ismaʿili

\textsuperscript{449} Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 125-130; Browne, Abridged Translation, 76-80.

\textsuperscript{450} Robinson, Islamic Historiography, 141.

\textsuperscript{451} The entry on the Ispahbad Husām al-Dawla wa al-Dīn Ardashīr b. Husayn is Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 125 114-120; Browne, Abridged Translation, 67-73. According to Richard Frye’s account of the Iranian Bawand dynasty that ruled in Tabaristan for more than 700 years (45-750/665-1349), “After the Mongol invasion there was anarchy in Tabaristan, and finally a member of the Bawand family, Husām al-Dawla Ardashīr b. Kinakhār was chosen ruler by the people. He moved his capital from Sārī to Āmul for safety's sake. Under his rule (12 or 15 years) the Mongols invaded Ṭabaristan. His son, Shams al-Mulk, was put to death in 663/1264 by Abakā Khan after ruling 18 years. This dynasty ruled as vassals of the Mongols but they suffered nonetheless from Mongol invasions and depredations.” R. N. Frye, “Bawand,” EI2.
Shiʿi, since an Indian envoy who arrives to inform Ardashir of the success of an Imami Shiʿi, daʿi in India in 579/1183-4. The most memorable anecdotes about the Ispahbad are those about his magnificent generosity, which includes gifts to Sayyids and also to the needy. On Fridays, the day of congregational prayer, he would order the Justice Minister to distribute 100 gold dinars amongst the most deserving in the public square. In his capital at Sar-i the Ispahbad Husam al-Dawla wa al-Din Ardashir b. Ḥusayn patronized men of learning and literary men, who he sponsored generously with goods, clothes, and money. The Ispahbad lavished his pious generosity on the Alawi that would come to Tabaristan from Egypt, Syria, and Arabia.

During Hajj season the Ispahbad’s donated gifts to multiple shrines of members of the house of the Prophet, the poor, and the Amirs of Mecca. These charitable donations included money for water, money for the Amir al-Hajj who led the caravan, and charitable donations to the shines, amongst others, of Imam Ḥasan, ‘Abd al-‘Aḍḥīm in Rayy, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib, Salmān al-Fārisī, Imam Ḥusayn at Karbala, and Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā. The function of this lengthy list is to highlight the spectacular generosity of the Ispahbad towards the shrines of the Shiʿi Imams and other pious generations. This bolsters the Ispahbad – and, by extension, Tabaristan’s – pietistic credentials and argues for the very real material importance of the ruler and his region as a benefactor of Shiʿi shrines and also as supporting custodians of the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina.

452 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 120; Browne, Abridged Translation, 70-71.
Sayyids are exemplars of generosity, but it is more importantly their relationship to the Prophet that brings prestige and piety to Tabaristan.453 According to Ibn Isfandiyār, these ruling sayyids included Sayyid Ḥasan b. Zayd b. Ismāʿīl “Jalib al- Ḥijāra” b. Ḥasan b. Zayd b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 270/884), or Dāʾī, and his brother Muḥammad b. Zayd, al- Dāʾī ila al-Haqq or Dāʾī al-Kabīr (d. 287/900)454, whose pious qualities stand out. Muḥammad b. Zayd, al- Dāʾī ila al-Haqq or Dāʾī al-Kabīr annually sent a large amount of gold dinars to the shrines of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and other members of the family of the Prophet, and Ibn Isfandiyār credits him with being the first to rebuild the tombs of the Imams after the caliph al-Mutawakkil (206–247 / 822–861, r. 232–247 /847–861) destroyed them.455 In another narrative, Muḥammad b. Zayd, al- Dāʾī ila al-Haqq treats with fairness and kindness a descendant of Yazīd, descended from Muʿawiya from the tribe of Abū al-Shams.

The Sayyids also left their mark on Tabaristan through their many descendants. Abū Muḥammad Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. ‘Amr b. ‘Alī al-Sajjād b. Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, known as al-Nāṣir al-Kabīr has a tomb in Amul, extant at the author’s time, and three of whose sons lived and ruled in Gilan and Daylam.456 Members of his family knew and studied with the eleventh Shiʿi Imam Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-

453 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan, 94-106; Browne, Abridged Translation, 47-58.

454 On these Alid rulers of Tabaristan – al-Ḥasan b. Zayd, known as al-Dāʾī al-Kabīr and the founder of an Alid Zaydī dynasty in Tabaristan (d. 270/884), and Muḥammad b. Zayd (d. 287/900), see Daftary, Ismāʿīlīs, 166. Another Alid ruler of Tabaristan that Daftary addresses is al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917), “who led the case of Zaydī Shiʿism in the Caspian region.”

455 The sum of gold dinars varies in the manuscripts form one thousand to thirty thousand gold dinars. Although one manuscript says one thousand gold dinars and another says thirty thousand, clearly what is being emphasized here is his piety by donating annually to the shrines of ‘Alī, Ḥasan, and Husayn and other members of the Prophet’s family; the amount is not really relevant. Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan, 94-96; Browne, Abridged Translation, 47-48.

456 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan, 97-98; Browne, Abridged Translation, 49.
The emphasis is on the direct lineage of the transmission of knowledge from the Imams to the Sayyids of Tabaristan.

Ibn Isfandiyār also mentions Sayyid Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Muʿayyad Biʿallah ʿAḍud al-Dawla and Sayyid Abū Ṭalib Yahya an-Nāṭiq biʿl-Haqq, the sons of al-Ḥusayn b. Harūn b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Zayd b. al-Imām al-Sibt al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbī Ṭalib, in an entry that underscores the effectiveness of the Shiʿi daʿīfs and the adherence of the people of the region to it. Ibn Isfandiyār provides what amounts to an intellectual vitae of Sayyid Abū Ṭalib Yahya an-Nāṭiq biʿl-Haqq, who taught in Gurgan before going to Daylamān. Notably, al-Sayyid Shams al-ʿAl-ʿi Rasul Allāh is the first of the Sayyids who Ibn Isfandiyār identifies as one of the nussāk (pious ascetic recluses) and ʿubbād (worshippers).

Sayyids are portrayed as the true custodians of religion. The locals respect the learning, piety, and asceticism of the fugitive Talibi sayyids, who have fled Darfu and Lapra, and are the true heirs of the Prophet and therefore righteous custodians of religion. They ask these Sayyids to overthrow the tyrannical Muḥammad b. Aws. Ibn Isfandiyār includes more of the political and military history of Tabaristan arranged in chronological order in the era of the ruling Sayyids of Tabaristan, of whom the first, Ibn Isfandiyār tells us, was the 3rd/9th century Ḥasan b. Zayd, and includes a portrait of his

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458 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Tabaristan, 98-101; Browne, Abridged Translation, 50-54.

459 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Tabaristan, 101-102; Browne, Abridged Translation, 54-55.

460 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Tabaristan, 105; Browne, Abridged Translation, 57-58.

fervent and violent belief in the Muʿtazili doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾan.\textsuperscript{462}

Here we see religious independence explicitly coupled with political and fiscal autonomy.

Ibn Isfandiyār’s description of the Talibi Sayyids and their piety are coupled with accusations against a he describes as a stridently Sunni anti-Shiʿi vizier, Abdullah b. Yaḥya b. Khāqān, who persecuted them.\textsuperscript{463} Abdullah b. Yaḥya b. Khāqān was vizier under the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil, and the vizier is portrayed as a drunk and a murderer of Alids. This unsightly portrait contrasts with the Shiʿi piety of Muḥammad b. Zayd, the self-professed ruler of Tabaristan (during the reign of the Caliph al-Muntasir, 247-8/861-2) and the Shiʿi Buyid ʿAḍūd al-Dawla Fana-Khusraw b. Rukn al-Dawla Hasan [b.] Buwayh (324–372 / 936–983).\textsuperscript{464}

Ibn Isfandiyār accuses the vizier with ʿAbd Allāh b. Yaḥya b. Khāqān of grave offenses against the Alids. He was someone

who was continually inciting [the caliph Jaʿfar al-Mutawakkil] to kill the descendants of the Prophet, and even succeeded in convincing him to destroy the tombs of the Martyrs of Karbala, dam up the water, grow crops on the site of their graves, and set Jewish watchmen and keepers there to arrest and kill any Muslim who visited these holy places. Therefore in the time of al-Dāʾī Muḥammad b. Zayd the tombs of ʿĀlī and his son al-Ḥusayn and other descendants of Abū Ṭalib were in ruins.\textsuperscript{465}

The polemic firmly situates Ibn Isfandiyār within a strongly Shiʿi context. The accusations about Jewish watchmen and orders to kill Muslims who attempted to visit the Shiʿi tombs at Karbala is clear: these are extravagantly anti-Shiʿi actions.

\textsuperscript{462} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Tabaristān}, 241; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 176.

\textsuperscript{463} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Tabaristān}, 224. “Naṣībi madhhab bud.”

\textsuperscript{464} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Tabaristān}, 224-227; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 158-161.

\textsuperscript{465} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Tabaristān}, 224; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 158.
Furthermore, Ibn Isfandiyār portrays the caliph al-Mutawakkil as a bloodthirsty killer of Alids. Not only did the caliph al-Mutawakkil persecute Talibi Sayyids, but according to Ibn Isfandiyār he killed Imam Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-ʿAskarī (b. 214/829 or 212 or 213/828 or 829, d. 254/868), the tenth Twelver Shiʿi Imam known as al-Hādī. Though Shiʿi tradition states he was poisoned by the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, the Maqātil al-ʿTālibiyīn does not include al-Hādī among the Alid martyrs. Furthermore, historical accounts state that al-Mutawakkil did have an anti-Alid policy and did have al-Hādī brought to Samarra where he kept the Imam under surveillance, but does not describe him as murdered. Ibn Isfandiyār rounds out the negative portrait of al-Mutawakkil by describing how he indulged in drink and debauchery as well. While the allegations of al-Mutawakkil’s virulent anti-Shiʿi sentiments may have merit, Ibn Isfandiyār’s literary strategy is to build a sympathetic case for the Alids more broadly and for the Talibi Sayyids of Tabaristan specifically.

Ibn Isfandiyār’s literary strategy is to underscore the region’s loyalty to the Alids and Talibi Sayyids of Tabaristan. During the caliphate of the Abbasid al-Muntasir (r. 247-8/861-2) Muhammad b. Zayd declared himself the ruler of Tabaristan, and Ibn Isfandiyār credits him with the revival of Shiʿism in the region. Again, here the

466 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 226-227; Browne, Abridged Translation, 161.


468 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 224-225; Browne, Abridged Translation, 158-159.

469 al-Muntasir took it upon himself to “preach the Shiʿite doctrine, and to inculcate the deepest veneration for the House of ʿAlī, and to repair their shrines, and to build fresh ones where he supposed their graves to be. In all this he was aided by ʿAdud al-Dawla Fanakhusraw b. Ruknuʾd-Dawla Hasan [b.] Buwayh, who surrounded these holy places with houses and bazaar, and instituted the observances of Muharram [Persian ʾiʿtishūra] and the Yawmuʾl-Ghadir and other Shiʿite practices, and was himself buried when he died at Mashhad ʿAlī.” Here I quote E. G Browne’s English translation: Browne, Abridged Translation, 158; Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 224.
implicit relationship between religious autonomy and administrative and fiscal freedom is made explicit: religious authority and pious heritage are coupled with a fierce localism and assertion of fiscal and political independence.

The *ulama* of Tabaristan held privileged positions as custodians and disseminators of knowledge. What is striking is the absence of munificence in their stories. Clearly, generosity is for rulers – Ispahbads, notables (*maʿārif*), and princely and dynastic governors; men of learning need only guard and share their learning. The leading light of the *ulama* is Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, the author among other works of the encyclopedic history and Qur’an commentary. Tabari’s surprisingly short – albeit very flattering – entry for such a famous individual is followed by a list of a few of the most illustrious scholars of Tabaristan: Imam-i-Shahid Fakhr al-Islām ʿAbd al-Wahid b. Ismaʿīl Abū al-Maḥāsin, known as ‘the second Shāfiʿī’, and for whom Nizām al-Mulk built a college at Amul; the *qadi al-qudat* Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Rūyānī, who flourished during the era Shams al-Maʿālī Qābus (366-403 / 976-1012), whose descendants still held judicial offices in Tabaristan in Ibn Isfandiyār’s time.

This chapter has explored the roles that Sahaba, Tabi’un, Sayyids, and their traditions play in local and regional histories as tools of legitimation and has argued that such claims of heirship or association with the Prophet are one amongst multiple literary strategies employed in local and regional histories to forge links with foundational moments and characters in history.


In *Tārīkh-i Qum*, significant for the city’s literary self-representation were the Sahaba, Tabi’un, and the living *faḍūl* of Qum in the form of descendants of the Prophet and Talibi Sayyids. In *Tārīkh-Bayhaq* by Ibn Funduq, critical to the city’s literary self-representation is a focus on the city’s ties to Sahaba or Tabi’un, even in cases where that link is potentially tenuous or fictional. For *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, the strong and sustained emphasis on the family of the Prophet, Alids, and Shi’i Imams were related to claims for the independence of Tabaristan. Examples from *Tārīkh-i Qum, Tārīkh-Bayhaq, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān*, and *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* illustrate how the author binds a city or a region to Sahaba, Tabi’un, and Sayyids, and how the strategies of literary self-representations amplified the city or region’s legitimacy. These forms of literary legitimation may be non-biological or supra-biological in contrast to the genealogically-based prestige accorded to descendants of Sahaba, Tabi’un, notable hadith transmitters, and the family of the Prophet.

The following chapter explores another strategy of literary self-representation and addresses Persian local histories of cities and regions and their claims to prophetic authority and sanctity in the context of broader scholarship on the urban environment in the Islamic world. These claims to prophetic authority, piety, and sanctification include foundation legends of cities; tombs of saints and pious visitations to them; the social, institutional, and literary processes at play in the attribution of sainthood; and observations about place-based sanctity, saint veneration, shrine visitation, and the sacralization of place. The chapter focuses on the different types of narratives, etymologies, and pious individuals and places in order to underscore how the literary self-fashioning in these texts articulated an identity simultaneously deeply local, Persian,
and regionally differentiated and also firmly embedded within the framework of Islamic history.
Chapter 5: The Sacred and the City

On the night of the Prophet’s ascension Iblīs the Accursed came to this place on his knees and he put both his elbows upon his knees, and looked upon the ground. The Prophet said to Iblīs: “Qum, ya mal'ūna,” which means “Rise, oh accursed one.” And it is for this reason that Qum was given the name “Qum.”

This chapter considers Persian local and regional histories and their claims to legitimacy and sanctity in the context of broader scholarship on the urban environment in the Islamic world. Examples drawn from Tārīkh-i Qum, Tārīkh-i Bukhārā, and Tārīkh-i Tabaristan, to frame this discussion. The aspects of saints, the sacred, and the city that this chapter focuses on includes foundation legends of cities; tombs of saints and pious visitations to them; the social, institutional, and literary processes at play in the attribution of sainthood; and saint veneration, shrine visitation, and the sacralization of place.

The broader historical questions that inform this chapter include whether persistence of tribal affiliation in Arab areas – and the comparative lack of it in Iranian cities – created a disproportionate emphasis on the city as the unit of measure in Iranian local histories. The second question is whether the resilience of tribal affiliations persisted even in cities. Finally, there is the issue of how did inter-tribal conflict and the organization – both administrative and physical – of the people within the city (both Arab-Arab and Arab-Persian) affected communal relations and strife in the city, and how does this situation differed in Persia compared to elsewhere.

472 Qummi, Tārīkh-i Qum, 51.
This chapter will not engage in a deep discussion of what constitutes a city and essentially treats developed urban settlements as cities without differentiating between their various levels of urban development. The definition of the medieval Islamic city includes not just the walled city but also its affiliated villages. To the extent that this chapter differentiates between different types of cities, it references Wheatley’s work on cities in the Islamic world between the 7th and 10th centuries, which in turn uses Muqaddasi’s *Ahsan al-Taqāsim fī Ma‘rifat al-Aqālim* as its basis. In Muqaddasi’s schema there are four levels in descending order in the urban hierarchy: metropolis (*misr*), provincial capital (*qasabah*), district capital (*madīna*), and then various small urban centers. Some cities referenced in this chapter are *amsār* and are the highest form in the urban hierarchies described by Muqaddasi.473

Associating Sahaba, Tabi’un, prophets, saints, and notable figures with a city is one of multiple ways of binding a city to pivotal movements in sacred history, and this study belongs in the broader contexts of relics, graves, and other pietistic items that tie a location to a sacred or revered presence. Scholars of Christianity have documented and examined the proliferation of holy relics in Christianity, such as the shroud of Christ at Turin, handkerchiefs that touched the skin of St. Paul, and the bones of martyred bishops.474 Sacred relics and sites similarly proliferated in the Muslim tradition. In the Islamic tradition, the taking, plundering, or recapturing of relics could also be a form of

473 Wheatley, *Places Where Men Pray Together*, 74-78. The cities that Muqaddasi categorized as *amsār* that relevant for my dissertation are: Irānshahr (Naysabur/Nishapur) in Khurasan, al-Mawsil (Mosul) in al-Jazirah (Aqīr), Damascus in al-Sham, al-Fustat in Misr, Qurtubah (Cordoba) in al-Andalus and, to a lesser extent, Shiraz in Fars, Mecca in al-Hijaz, and Baghdad in al-Iraq.

asserting power and legitimacy: possession of relics symbolized power.\textsuperscript{475} In Islamic history focused on the urban or physical landscape, influential scholarly research has addressed pious institutions, characters, and places in the fields of archaeology, social history, and economic history.\textsuperscript{476} Instead, this chapter concentrates on the ways in which narratives, etymogogies, figures, and traditions in local and urban histories bind the place to the Prophet or to foundational moments in prophetic history and the Islamic narrative.

Given the fantastical nature of the foundation stories of some cities and the variant reasons offered for others, it is reasonable to doubt some foundation legends. However, this study is not concerned with the authenticity or truthfulness of such claims. This chapter focuses on literary presentations of cities and is an examination of literary construction and identity in early Islamic Persia. Thus the veracity of claims about tombs, relics, or noteworthy sites, is irrelevant, and neither is archaeological evidence. The critical question is why the authors have portrayed the cities at their foundational moments in the way that they do.

There are multiple reasons for the existence of competing narratives about the foundations of various cities. Particularly for garrison cities that the Arabs created in the course of the initial conquests, there could be a gap of several centuries between the garrison’s formation, its transformation into a city, and its establishment in the literature. Unlike cities that were formed as adaptations or developments onto other pre-existing

\textsuperscript{475} On the acquisition of relics as a mode of rivalry and legitimacy, see Paul E. Walker, “Purloined Symbols of the Past: The Theft of Souvenirs and Sacred Relics in the Rivalry between the Abbasids and Fatimids,” in \textit{Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam}, 364-387.

\textsuperscript{476} For example, McChesney has documented the history of a \textit{waqf} for the shrine of ‘Alî in Mazarisharif (in Balkh, now in Afghanistan) from the 1480s to the 1880s. McChesney’s book is an economic history of the region of Mazarisharif vis-à-vis the Alid shrine and its relationship with \textit{waqfs}. While McChesney investigates a different phenomenon, his project identifies an alleged shrine of ‘Alî that was a physical entity that tied the city to the legacy of ‘Alî and the Prophet. McChesney, \textit{Waqf in Central Asia}. 

cities—such as Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Palermo, and Seville—there may have been genuine confusion regarding the formation of cities that were created on the basis of Arab garrisons or that were effectively created ex nihilo in the course of the Islamic conquests and expansion of Islamic civilization, such as the garrison cities of Kufa and Basra in Iraq.\footnote{477}

The foundation story of the garrison city of Basra is a convenient example that demonstrates that genuine confusion that created competing narratives about the foundation of a city. Two are variant versions, both recorded in al-Baladhuri, about ‘Utba ibn Ghazwan establishing Basra. One of them has his founding the city in 14/635-636, while another reported by al-Mas’udi credits ‘Utba ibn Ghazwan with the foundation the city, but at a different date (16/637 or 638, or possibly 17 or 18/638 or 639) on the site where his followers had camped in 14/635-636. The variant version does not necessarily imply purposeful deception but may result from genuine confusion.\footnote{478}

Likewise, there are differing accounts of the Arab Islamic conquest of Qum. The facts about the Arab conquest of Qum are murky, but there is no dispute that Qum existed prior to the Islamic period and the Arab conquests. It is also certain that it was settled primarily by members of the Arabian tribe from the Ash‘ari clan who came to Qum from Kufa after the initial conquest of Qum in 23/644 by the Arab commander Abū Musa al-Ash‘ari. However, there are different accounts of the Arab conquest of Qum and when these Arabs from Kufa arrived in Qum.


\footnote{478} Wheatley echoes Charles Pellat’s earliest suggestion that it is genuine confusion that gives rise to multiple conflicting stories. Wheatley, *Places Where Men Pray Together*, 42. Wheatley cites al-Baladhuri, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 346 and 341.
Possibly the Arabs came when Hajjāj b. Yūsuf was governor of Iraq.⁴⁷⁹ One account suggests that Ashʿari Arabs fled Kufa and the Umayyad governor al-Hajjāj following his suppression of a rebellion by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ashʿath in 82/701. This account also posits that Saʿd b. Mālik al- Ashʿarī’s sons escaped to Qum.⁴⁸⁰ Another account argues that the same sons of Saʿd b. Malik al-Ashʿarī settled in Qum in more peaceful circumstances in 94/713.⁴⁸¹ Alternatively, the Arabs may have arrived later, in 99/717-18 with Aḥwās b. Saʿd, who was fleeing the consequences of the Alid uprising in Kufa and was given land in the area by the Persian Yazdanfadhar, which gradually became settled by other Arabs who took control of the area.

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⁴⁷⁹ Abū Muḥammad al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf b. al-Ḥakam b. ʿAkhī al-Thakafī was a famous Umayyad governor and descended from the Aḥlāf clan of the Banū Thakīf. He was born in Taʿif, in the Hijaz, around 41/661 and died in 95/714 in Wāṣit, Iraq. He was appointed governor of Iraq when he was aged 33 in the year 75/694. He was also appointed governor of Ḵurāsān and Sīsijistān in 78/697. He died at the age of 52 in Ramaḍān 95/June 714. A. Dietrich, “al-Ḥadjdjadj b. Yūsuf b. al-Ḥakam b. ʿAkhī al-Thakafī, Abū Muḥammad,” EI2.

⁴⁸⁰ Hajjāj b. Yūsuf, operating under the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 685–705), impelled Alids to flee from harsh treatment in Kufa, particularly in light of the killing of Husayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib in Karbala in 61/680 as a consequence of his refusal to pledge the bayʿa to Yazīd, and al-Mukhtār b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī’s pro-Alid movement and rebellion in al-Kūfa in 66/685. For a discussion of Mukhtar b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī and his rebellion, see Daftary, Ismaʿīliyya, 51-53, 56-61, 63, 65, 66, 80. Of the period that followed al-Mukhtar’s rebellion, Daftary argues: “For the sixty-odd years intervening between the revolt of al-Mukhtar and the ʿAbbāsid revolution, Shiʿism did not represent a unified and coherent movement. During this period, different Shiʿī groups co-existed, each having its own ism, and developing its own doctrines, while individuals moved freely and frequently between them (57).” In this rebellion al-Mukhtar claimed to be the representative of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, who was ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalib’s son by Khawla, a woman from the Banū Ḥantfa tribe. G.R. Hawting, “al-Mukhtar b. Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī,” EI2.

⁴⁸¹ Madelung, Religious Trends, 78-79. For a recent echo of Madelung’s original argument, see Newman, Formative Period, 39. Within the Ashʿari clan, the first clear association with the Imams was Mūsā b. ʿAbdallah b. Saʿd. Mālik al-Ashʿarī, an associate of Muhammad al-Baqir and Jaʿfar al-Sadiq, the fifth and sixth Imams. The clan was more broadly associated with Shiʿism from the battle of Siffin in 37/657. Newman cites Yaḥyā, Muʿjam al-buldan, IV, pp. 175-176.
The Persian translator of Tārīkh-i Qum quotes multiple accounts of the conquest of Qum. The first account he mentions is that the area surrounding Isfahan\(^{482}\), which included Qum, was conquered by force. However, another narrative indicates that Qum was not conquered by force.\(^{483}\) The author also suggests that the first Ashʿari Arabs, who included ʿAbdallāh ibn Saʿd, who had fled from Iraq, may have arrived and settled (nuzūl kardand) in Qum in 74/693.\(^{484}\) Despite the confusion about the foundation of the city, Qummī adduces sacred etymologies for the city.

It may be that the Iranian cities considered in this dissertation are in some ways qualitatively different from the Arab cities in, for example, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria. Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Cairo and Seville were cities or settlements that pre-dated Islam. Cities such as Damascus in Syria and Cairo in Egypt had sizeable Christian populations, and Baghdad in Iraq had a sizeable Jewish population. In contrast, the Iranian cities considered in this dissertation – Qum, Bayhaq, Bukhara – tended to be smaller settlements, on the order of several thousand people. Tabaristan had no major cities but instead had clusters of villages. Furthermore, whatever Christian or Zoroastrian communities that did exist in Iranian areas were likely small, unlike the Christian and Jewish communities in the Arab cities of Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus.

\(^{482}\) Isfahan, of which Qum was originally considered as part of and from which it would later separated to become its own distinct city, was similarly established as a garrison. After the initial establishment of Ashʿari Arabs in the garrison near Qum there was a later influx of Arabs. There were tussles between the Arab Alids from Kufa and the indigenous Persians who originally possessed the land. Eventually Arab Alids became the dominant group in Qum and established a settlement within one city wall, which Wheatley dates to the first three decades of the 8\(^{th}\) century CE. Wheatley, Places Where Men Pray Together, 138–139. “As early as the fifth decade of the seventh century, Arab garrisons were established at a number of strategic locations, inclusion Isfahan, Qazwin, al-Rayy, Qumm, Nihavand, Dinawar, Sirawān, and Saymarah (138).”

\(^{483}\) Qummī, Tārīkh-i Qum, 53-54.

\(^{484}\) Ibid., 83-85.
For these ancient and important cities in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, the advent of Islam was another development, an additional religious community, a new form of architecture, and a new type of administration that was added on to an extant settlement. Islam was another, albeit extremely important, development in the longer history of the city. In contrast to these large and ancient Arab metropolises, cities in Iran likely had a different character. The foundation or expansion of Iranian cities were largely developments that occurred with the Islamic conquests and the garrison cities. Since the settlements in Persia did not have comparatively sizable Christian, Zoroastrian, or Jewish communities, the religious tenor would have been more heavily Muslim in these Persian cities than those in Arab lands. The sacred spaces, etymologies, and founding narratives in Persian cities may have therefore been more Islamic in character than their counterparts in Arab cities with sizeable and long-standing communities of other religious faiths.

The existence and development of sacred space is a common thread that runs through the Abrahamic faiths. Saints and martyrs are commemorated, and their bodies, relics, and memories are venerated. In the Islamic tradition, notable Companions and members of the family of the Prophet who were martyred during the Islamic conquests and the subsequent contests for authority, and traditions of martyrdom in the Shi‘i, tradition were particularly central to pious practice and remain so to the present day. In Christianity there is the tradition that martyrs are the first to be resurrected.\footnote{André Dartigues, “Resurrection of the Dead,” \textit{Encyclopedia Of Christian Theology}, First Edition, Ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste. Routledge, 2004. \textit{Religion Online}.} Consequently, people wanted to be buried near martyrs bodies, so that they would be in physical proximity to the bodies that will be the first to be resurrected and to “share in
their power at the resurrection.” Similar practices occurred in Islam, as will become evident in the section of this chapter on Faṭima and her shrine in Qum. Though not martyred herself, Faṭima’s hagiographical account is inextricably tied to that of her brother, the 8th Shi’i Imam al-Riḍa and the broader tradition of Shi’i martyrology.

In medieval Islam proximity to the burial place of the Companion, notable, saint or martyr also took the form of pilgrimage or pious visitation, or ziyārat. Visitation or pilgrimage to a sanctified site was a pious act in itself. Participation in a pious ritual in proximity to a shrine – which often included supplications, rituals, recitations of the Qur’an, prayer, and physically touching some part of the shrine in an act of devotion – occasioned an accessing of the saint’s intercessory power and baraka. Qum enjoyed Buyid patronage and was famous in the Saljuq era for its madrasas and for the shrine sanctuary of Faṭima – which Sunnis as well as Shi’is visited – and for its awqaf, and for the ulama there. In seeing and touching sacred sites, the believer participated in saintly power by both performing pious action and accessing a saint’s power and received baraka.

As a consequence of this affinity for piety and the power it exercised in the medieval world, great volumes of visitors flocked to shrines and burial places of notable Companions, notables, saints and martyrs. This also occasioned the proliferation of the genre of pilgrimage guide, or ziyārat literature, in the medieval Muslim world. The earliest ziyārat literature, kutub al-ziyārāt, is a highly localized genre and dates from the

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3rd/9th century with the Shi'i guide, *Kitāb al-Ziyārāt*, by the Kufan jurist and theologian Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Faddāl al-Taymī al-Kūfī (d. 224/838-9). The earliest extant guide, which served as a model for later works, was written by Ibn Qūluya (d. 978-979). The institutionalization of Shi'i pilgrimage and the *manāsik* (sacred rights) of the *ziyāra* occurred by the 10th century. This is the period in which the original and no longer extant Arabic *Tarīkh-i Qum* was written. The development of the *ziyārat* genre occurred at different paces in the Islamic world. Guides for some areas such as Sham did not proliferate until after the 10th/16th century, while in other areas, such as Egypt, *kutub al-ziyārat* existed in Fatimid and Mamluk eras. Though the profusion of guides was later from Sham than elsewhere, the region is notable for the great volume of pilgrimage guide literature, which includes places associated with pre-Islamic figures common to the Abrahamic tradition.

It is the attribution of sainthood through social, institutional, and literary mechanisms and processes that identified and created a saint. No single central authority could effectively control saint veneration. As Kleinberg writes in his study of living Christian saints in the medieval Europe and the social processes by which communities recognized saints:

Sainthood is not a quality or a set of characteristics but an attribution. Although certain acts are accepted as virtuous, the sanctity of the performer is not a self-evident consequence of such acts. The nature of saintly acts and the legitimacy of using them as proof of sainthood in a particular case needs to be debated and agreed upon.

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488 Meri, “The Islamic Cult of Saints,” 34-35, 44.


The recognition of sainthood, Kleinberg argues, was a social project that was constantly negotiated – a saint could, in the course of his or her life, gain or lose to various degrees the saintliness accorded to him or her by the community. Far from being a decision exclusively sanctioned by the papacy, community recognition was a prime factor in the recognition of a saint.⁴⁹¹ Although it is debatable how much of the creation of sainthood occurred during the person’s life, the argument that social process was critical in conferring sainthood is convincing.

In the Islamic tradition, despite conflicting theological and historical arguments for and against the practice, shrine visitation and saint veneration permeated Islamic society and cannot be dismissed as “popular culture.” Both the elite and non-elite alike participated in the culture of ziyārat by contributing to the construction and upkeep of shrines, endowments, and going on visitations.⁴⁹² Veneration of friends of God (awliyaʾ), members of the Prophet’s family, and martyrs transcended social strata and physical locations in the early Islamic world.

Though there is a profusion of Shiʿi and Sunni ziyārat literature, the sources differ in audience in content. One notable general difference between the Sunni and the Shiʿi traditions is the greater institutionalization and centrality of ziyarʿat in the Shiʿi tradition,

⁴⁹¹“The medieval papacy is portrayed as having a clear ideal of sainthood which it sought relentlessly to impose on the masses. In fact, canonization was never a major factor in the medieval veneration of saints.” “The papacy began in the twelfth century to show a growing interest in the veneration of saints. A decisive step toward a papal supervisory role was taken by Alexander III (1159-81)… The language used in the papal letter may suggest that the pope expected all possible saints to be submitted to papal scrutiny; but this has no nearing in reality. The papacy did not expect every small community to await papal permission before it expressed its devotion to a saint. It reserved for itself, however, the right to disqualify a cult it did not approve of.” Ibid., 21, 26-27.

⁴⁹²Meri, “The Islamic Cult of Saints,” 44.
as well as traditions of the imams about ziyārat, and especially those of the sixth imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765). While Sunni guides have a broader audience that includes mentors, rulers, devotees, and learned guides, Shi’i guides were directed towards the learned who would then instruct devotees on the traditions of the imams, and Shi’i texts often included supplications to memorized. Shi’i guides also include hadith and the traditions of the imams, and virtues or merits (faḍā’il) traditions about holy cities, such Kufa and Karbala, and descriptions of rituals to be performed and when such rituals should be performed.

**Tārīkh-i Qum**

The example of Faṭīma of Qum and her shrine sanctuary illustrates how narratives, etymologies, and pious individuals and places in local histories articulated a literary self-fashioning simultaneously deeply local and Islamic and should be seen in the context of the politics of rhetorical legitimation. When considering this local Persian and global Muslim balancing act, it is critical to keep in mind that the *Tārīkh-i Qum* repeatedly describes explicitly non-Islamic qualities such as Zoroastrian fire-temples (āteshkade-ha) as well as the relations of various Alid descendants of the Prophet. There are also virtues of indeterminate origin – such as virtues of the fruits, trees, rivers, and natural bounties – that could just as well resonate with Islamic conceptions of geographies of heaven as indigenous Iranian notions of virtuous bounty. The identity of Qum is simultaneously deeply local and Persian. The city history acknowledges its

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493 Ibid., 35.

existence before the arrival of the Arabs, and yet it is firmly embedded within the framework of Islamic history.

*Tārīkh-i Qum* catalogues the virtues or merits, or *faḍāʾil*, of Qum. These virtues form a common thematic link between *Tārīkh-i Qum* and other local histories. These virtues comprised of living *faḍāʾil*, which are the descendants of the Prophet—overwhelmingly Alid—and *ulama* in Qum, as well as natural virtues and excellences of the land, and the utterances made by the Prophet, his family members, or Companions that are recorded in *hadith*. One such virtue of the city is the shrine of Faṭīma. In his articulation the relationship with Qum of the descendants of the Prophet through Ḥasan (sādāt-e Ḥasannīye) who came to Qum from the descendants of Mūsa b. Ja’far⁴⁹⁵, the author includes a significant section on Faṭīma, daughter of Imam Mūsa b. Ja’far and sister of Imam al-Riḍā.⁴⁹⁶ This covers her travel, her illness during the travel—at which point she asked to be taken to Qum—and her death in Qum, and her burial in Qum.

Faṭīma’s travel to Qum is inextricably tied with the fate of her brother, the 8th Shi’i Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā (b. Medina, 148/765 or 151/768 or 153/770, d. Tus in 203/818).⁴⁹⁷ When al-Riḍā reluctantly accepted the caliph al-Ma’mūn’s (r. 813-833) designation of him as the heir to the Abbasid caliphate, he travelled from Medina to Marv, in Khurasan. When anger in Iraq over the effective movement of the capital away from Baghdad provoked revolt, al-Ma’mūn journeyed back from Marv to Baghdad, as did al-Riḍā. What is clear is that al-Riḍā died en route in Tus sometime in 203/818 after

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⁴⁹⁶ Shimamoto suggests that the modest description of the event in the *Tārīkh-i Qum* is the oldest and longest description of Faṭīma’s arrival in Qum. Shimamoto, “Reflections on the Origin of Qum,” 100-102.

falling ill. Shi‘i narratives attribute al-Riḍā’s death to poisoning either by the caliph al-
Ma‘mūn himself or on his orders. Al-Riḍā was buried near the tomb of the Abbasid
Harūn al-Rashīd, and al-Riḍā’s sanctuary, or mashḥad, became the dominant feature of
the town of Tus, which became known as Mashhad, after the sanctuary.

Although not noted in Qummī’s Tārkhi-i Qum, Fāṭima is herself a significant
figure in the transmission of prophetic knowledge not only through hadith but also
through the “Mushaf Fāṭīma.” The “Mushaf Fāṭīma” is a text containing secret
knowledge believed to be revealed to Fāṭima by Gabriel between the Prophet
Muhammad’s death and Fāṭima’s own death, which she in turn dictated to ’Alī.

According to Shi‘i tradition, ’Alī and the subsequent Imams kept the book, which
disappeared with the Twelfth Imam when he went into occultation. The “Mushaf
Fāṭīma” will again reappear when the Twelfth Imam returns and will then be revealed to
the Shi‘a.498 In later centuries, as the traditions of the Imams in al-Ṣaffar’s Basā‘ir
(compiled in Qum in the late 3rd/9th century) attest, the Twelver Imams would claim
amongst their many privileged positions as custodians of knowledge access to this
“Mushaf Fāṭīma.”499

Fāṭima al-Ma‘ṣūma, ’Alī al-Riḍa’s sister, set off from Medina for Marv in
201/816-17 to visit her brother, but she became ill in Sāwa or Sāve, a Sunni town500 10
farsangs or roughly 60km from Qum. When she became ill, Fāṭima asked to be taken to
Qum for an unspecified reason. According to the Tārkhi-i Qum, the people of Qum

498 Joseph Eliash, “‘The Šī‘ite Qur‘ān’: A Reconsideration of Goldziher's Interpretation,” Arabica T. 16,

499 Newman, Formative Period, 73.

welcomed Fāṭīma. Mūsa b. Khazraj b. Sa’d Asha’rī housed Fāṭīma as his guest, and when she died after 17 days, he buried her on his property called Bābelān. It would be most logical if Fāṭīma knew of Qum and that it had an Alid population there, as Shimamoto suggests.\(^{501}\)

It is in the climate of early 3/9th century Qum, when the city was already established with an Alid identity, that Fāṭīma dies and is buried in Qum in 201/816-17. This event will become a pivotal moment for the city’s identity and significance. Wheatley is incorrect when he claims that “No medieval author mentions the tomb of Fāṭīma, sister of the eighth Imam ‘Alī al-Riḍa, which now ranks second only to Mashhad as a Shi‘ite sanctuary. In fact this shrine was practically unknown until early in the seventeenth century…”\(^{502}\) Qum enjoyed Buyid patronage, and was famous in the Saljuq era for its madrasas and for the shrine sanctuary of Fāṭīma – which Sunnis as well as Shi’a visited – and for its awqāf, and for the ulama who lived in Qum.\(^{503}\) What is relevant here, however, is Wheatley’s observation that pilgrimage to the shrine in Qum of Fāṭīma al-Ma’ṣūma increased after deliberate intervention at the political level to draw pilgrimage to Safavid territory, of which Qum was an important – though not exclusive – focal point.

The death and burial of Fāṭīma al-Ma’ṣūma is in retrospect the key moment in Qum’s history that enables its later transition from a district and seasonal capital city into a shrine city for the shrine of Fāṭīma. From the late 1400s to the early 1500s onwards,


\(^{503}\) J. Calmard, “Ḳum,” EI2.
Qum – religiously significant from its early days – transitioned from a seasonal capital city with political significance into a full-fledged shrine city under the Safavids. Qum achieved tremendous patronage from Shah Ābbās in the 17th century when he made magnificent developments to the shrine of Fāṭima in his attempt to redirect pilgrimage traffic to Qum and Mashhad away from the Ottoman Sunni held sanctuaries in Najaf and Karbala.\(^{504}\)

A striking reports that illustrates how al-Qummī binds Qum to key moments and characters in Islamic and cosmic history and to prophetic authority is one in which he quotes a tradition about Qum and Fāṭima. This story revolves around a conversation between Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq and a gathered crowd.\(^{505}\) This story is about the 6th Ithnā’Asharī Shi’i Imam, Ja’far al-Ṣādiq,\(^{506}\) as well as Fāṭima, who is the daughter of the 7th Ithnā’Asharī Imam, Mūsa b. Ja’far, known as Mūsa al-Kādhim\(^{507}\) and the sister of the 8th Ithnā’Asharī Shi’i Imam, ‘Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā. Ja’far al-Ṣādiq is therefore the grandfather of Fāṭima. The event it describes would have taken place in the 2nd/8th century.

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\(^{504}\) Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 331.

\(^{505}\) Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq greets a group of people in Arabic with “marhaban”, although the rest of the conversation is rendered here in Persian.

\(^{506}\) Ja’far al-Ṣādiq was born in 80/699-700 or 83/702-3 in Medina, and died in 148/765. “Dja’far died in 148/765 (poisoned, according to the unlikely Twelver tradition, on the orders of Maṣūr) and was buried in the Bakī‘ cemetery in Medina, where his tomb was visited, especially by Shī‘is, till it was destroyed by the Wahhābīs.” Umm Farwa, his mother, was a great-granddaughter of Abū Bakr. He is the last imām recognized by both Twelver and Ismā‘īlī Shi’is. Many of his partisans – shī‘ā, or personal following – lived in Kufa, and some in Basra. “He lived quietly in Madiḥa as an authority in hadīt h and probably in fikh; he is cited with respect in Sunnī isnāds.” M. G. S. Hodgson, “DJafar al-Ṣādik,” EI2.

\(^{507}\) He who restrains himself” or “who keeps silent”, for his politically quietist policy.
First, Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq greets the gathered crowd in Arabic with “marhaban”, although the rest of the conversation is rendered in Persian. Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq says “Marhaban, our brothers from the people of Qum.” When the assembled group of people says, “Oh Imam, we are from Rayy,” Ja’far al-Ṣādiq again says “Marhaban, our brothers from the people of Qum.” This repeats three times, and every time Ja’far al-Ṣādiq greets the group as his brothers from Qum. Ja’far al-Ṣādiq then says the following:

God has a sanctuary, and that is Mecca (Khodā-i haramist, o ān Makke ast). And the Prophet of God has a sanctuary, and that is Medina. And Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī has a sanctuary, and that is Kufa. And we have a sanctuary, and that is the city of Qum. Know that soon a woman of my descendants, whose name is Fāṭima, will be buried in Qum, and everyone who does ziyārat to her will find he or she certainly goes to heaven (har kas ke ziyārat-e ou dar yābad, be-behesht ravad, o behesht-e ou ra wājib shavad).  

The translator notes that the narrator of this tradition (rāwī) said that: “During the time that Imam Abī’ Abdallāh Ja’far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq had this conversation, Muṣa Kāḏhim [who would become Fāṭima of Qum’s father] was not yet visible in the belly of his mother, and his mother was not yet pregnant with him.”

The critical themes in this narrative are the sanctification of Qum as the holy city of the Shi’a, so privileged that it is mentioned alongside Mecca, Medina, and Kufa. Qum is painted as a second Kufa and as the sacred base of the Shi’a. It is also a premonitory statement by a descendant of the Prophet about further progeny: Faṭima. This story actively sanctions pilgrimage to Faṭima’s grave and rewards heaven for those who do so. In so doing, the author of Tārīkh-i Qum perhaps retroactively sanctions the already extant

508 Qummi, Tārīkh-i Qum, 573.

509 Ibid., 573.

510 Ibid., 573.
pious practice of visitation to Fāṭima’s tomb sanctuary in Qum. In another tradition about Qum and Fāṭima, Tārīkh-i Qum reports a hadith that “Ziyārat to Fāṭima’s grave is the equivalent to Heaven, without a doubt (ziyārat-qabr-e Fāṭime ‘alayha al-sallām, muʿādil o mawāzī o barābar-e behesht-st, bi ʾshakk).”511 The emphasis of this story is unmistakable: Qum is holy city of the Shi‘a, sanctified by Shi‘a Imams, and is the eternal resting place of Fāṭima al-Ma‘ṣūma. Qum was sacred ground from its earliest days, and it was predicted that it would be the eternal resting place of Fāṭima and a sacred enclave of the Shi‘a.

There is a strong affiliation throughout of the Ash‘aris of Qum with Kufa.512 Given that Ash‘ari Arabs settled in Qum, the tradition can be see in its historical perspective. Indeed, since many of the Ash‘ari Arabs who settled in Qum were originally from Kufa, this continuity makes perfect sense: in the early 700s, Arabs from Kufa from the Ash‘ar clan seeking refuge from persecution by the Umayyad governor al-Hajjāj chose Qum and its environs as a sanctuary.513 Ash‘ari Arab Alids found Qum as their refuge from Umayyad persecution.514

If Qum is central to Alid and later Shi‘i life and identity, then when did this association between Shi‘ism and Qum begin? Certainly by the time the original – and now lost – Arabic Tārīkh-i Qum was penned in 378/988-89, Qum was Shi‘i. Madelung catalogues the spread of Ithnā‘Asharī Shi‘ism in Qum and finds that, “by the end of the

511 Qummi, Tārīkh-i Qum, 573.
512 Ibid. See, for example, 797, 805, 811, 813, 822, 824.
513 “The town [of Qum] and its environs were chosen by a clan of Ash‘ar from Kufa as a haven of refuge from the awesome Umayyad governor al-Hajjāj.” Madelung, Religious Trends, 78-79.
second/eighth century Qom was, like Kufa, solidly Shi‘ite and, unlike Kufa, solidly Imami,\textsuperscript{515} and “Qom thus became the chief center of orthodox Imami traditionism in the third/ninth century.”\textsuperscript{516} Tārīkh-i Qum portrays Alids and Talibis, and while the text does not discuss theological concerns, it highlights incidents and narratives about the Twelver Imams and Fāṭima al-Ma‘ṣūma.

Agreeing with Madelung’s dating, Newman posits that Ithnā‘Ashari Shi‘ism was the established dominant religion in Qum by the late 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th} century. Newman argues that it was “most definitively a Shi‘i haven,” albeit a besieged one, and given the city’s socio-political elite were Imami Shi‘i they “established Qum’s reputation as a Shi‘i, and especially Imami, haven, if not the city-state, by the third/ninth century, in contrast to other cities in the region in which pockets of believers might be found.”\textsuperscript{517} The center of Shi‘i scholarship would shift in later centuries, moving from Baghdad to Najaf in the 5\textsuperscript{th}/11\textsuperscript{th} century, with al-Hilla – between Baghdad and Kufa – rising to scholarly prominent in the 6\textsuperscript{th}/12\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{518} Qum, at the time of the translation into Persian of the original Arabic Tārīkh-i Qum around 805/1402-1403, would have been a stronghold of Imami Shi‘ism, even if was not a center of scholarly output.

Talibi graves from the Umayyad period in Qum, along with Shiraz, Isfahan, and Kashan, evidence the movement of Talibis to these cities that functioned as regional Shi‘i

\textsuperscript{515} Madelung, Religious Trends, 79.
\textsuperscript{516} Madelung, Religious Trends, 81.
\textsuperscript{517} Newman, Formative Period, 38, xx.
\textsuperscript{518} Madelung, Religious Trends, 83.
centers, Qum even more so than the others.\(^{519}\) It was in Qum that “the traditions of the imams first transmitted in Kufa and elsewhere were sifted and collected.”\(^{520}\) *Mu’jam al-buldān* by Yaʿqūt (575-626/1179-1229) is an early source for the presence of Kufan Shi’i in Qum. When placing and dating the Alids and Shi’i trend in Qum, the Ash’ari Arab influence reinforced not only an Arab identity but reinforced the Alid heritage of the Ash’ari Arabs that migrated to and settled in Qum.\(^{521}\) Indeed, it was these Ash’ari Arabs – as opposed to mawālī, as was the case in Kufa – who comprised the majority and the prominent traditionists in Qum, and Shi’i works such as the *al-Usūl min al-Kariَf* by Muḥammad b. Ya’qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940-1) document the pro-Arab sentiments of some local notable traditionists.\(^{522}\) The Ash’ari tribe had an enormous physical impact on Qum in addition to its importance in the spheres of religious authority and socio-political prominence. Members of the Ash’ari clan are credited with building or refurbishing various elements of the city, including *mīdāns*, *karīz* water channels (*kārīz-hā*), water-mills (*āsiyāh-hā*), bridges (*qantara-hā*).\(^{523}\)

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521 Thus, statements such as Schimmel, who suggests that “western Iran was more open to ‘Alid-Shi’ite ideas than the center or the East. The Shi’ite movement had primarily grown in Arab lands, though it did so in the border zone between Arab and Persian culture, Iraq, where, no doubt, it assumed many features of ancient oriental religions (101),” may be placed in the broader context of the influence of Arabs from Iraq who settled in regions in Iran, such as Qum. Annemarie Schimmel, “The Ornament of the Saints: The Religious Situation in Iran in Pre-Safavid Times,” *Iranian Studies* 7, no. 1/2 (Winter – Spring 1974): 101.


From the vantage point of a traveler and geographer in the 4th/10th century and writing around 375/985, geographer Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Muqaddasi had particularly generous praise for the region of al-Jibal, to which Qum belonged, but his judgment of Qum itself was more severe. Despite considering Rayy glorious (al-Rayy al-jālī) and Isfahan, to which Qum once administratively belonged, as a precious district (al-kūra al-nafīsa Isbahan), Muqaddasi accuses the Qummis of being extremists who have neglected their mosque and communal prayers. “The people of Qum are extremist Shiʿi. They have abandoned communal assembly and they have neglected the mosque, such that Rukn al-Dawla forced them to take care of the mosque building and its needs.” Qummis, as well as others in the region, have also adopted noticeably Shiʿi names: “The most common kunya of the people of Qum is Abū Jaʿfar, and for the people of Isfahan it is Abū Muslim, and for the people of Qazvin it is Abū al-Ḥusayn.”

Muqaddasi found Qum characterized by extremism in general, the people extremist Hanbalis (ghawal hanabila) or else extremist Najjariya.

As shrine complexes, relics, burial near saints, and pious visitations to them attest, Yasin’s observation on the Late Antique Christian phenomenon that “the holy graves

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525 “Wa ahl Qum Shi‘a ghāliya, qad tarakū al-jama‘āt wa ‘attalū al-jāmi‘ ila an alzamahum Rukn al-Dawla ‘imaratuhu wa luzūmuhu.” Muqaddasi, Kitāb aḥsan al-taqāṣṭm, 395. See also Collins, Best Divisions, 351.

526 “Akthar kunya ahl Qumm Abu Ja‘far o ahl Isfahan Abu Muslim o bi-Qazvin Abu al-Ḥusayn.” Muqaddasi, Kitāb aḥsan al-taqāṣṭm, 398. See also Collins, Best Divisions, 353.

evidence of a strongly place-based sacrality”528 certainly holds true in the Muslim tradition as well. A similar process the sacralization of space and place-based sacrality functions in the Islamic world in terms of the sanctity and piety accorded to people – be they pious exemplars, ascetics, mystics, and the like – objects, such as relics, or places, such as shrines, cities, or tombs. Some locations, such as Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, hold an undeniable place of prominence in the Islamic tradition since its early development and inception. Cities such as Damascus and places in Sham are important for their ties to pre-Islamic prophets and various saints and pious exemplars. Yet other cities such as Karbala and other cities have developed significance, in this case as a site of pilgrimage for the martyrdom of the al-Husayn, son of `Alî b. Abî Ṭalîb and the grandson of the Prophet.

Qum is an interesting example of a city that has gained religious prominence for multiple reasons through the centuries. Qum was initially settled primarily by Ash’ari Arabs529, and many Sayyids settled there.530 But it was in the early 3rd/9th century that Fāṭima, the sister of the eighth Shi’i Imam al-Riḍâ, was buried in Qum, around which a shrine complex developed.

528 Ann Marie Yasin, Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult and Community (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.

529 Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 325-326; 335-336. Lambton notes that while the sources include conflicting reports on whether the conquest was by treaty or by force; see the Tārikh-i Qum; al-Baladhuri states in Futuh al-baladân that Qum was conquered by Abu Mûsa al-Ash’ârî in 23/643-4. See also Lambton, “An account of the Tarikhi Qumm,” 586-596.

530 For a convenient summary of the Alid sayyids in Qum and their account in Tārikh-i Qum, see Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 335-336. See also Lambton, “An Account of the Tarikhi Qumm,” 596. There were a significant number of Alid sayyids in Qum. In 371/981-2 there were 331 (men and children) sayyids in Ava, Qumm, Kashan, and Khwurazan was 331, each of whom was given a monthly allowance of 30 mann of bread and 10 silver dirhams.
What is particularly interesting is that, despite the importance of Qum in later centuries and the importance of the shrine complex of Fāṭima, and despite the early date of Fāṭima’s burial there in 201/816-17, it was only in the Safavid era that Shah ʿAbbās I (978-1038/1571-1629, r. 995-1037/1587-1629) particularly encouraged pilgrimage to Qum and Mashhad as alternatives to Najaf and Karbala, which were cities then under Ottoman control. Mashhad, the city in Khurasan, contains the burial sanctuary of Fāṭima’s brother and the eighth Shi'i Imam, al-Riḍā, who died in Tus in 203/818 and was buried there next to the tomb of Harūn al-Rashīd. 'Alī b. Mūsa al-Riḍā’s place of martyrdom or tomb-shrine, or mashhad, then began to refer to the town as well and not just the burial sanctuary, and today the city is known as Mashhad. By encouraging pilgrimage to Qum as the second most sacred site after Mashhad, the Safavid shahs put the weight of the ruling dynasty behind the shrine of Fāṭima in Qum. With sacred Shi'i sites in the far east of their domains at Mashhad and in the west at Qum, the Safavids could lay claim to sanctified ground and the legitimacy, prestige, and pilgrim traffic these sites would draw.

The decision to advocate ziyarāt to the shrine of Fāṭima in Qum was motivated to a significant degree by a series of factors that were not strictly religious or theological: directing pilgrimage traffic within the empire was in line with the centralizing policy of


532 Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 331.

533 More correctly, it was within the town of Nūqān, which contained the village of Sanābādh, that the caliph Harūn al-Rashīd (d. (193/809) and ‘Alī al-Riḍā b. Mūsā (d. 203/818) were buried; the site is now called Mashhad. See M. Streck, “Mashhad,” *EI2*. 
the Safavids. A decision to enrich and underscore the religious significance of Qum within both the Safavid Empire and the Islamic realms more broadly would enhance and bolster the Shi’i credentials of the Safavids. The prestige and importance accorded to Qum is then partially a product not only of political impact but also of literary influence. Like the saint who is made a saint by the community’s identification of him or her as such, it is the privileging of the city in literature as well as through popular piety and the encouragement of the Safavid shahs that later elevates the religious significance of Qum and the importance of the *ziyarat* site of Fāṭima of Qum. This elevation through the literature, popular piety, financial support, and central authority creates a type of self-affirming circle: it is a place of religious significance because various people say it is so, which then increases its religious importance.

Given Fāṭima’s relatively early incorporation into Qum’s literary self-image and the later importance of the shrine, it is clear that saints played a role in the physical and literary development of local identity and localization of religious identity. The theoretical framework about Christian saints and local identity in the Late Antique Mediterranean is applicable here. In the Christian context, local saints “served to connect local history and the local church to the wider set of Christians feasts and the broader sweep of sacred history.”

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534 Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 332.

535 For example, churches produced their own calendars, which would commemorate a particular group of saints, and “the celebration of a particular set of saints’ feasts became another means of asserting and performing local identity and solidarity.” A local calendar and identity did not only set a local community apart. Yasin, *Saints*, 251.

536 The full quote is below. By combining the local calendar with other holidays and the feasts of saints martyred in other locations, “each calendar of festivals embedded local saints within the larger liturgical cycle. The saints in turn served to connect local history and the local church to the wider set of Christians feasts and the broader sweep of sacred history.” Yasin, *Saints*, 252. See also pp. 253-256.
Localized commemoration of saints, such as Fatima, embed Qum deeper into the broader Islamic sacred geography. As Meri wrote on the power of ziyarat to connect the local and the universal for the believer, “The ziyarat is the collective conscience of Islamic society on the local and universal levels. To the reader local elements no longer remain in the local realm. They assume a new meaning as they are expounded in an Islamic framework.” Such modes of embedding and enmeshing demonstrate a movement to make the global local, a balancing act of simultaneously asserting a local articulation of Muslim identity and making the global umma a local reality.

As Yasin noted in her recent study of how churches functioned as social and ritual spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean, the sacrality associated with a saint extends far beyond his or her place of commemoration or burial. Christian tradition attests to the desire for depositio ad sanctos, or burial near tombs of saints or martyrs, because resurrection would occur first near the saints. A saint’s tomb was also believed to be the meeting point of heaven and earth; burial near the tomb moved a believer closer to salvation and a personal relationship with the saint, proximity to whom may include the saint’s protection. For Fatima of Qum, her sphere of sanctity extended beyond her burial ground in Babelan to include the city of Qum itself. Though her shrine complex was certainly the focal point of pilgrimage, pious believers sought to be buried near her, and pilgrimage traffic to Qum was particularly significant in the Safavid period.

537 Meri, “The Islamic Cult of Saints,” 44.

538 Yasin, Saints. As Yasin notes in the Christian tradition, there are “features of monuments and aspects of saint veneration that are not fully explained by the materiality of relics and the ‘placeness’ of cult. Often, for example, the inscription of saints’ names or images on church surfaces do not mark the location of relics but instead testify to votive prayers, donors’ benefactions, or liturgical celebrations (2).”

539 Yasin, Saints, 70-71, 221.
Faṭima’s burial in Qum encouraged a burial bonanza in later centuries. Faṭima’s shrine – especially after royal patronage was lavished in it – drew pilgrims and money to Qum. Burial, particularly for those buried in close proximity to the shrine of Faṭima, also brought money to Qum. Alids and ulama were drawn to Qum because of the shrine of Faṭima, because the city developed as a religious center, and in order to be buried in Qum. Indeed, the center of gravity of the city of Qum shifted and centered on what sanctuary of Faṭima, which now occupies the center of Qum. Using the records of British travelers to Persia in the 19th century, Lambton notes: “The traffic in corpses were also a source of revenue... The price of internment varied according to proximity to the shrine.”

In Qajar times, Fatḥ ‘Alī Shāh (1185-1250 /1771–1834) also known as Bābā Khān, and his grandson and successor Muḥammad Shah (1215-1264 /1808–1848), the second and third Qajar rulers, were also both buried in Qum. After Faṭima’s death, Umm Muḥammad, the daughter of Mūsā Riḍā ‘iyāt, Mūsā b. Muḥammad (Imam Jawād) b. ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍa, was buried in a grave next to that of Faṭima. Umm Muḥammad is therefore the daughter of Mūsā Riḍā ‘iyāt, who was the son of the 9th Ithnā ‘Ashari Shi‘i Imam Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Riḍa (d. 220/835), known as Muḥammad al-Tāqī or Muḥammad al-Jawād.

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540 Shimamoto, “Reflections on the Origin of Qum,” 102. “Though Bābālan, Fatemeh’s eternal resting place, was originally located at the southern part to the city away from Komīdān and Mamjān, which were the center of the city at the time, with the passage of time her tomb helped shift the gravitation of importance from the north to the south. As a result, her shrine has occupied the very center of Qum as we see it now.”


542 Qummi, Tarikh-i Qum, 570, note 2.

If the sacred body of Fāṭima sacralized Qum through her interment there, Tārīkh-i Qum also asserts sacred and prophetic origins for the physical site of Qum. Several aspects of Tārīkh-i Qum illustrate how the authors of Persian local histories employed rhetorical strategies for legitimation to articulate a spatio-communal Muslim Persian identity along the twin bases of piety and authority. Qum’s local history and its sacred etymologies should be seen as part of the dynamic of how Persian local histories attempted to make the global – the notional global Muslim umma – local by simultaneously asserting a strongly local identity while tying the city to critical moments and characters in Islamic sacred history. The traditions, such as hadith and akhbar reports, about the etymology of Qum should be read as part of a rhetorical strategy of legitimation.

Tārīkh-i Qum offers multiple etymologies for Qum, some fanciful and some more plausible. The author relates that Ahmad ibn [Muḥammad] Abī ʿAbdullāh Barqī relates in his Kitāb-i Bunyān various explanations for the etymology of Qum, including one that the translator finds most plausible, which is that Qum is a derivation shorted from the word kūma, which referred to the shelters (māvī, or māwī, which meant panāh-gah, or shelter) used by shepherds grazing their flocks in the fields near Qum. The kūma became Kum, which was then Arabized (muʿarrab) into Qum. Another etymological explanation is that it referred to a spring that was plentiful with water in a village called

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544 For the etymologies, see Qummi, Tārīkh-i Qum, 39-52. Many are based on word play.

545 Qummi, Tārīkh-i Qum, 41-42. The author of the Tārīkh-i Qum frequently cites Barqī, whose full Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Khalid ibn ʿAbd-al-Rahmān ibn Muhammad ibn ʿAlī Barqī Qummi, and he one of the important muḥaddithān and Ithnā ʿAshārī fuqaha in the 3rd/9th century, whose ancestors were from Kufa. Qummi, Tārīkh-i Qum, note on pp. 39-40.
Kūb that flowed into Qum from the spring of Kūb Rūd, or from the wādi of Kūb and Kūb Rūd was Arabized into Qum. Lambton advocated this latter theory.546

Another etymological explanation is that Qum was built by Qumsāre ibn Lahrasuf. Shimamoto summarizes several theories about the etymology of the naming of Qum: that Qum is the shortened and Arabized form of the name of Komīdān, one of the largest villages that were built by the Ashʿari Arabs who came to the area; that Qum derives from the Arabic word qamqamah, which refers to a place where water gathers, because they were was a watering place, filled with plants and birds, in the Qum area, although this theory goes against the grain of the significant information in Tārīkh-i Qum about water shortages in Qum.547

Certainly more interesting and arresting than an etymology that derives from the shepherd’s shack, however, is this story about Qum, Muhammad, and Iblīs on the night of the mīrāj. The mīrāj is a tremendously important event on which to hinge an etymology. The mīrāj is the Prophet Muḥammad’s night journey to Jerusalem (al-maṣjid al-aqṣā) and subsequent ascension to Heaven from there. It is also alluded to in Sura 17 (al-Isrāʾ) of the Qurʾān: “Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless.”548 According to Qummī, “On the night of the Prophet’s ascension (mīrāj), Iblīs the Accursed came to this place (boqʾ) on his knees (be zānu dar āmade būd) and he put

both his elbows upon his knees, and looked upon the ground. The Prophet said to Iblīs:

‘Qum, yā mal'ūna,’ which means ‘Rise, oh accursed one.’ And it is for this reason that Qum was given the name ‘Qum.’ 

In extending the *miʿraj* to include a detour overlooking Qum with Iblīs and Gabriel, Qummī extends the physical boundaries of Muhammad’s heavenly ascension beyond Mecca, Jerusalem (*al-masjid al-aqṣā*), and the heavens into the land above Qum. Savant’s argument is relevant here, which is that for the Arabs their genealogical claims to Ishmael transcended the geographical boundaries of Arabia while simultaneously sacralizing it. Qum’s sacred etymology similarly allows Qummīs to transcend physical geographic boundaries by placing Qum in a Qur’anic moment while also sacralizing Qum. Persian local histories were looking in to the central Arab narratives of the Islamic tradition. Muhammad’s heavenly ascension, which now includes him overlooking Qum with Iblīs and Gabriel, sacralizes Qum by binding it to a foundational and Qur’anic moment in history.

Another etymology traces back to Noah. A tradition, related on the authority of Abū Muqātil Sabīl Daylāmī, the *naqīb* of Rayy, which was transmitted to the author from Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad [the 10th Imam, al-Hādī], claims:

Qum is named as such because it was the place (*boq‘*) that during Noah’s flood – may God grant him salvation – was protected, and secure, and inviolable (*be-ḥimāyat būde ast, o mahfūz o maṣūn*). Qum is a section of Jerusalem (*Qum qi‘a ʾist az bayt al-muqaddas*), and during the days of the flood Noah came to Qum, and he came to the place that is today called Qum (*dar ayyām tūfan Nūh bedīn*

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549 mirfaq = āranj

550 Qummī, *Tārtkh-i Qum*, 51.

551 Savant, “Isaac as the Persians’ Ishmael,” 15.
maqām reside ast), and here he stopped here and stayed (injā muqām kard o be-istād), and called this place Qum.\(^{552}\)

The name of Qum appears to be influenced by a punning on the sounds of *maqām* (place) and *muqām* (stay). Regardless of the onomatopoetic aspect of the tradition, Qum is named Qum because the Prophet Noah named it as such.

Another tradition states that Muhammad, on the night of the *mīrāj*, asks Gabriel what dome (*gobbe*), it is that he sees in all the levels of heavens that he ascends to, and better than which he has not seen. Gabriel answers that it is Qum that the Prophet sees, a city which is filed with believers who wait for Muhammad on the day judgment (*va intidhār-e to keshand az barāye qiyāmat o hisāb*).\(^{553}\)

There is also Shi‘i tradition about the naming of Qum which claims that Qum is named as such because its inhabitants will be standing steadfast with the family of Muhammad, and they will stand upright with him, and will represent his [Muhammad’s] victory and his come to his aid (*ke ahl-e ān ba ʿāmīm-e āl-e Muḥammad ‘alayhi al-sallam jamaʿ shavand, o bā ou qāʾim o mustaqīm bāshand, o ou ra nasrat o madad nemāyand*).\(^{554}\) There is also a khutba given in Basra by ″Alī b. Abī Ṭalib in which he mentions Qum.\(^{555}\) In these examples, Qummī weaves the etymology and history of Qum deep into the fabric of Islamic revelation and history. The example of the Imam’s khutba underscores the depth of the relationship of the Shi‘i Imams with Qum.

\(^{552}\) Qummī, *Tāʿrīkh-i Qum*, 269-270.

\(^{553}\) Qummī, *Tāʿrīkh-i Qum*, 270.

\(^{554}\) Qummī, *Tāʿrīkh-i Qum*, 278.

\(^{555}\) Qummī, *Tāʿrīkh-i Qum*, 277.
These traditions about the Prophet, Iblīs, and Qum are part of a larger meta-narrative that framed the composition of these local histories. In the words of Miller, “A metanarrative is a system of thought, or a structure of thinking, that suppresses difference in order to legitimate its own vision of reality; because it makes totalizing claims to universal validity, a metanarrative suppresses or devalues discourses that are ‘other,’ that are different.”

In his study of social networks and the networks of hadith transmission, Senturk follows the work of Hayden White, Patricia Waugh, and Margaret Somers and defines metanarratives thus: “The cultural subtext that comes with the narrative, without which it is possible to interpret the narrative structure, is called metanarrative.” Senturk described the function of metanarratives this way: “Metanarrative... assigns identities to narrators, narratives, their ties, and their networks.”

In the Islamic context of the early Islamic period, these meta-narratives are framed and permeated by deeply resonant Qur’anic and biblical images, allusions, archetypes, and tropes. Thus, instead of only taking this tradition at face value, it is most productive if we see it in the context of commemorative writing that ties Qum to foundational characters and creates a pivotal moment of religious significance for the city. The aforementioned traditions were employed as rhetorical devices in service of the concerns that framed the author’s conception of place and piety. These narratives may be mythical, in the technical and not pejorative meaning of that term. I borrow and apply the non-pejorative definition for “myth” that Castelli uses in her study of the martyrdom

556 Miller, Dreams in Late Antiquity, 166.
557 Recep Senturk, Narrative Social Structure, 34.
558 Ibid., 43.
and early Christian culture making. As Stefan Leder writes on the role of fictional materials—some of which approach the level of myth—in non-fictional Arabic literature, “Fiction cannot be conceived of in opposition to reality. By measure of an intentional selection effected by the author, narratives represent realities of social life, as well as emotions and perceptions.” Myths are part of metanarratives that frame and guide history and are instrumental in forging communal identities.

We may understand the prophetic etymology of Qum on the night of the miʿraj as “an elaboration of memory.” If the sacred experience of Muḥammad’s miʿraj is a myth in the most expansive sense, then it is this “myth that generated the places which became the objects of memorialization.” The etymology of Qum is woven into the story of the miʿraj—and thereby in the broader Qurʿanic experience of revelation—and into historical memory and a highly localized identity.

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559 On the relationship role of myth and the collective imagination in terms of culture-making, “‘Myth,’ in this context, refers to narratives that promote a coherent portrait of the past and that forge links within a community among its members and between the community and its claimed past. Myth is the product of collective imagination, a compelling answer to urgent questions about foundations and identities.” Elizabeth Castelli, Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 30.

560 Stefan Leder, “Conventions of Fictional Narration in Learned Literature,” in Story-telling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature, ed. Stefan Leder (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 43. Leder continues: “It is evident, on the other hand, that the fictional text is not restricted to the description of reality, but lives on the author’s imagination. According to a distinction introduced by Wolfgang Iser—whose suggestion has found a wide approval—fictional narration unfolds within the triad of reality, fiction as an act of feigning (fingieren) and imaginary. The act of feigning, which produces a sort of imitation (‘repetition’) of reality, is at the core of fictional narration. Feigning gives a realistic shape to imagination, which is by nature not restricted to the appearances of the real. Fiction depicts reality, but it serves purposes which are not part of the reality depicted. The particular feature of fictional literature consists of the exposure of this act of feigning; the imitation of reality thus does not remain a deceptive device, but becomes an art of literary expression.”

561 Smith, To Take Place, 112. Smith discusses Christian myth and reconstructions of visits to the Holy Land through ritual experience.

562 Smith, To Take Place, 115.
This example illustrates one way in which the Persian local histories evidence a desire to articulate a spatio-communal identity. This Persian Muslim identity is articulated in terms of connections to Muḥammad and other pious individuals. These connections, as they are articulated in local histories, are not necessary blood lineages. When a Companion or member of the house of the Prophet may have visited, settled, or died in the city in question, he may have left descendants in the city, but that is not necessary to secure legitimacy. His legacy may take the form of hadith he taught, or his grave or tomb, a place where he taught or lived, such as a khāngāh or madrasa, or students who studied with him. Legacy can be transferred and transmitted through various means, including but not limited to genealogy. We may view the city itself – in its entirety and as described in the city history – as the locus of this pious legacy. The local histories identify, articulate, and commemorate these various pious legacies of the city that bring religious legitimacy and authority to these Persian cities and regions.

In the idiom of Persian local histories we should understand these assertions of connections to pious or sacred individuals as markers of legitimacy and authority that are part of the broader socio-political concerns of the pre-Mongol era. A claim that Muhammad visited the city in a dream is more than a record of a curiosity or miracle – it is an assertion of authority and legitimacy that reflects very real concerns about legitimacy and authority in Persia in the context of the broader Muslim umma at the time. Writing on collective memory, Halbwachs claims that the present milieu informs

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563 Though Donner argues that “collective memory” can only be metaphorical – since a community does not share a single mind – he does advocate the notion of “collective images” or “collective visions” of a community’s past. These “collective images” are what constitute a group’s historical self-understanding and vision of itself as a community, and Donner argues that it was not until the last third of the 1st century AH, or 66-100AH, that the early Muslims, a group who Donner thinks is more accurately understood as the
the recording of the past. This observation appropriately applies to local Persian histories: “even at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu,” and “religious memory … does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid, moreover, of recent psychological and social data, that is to say, with the present.”

The documentation of sacred etymologies and prophetic and prestigious genealogies are one manifestation of the broader phenomenon of making the global (the Muslim umma) local (and Persian) partially through appropriation of the Other. It is helpful to place the etymologies of Qum and Bukhara into a broader and trans-cultural milieu of the 12th and 13th centuries. The fact that during this era, medieval Buddhist elites in Ladakh adopting Turko-Persian dress as a self-conscious mode of self-fashioning and assertion of prestige is an example in the material culture of the objects and symbols that have migrated across cultures and are used in the service of self-representation and self-fashioning. Sacred etymologies recorded in Tārīkh-i Qum and community of Believers, had a collective sense of themselves as a community. Donner, Narratives of Islamic Origins, 139-139.


565 Flood, Objects of Translation, Chapter 2: “Cultural Cross-dressing.” In paintings in a Buddhist temple made sometime between 1150 and 1220 in Alchi, in Ladakh, located in the northwestern Himalayas, some of the royal rulers there wore the qaba, which was common in the Islamic world and was common in the Persianate and Turkic world, as well as the тирэ arm bands. The author argues that this “cultural cross-dressing” is because during the era of the paintings Ladakh was nestled between two powerful rulers – in the south, the kingdom of Kashmir, and in the west the Ghaznavid and Ghurid sultanates in Afghanistan. Flood notes: “The adoption of common modes of self-representation reflects not only their ability to render adoptees legible according to hegemonic or valorized cultural codes, but also the conferment of status that this implies. It is worth noting here that fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Arab and Persian visitors to the courts of southern India distinguished between the importance of the local rulers that they encountered based on their appearance, according higher status to those who had adopted Islamicate modes of dress (75).”
*Tarīkh-i Bukhara* demonstrate a literary counterpart to tangible modes of appropriation in material culture. The value of these stories is not in their historical accuracy. These narratives are important because they highlight the concerns – namely piety and religious authority – that were paramount at the time these texts were composed.

The effect that sacred etymologies have in their drive to connect a place, such as Qum, to a pivotal Qur’anic and prophetic moment and to collapse time between the prophetic past and the present is not a phenomenon unique to etymologies or to the Muslim tradition. It certainly resonates with the ways in which evocation of a rich communal past through narratives and visual depictions of saints lives and miracles in the Christian tradition had the goal, “particularly in the case of visual and narrative accounts of miracles... to lessen the gulf between past and present.”

From the late 800s/1400s to the early 900s/1500s onwards, Qum – religiously significant from its early days – transitioned from a seasonal capital city with political significance into a full-fledged shrine city under the Safavids, which would have lent prestige and legitimacy to the dynasty through its patronage of the city and in having such a sacred site within its territories. Qum achieved tremendous patronage from Shah Abūs in the 17th century when he made magnificent developments to the shrine of Ḥātima in his attempt to redirect pilgrimage traffic to Qum away from the Ottoman Sunni held sanctuaries in Najaf and Karbala. The Safavids based themselves in Tabriz, Qazvin and Isfahan, and as these cities developed into political seats of government, Qum became a sacred shrine city of Shi’i worship. The expansion of Ḥātima’s sanctuary and its mounting religious prestige, helped by the patronage that Shah Abūs lavished on it,

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drew both pilgrims and ulama to Qum. Safavid rulers were, in their deaths, also drawn to Qum. Safavid rulers, including Shah Ṣafī, (d.1052/1642), ʿAbbās I’s grandson and successor; Shah ʿAbbās II (r. 1052-77/1642-66) Shah Ṣafī’s son and successor; and Shah Sulaymān (d. 1105/1694), the penultimate Safavid shah, were all buried in Qum.567

Safavid centralizing policy curtailed and pre-empted the independence of Qum – which was solidly a sacred shrine city and not a locus of political strength – and Qum struggled in the post-Safavid period, with some return to prosperity during the Qajar era. There were chronic water shortages and irrigation problems in Qum. Though it had suffered these periodically for centuries, even up through the 19th century, Qum’s prestige for its shrine sanctuary became tremendous. It was later, in the late 19th century, that Qum became a dissident center and place of religious independence in the late 1800s onwards.568

**Tārīkh-i Bukhārā**

The **Tārīkh-i Bukhārā** is another local Persian city history that illustrates dual Perso-Islamic identity in its literary self-fashioning.569 One way which Narshakhī ties the city to the prophetic legacy is through prophetic hadith about the naming of Bukhara.

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567 The later history of Qum is not within the immediate scope of this dissertation, but a brief summary is in order. Lambton finds the history of Qum under the Saljuqs as “uneventful”, with both Shiʿis and Sunnis living in the predominantly Shiʿi area, and that Qum likely did not experience great damage during the Mongol and Khwarazmshah eras, although its economy likely suffered due to the destruction in other regions. The Ṣafī family in Qum was a local dynasty from the mid 1300s to the early 1400s, which had been influential from the mid-1200s. Such was the power of the independent dynasts that Mahmud b. Ṣafī (d. 791/1389 or 792/1390) even “issued coins in his own name as sultan.” In the 15th century Qum functioned as a center of the Qara Qoyunlu (who were Shiʿi) and later the Aq Qoyunlu (who were Sunni), who periodically settled there and used Qum as a seasonal capital. Lambton, “Qum: The Evolution of a Medieval City,” 328-331.


569 For a discussion of the original composition of **Tārīkh-i Bukhārā** in Arabic and its later translation into Persian, see Chap 1, pp. 7-8 and Chap 3, pp. 122-124 of this dissertation.
Narshakhī states that although the region is known by many names, Salman al-Farisi transmitted a tradition about the prophetic etymology of the city. Salman al-Farisi’s tradition is as follows:

The Prophet of God said that Gabriel told him that in the land of the East was a place called Khurasan. On the Day of the Resurrection and Final Judgement, three cities of Khurasan will be adorned with red rubies and coral, and their radiance will shine about them. Around these cities there will be many angels, and they will praise, glorify, and exalt God. These angels will bring forth these cities onto the plains in grandeur and splendor, like a bride who is brought into the house of her betrothed. In each of these cities there will be 70,000 banners and under each banner there will be 70,000 martyrs. In the entourage of each martyr will be 70,000 believers, who will be speaking Persian and receiving salvation. On the Judgment Day on every side of these cities – to the right and left, front and rear, for ten days journey – will be filled with martyrs.

The Prophet said, “Oh Gabriel, tell me the names of these cities.” Gabriel replied, “The name of one of these cities in Arabic is Qāsimīya and in Persian Yishkard. The second in Arabic is Sumrān, in Persian Samarcand. The third in Arabic is Fākhira, and in Persian Bukhārā.” The Prophet asked, “Oh Gabriel why is it called Fākhira?” Gabriel replied, “Because on the Day of the Resurrection and Final Judgement, Bukhārā shall excel all other cities in glory because of the multitude of martyrs [buried there].” The Prophet cried, “God bless the people of Fākhira and purify their hearts through the fear of God. Improve their actions and make them among the merciful of my people.” The significance of this is that from the east to the west it is attested that the people of Bukhārā are noted for their belief and purity.

Narshakhī’s inclusion of the Prophet’s claim that the inhabitants of these glorious cities, especially those of Bukhara, will be speaking Persian and receiving salvation, suggests that this tradition that would have gained particular traction in the city. In tying the city of Bukhara to the legacy of the Prophet through etymology, Narshakhī posits a powerful form of non-biological lineage and heirship to the prophet and his legacy. This

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570 I add “buried here,” since this is occurring on the Day of the Resurrection and Final Judgement, when there would be the bodily resurrection of all people. I take the 70,000 martyrs who will appear on the Resurrection in Bukhara to be 70,000 martyrs who were buried there.

571 I have added diacritics on the locations to emphasize the phonetic component of this etymology. Narshakhī, Tārtkh-i Bukhārā, 30-32; Narshakhī, The History of Bukhara, 21-22.
narrative the Prophet describing the blessedness and sanctity of Bukhara places the city into the prophetic experience and in pride of place on the map of the Islamic world.

Relevant when considering this dream, in both its proximity in geography and chronology, is the Samarqand Codex of the Qur'an that allegedly dates from the era of 'Uthmān but whose legend brings it to Samarqand in the latter half of the 15th century, which I discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of the Prophet visiting Bukhara in a dream.572

The dream narrative, coupled with this prophetic etymology, suggests that those with a vested interest in the legitimacy and prestige of Bukhara as an Islamic city – including its Samanid and other later rulers – may have felt the need to authenticate the importance of Bukhara in the Islamic empire. The 4th/10th century is also the time when Iran reached a critical point of conversion. It may be that during the 4th/10th century, when Tārīkh-i Bukhārā was composed in Arabic by Narshakhī, and during the 6th/12th century, when Abū Nasr Aḥmad al-Qubavī translated the work into Persian, the Islamic identity of Bukhara had become cemented and the issue of Islamic legitimacy had become one of importance to the city’s scholarly and political elite, its Muslim populace, its image, and literary self-representation.

This narrative evidences Narshakhī’s move to bind the city of Bukhara to the Prophet. In tying the city of Bukhara to the legacy of the Prophet through the etymology related on the authority of Salmān al-Fārisī, Narshakhī underscores the importance of Salmān al-Fārisī in Persian Islam, an issue which I have discussed in Chapter 4, and argues for a powerful form of heirship to the prophet and his legacy. As a Persian and

572 See Chapter 3 of this dissertation, pp. 126-129.
particularly notable Sahaba, Salman granted all Persians a kind of privileged access to the Prophet. This relationship of Persians to the Prophet through Salman, though not actually genealogical, formed a link and type of expansive heritage linking Persians to the Prophet.

\textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}

Iftandiyar includes various etymologies and foundation narratives in \textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}, some fantastical and some plausible. Similar in tenor to \textit{Tārīkh-i Qum}'s repeated references to explicitly non-Islamic qualities in describing the area's past\textsuperscript{573}, so too does Ibn Iftandiyar reach into the memory pool of Tabaristan's pre-Islamic heritage and reference Islamic as well as non-Islamic elements. The effect is to articulate an identity that is simultaneously deeply local and Persian and enmeshed within the Islamic narrative.

Iftandiyar includes etymologies and histories of various places within Tabaristan that are rich in pre-Islamic lore as well as Alid elements. These include the etymology of Farshwagdar, for which Ibn Iftandiyar offers several etymologies that range from ‘Living safely’ to ‘land of the mountain, plain, and sea,’ among others.\textsuperscript{574} The mythological elements are particularly apparent in the section that references Rustam, son of Zal, as the killer of Jamshid, king of Mazandaran. Ibn Iftandiyar relates that Mazandaran was in the possession of demons until the era of Jamshid, who purportedly conquered them and commanded them to transform the land to make it more habitable

\textsuperscript{573} For example, Qummi repeatedly references Zoroastrian fire-temples (\textit{āteshkade-ha}). Qummi, \textit{Tārīkh-i Qum}, 29, 104, 249-255.

\textsuperscript{574} Ibn Iftandiyar, \textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}, 56; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 14.
and hospitable. The region, allegedly, was originally called “Mūz andarūn,” meaning that the region was within the area of the Mūz mountains. In this section on Mazandaran, Ibn Isfandiyār’s emphasis is on the pre-Islamic ancient Iranian past. The emphasis on Alids, Sayyids, and the family of the Prophet and the Islamic elements of the city that will appear in later sections is absent. Far from needing to forget or elide the pre-Islamic past, Ibn Isfandiyār incorporates it into a broader narrative that ultimately leads to the region of Tabaristan being imbued with Alids and Sayyids and embedded within the Islamic narrative.

Fitting the broader pattern that exists in Persian local and regional histories, the merits and wondrous things in Tabaristan include its natural elements as well as its denizens and those who are associated with the region. In short, there are natural as well as living and cultivated faḍʿāl. The section on the virtues and marvels of Tabaristan, too, is rife with etymologies, some more appealing than convincing. Ibn Isfandiyār offers as an etymology of Tabaristan a story about how Bozorgmihr said that the region’s name is happiness (Tarab) and garden (Bustān) to which ʿAbdullāh b. Qutayba replied that the region ought to be called “Tabaristan.”

The foundation story of Sari blends mythical pre-Islamic and Islamic elements. Sari’s ancient foundation was allegedly laid by Tus, the son of Nūḍhar, during the era of the mythical Kayānid ruler Kaykhusraw (son of Siyāwush/Siyāwakhsh and the maternal

575 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān 56-58; Browne, Abridged Translation, 14-16.

576 On concepts of Persia, Persianness, and memories of the pre-Islamic and proto-Islamic past, see Savant, “Isaac as the Persians’ Ishmael.”

577 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān 76-89; Browne, Abridged Translation, 30-42.

578 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān, 79; Browne, Abridged Translation, 32-33.
grandson of the Turanian enemy Afrāsiyāb).\textsuperscript{579} Sari was host to the fugitive Burzfarrah/Farīburz, Kay Khusraw’s uncle. Its mosque was built during the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd by the Amir Yaḥya b. Yahya and was later completed by Māzyar b. Qārīn. The simultaneous emphasis on the pre-Islamic ancient Iranian past, as well as Islamic aspects of the founding of Sari, demonstrates the dual claims that Ibn Isfandiyār places on the city through his respective sections on both the region’s pre-Islamic and Islamic heritage.\textsuperscript{580}

The foundation story of Amul\textsuperscript{581} combines pre-Islamic as well as Islamic elements along with oneirocritical and etymological aspects to create an epic narrative.\textsuperscript{582} In short, King Firūz in Balkh sees a beautiful woman and tries to find this woman he saw in his dream. King Firūz has fallen in love with the woman, who turns out to be the daughter of Ashtād, one of the two Daylami brothers who had taken refuge for a crime from Daylam and settled near Amul. Through various schemes, the king is finally united with and marries the woman, who is found in Tabaristān. She marries the king and lives with him in Balkh. However, the climate of Balkh did not agree with her, so she also had built what became the city of Amul.

The story contains stock elements: the beautiful woman seen in a king’s dream, the quest to find her, a city built at her behest. While the narrative is unlikely and rather fantastical, it is not out of the ordinary for a foundation narrative. The important Islamic

\textsuperscript{579} Cl. Huart, “Kay KHusraw,” EI2.

\textsuperscript{580} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Tabaristān}, 58-59; Browne, Abridged Translation, 16-17.


\textsuperscript{582} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Tabaristān}, 71; Browne, Abridged Translation, 26. Amul in the Tabari dialect is apparently \textit{āhūsh}, meaning death, and it’s meaning in Amul is “may you never die.”
characteristic of the city – here the congregational mosque\textsuperscript{583} – is mentioned in addition to those pre-Islamic mythical ones. Ibn Isfandiyār includes specific information about the cost of the land occupied by the mosque, which stands in sharp contrast to the pre-Islamic mythical elements of this section on Amul about the king seeing a girl in a dream and then sending others to search the land to find her so that he can marry her. Ibn Isfandiyār notes that Imam Hasan b. 'Alī visited a place called Māmtīr (for which he gives another etymology), and the region’s Islamic Alid credentials are emphasized along with the pre-Islamic elements.\textsuperscript{584}

Language is another element in which localized identity is evident. In the sections on foundation narrative of Amul as well as elsewhere in Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān, there is material that shows that the Tabaris had a different dialect. Ashtād’s beautiful daughter, whom King Fīrūz saw him in dream and eventually married, explains the beauty of the women of Tabaristan in her own Tabari dialect.\textsuperscript{585}

In the section on Ruyan, as in the section on Mazandaran, the emphasis is on the pre-Islamic ancient Iranian past. Again, the emphasis on Alids, Sayyids, and the family of the Prophet and the Islamic elements of the city that appear in other sections is absent. Ruyan’s foundation story references the fratricidal narrative of the Shāhnāma about the murder of Īraj (who was bequeathed Iran by his father Ferīdūn), at the hands of his brothers Tur (who possessed Turan) and Salm (who controlled Rum). The fantastical

\textsuperscript{583} Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān, 72-73; Browne, Abridged Translation, 26-27.

\textsuperscript{584} Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān, 73; Browne, Abridged Translation, 27-28.

\textsuperscript{585} Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān, 70; Browne, Abridged Translation, 24. Other stories that attest to the language of Tabaristan are Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīḵ-i Ṭabaristān, 81, 82, 137-139; Browne, Abridged Translation, 34, 35, 87-89.
elements are striking: the resolution of a land dispute with the treacherous Afrasiyāb is solved by 'Arish shooting an arrow over the implausible distance from a village near Amul to Marv, which allows king Manūchīhr to established himself in as the ruler Tabaristan.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 59-62; Browne, Abridged Translation, 17-20.}

The wonders and virtues of Tabaristan are numerous. Taxes are light and there is plenty of good water accessible to all; the local rulers of Tabaristan (such as the Ispahbads) have been well-respected by caliphs and others, who seek their advice; famous scholars and doctors, and famous people have sought refuge in Tabaristan, and even Rustam’s son Suhrāb is said to be buried in Sari.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 81-82; Browne, Abridged Translation, 34-35.} Some of the stories about the wonders of Tabaristan are outright fantastical. The alchemists’ Philosopher’s Stone is allegedly found somewhere on the slopes of Mount Damawand. There is also a tradition on the authority of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalib that attests to Mount Damawand being the site where King Solomon imprisoned Sakhr, the jinn who stole his ring.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 82-83; Browne, Abridged Translation, 35-36.} There is a fantastical anecdote about a be-turbaned micro-cephalic hairless king called Māhiya-sar, who with his mother lived near Amul. His true identity was unknown (some thought he was a Jew, others a Zoroastrian) and whose mother was a witch. They buried treasure in the vicinity, but all attempts to recover the treasure were prevented by landslides whenever people went to try and dig it up.\footnote{Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān, 84-85; Browne, Abridged Translation, 37-39.}
Some of the ʿaḍāʾib, or marvels, sound like superstitions and oddities. There is allegedly a place where when there is a drought, people throw crushed onions, at which point it rains but the person who crushed the onions dies.\textsuperscript{590} Amongst the other marvelous, odd or unusual things is the village where people die early and do not live past 20 years old.\textsuperscript{591} There is even an alleged dragon in Tabaristan.\textsuperscript{592}

Ibn Isfandiyār closes the section on the cities of Tabaristan with a summary of those that lie beyond the Darband range.\textsuperscript{593} These include Gurgan, Rayy, Qumis, Dinajay, and Malat, and what stands out is his emphasis of their Islamic components. The 28 cities in the district of Tammisha that Ibn Isfandiyār mentions have various Islamic components, such as mosques, markets and learned men, and Ibn Isfandiyār provides a list of the cities but without the elaborate foundation stories for the individual cities. Only Gurgan is credited with a small etymology. In describing the origins, characteristics, rulers, and history of the region of Tabaristan, Ibn Isfandiyār stresses that Tabaristan is place associated with the family of the Prophet. Regional rulers and descendants of the \textit{Ahl al-Bayt} serve as custodians and guardians of the faith which, in this case, is largely Shiʿi.

Ibn Isfandiyār incorporates anecdotes about various Sufis and saints in the opening sections of his work. These anecdotes about Sufis, posthumously elevated in the literature and living tradition to the level of saints, or friends of God (awliyaʾ), fit into the

\textsuperscript{590} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}, 88; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 40.

\textsuperscript{591} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}, 88; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 40.

\textsuperscript{592} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}, 89; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 41-42.

\textsuperscript{593} Ibn Isfandiyār, \textit{Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān}, 74-75; Browne, \textit{Abridged Translation}, 28-30.
broader pattern of appealing to and mentioning not just Alids or Shiʿi Imams but more broadly religious exemplars (such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī). These include Abū Yazīd (Bāyazīd) Ṭayfūr b. Ḥātim al-Asamm (‘the deaf’), Abu Saʿīd Kharraz, Abu Ibrahim Ismāʿīl ibn Yaḥya al-Mazanī and Ibn ʿAbd al-Hakam al-Misrī, who were students (shāgārdān) of Shāfīʿī.

Ibn Isfandiyār presents miscellaneous anecdotes about the Sufis, including those about God, man’s rebelliousness, and man’s dangerous propensity to sin. Ibn Isfandiyār also includes stories, peppered with Qurʾanic quotations, about ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd al-Qays, and well as Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik Dīnār, Abū ʿAbd al-Ḥaṣmān Ziyād b. Anʿām al-Ifriqī, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Additionally, he includes an anecdote with a similar theme about a group of Khwarazmian Jews. The Khwarazmian Jews complained about their ruler, only to receive the retort from one of their own Jewish leaders that they deserved it: an unbelieving ruler was punishment for rebellion. The anecdote is clearly a polemical one against the Jews of Khwarazm, who were likely a small minority population. Nevertheless, the moral of the story is clear: the imposition of unjust rulership is God’s punishment upon a rebellious population.

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595 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 48-50; Browne, Abridged Translation, 10, although the Sufis mentioned differ somewhat from the Persian edition.

596 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 50-55; Browne, Abridged Translation, 10-13.

597 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 55; Browne, Abridged Translation, 13.

598 Bīrūnī (d. after 442/1050), the Khwaresmian scholar, notes that there were Zoroastrians and Greek Orthodox Melkite Christians in Khwarasam into the 5/11th century. On the presence of Orthodox Melkite Christians, Bosworth cites Bīrūnī’s, Āthār, 288, tr. 282-3. C.E. Bosworth, “Ḵhwārazm,” EI2.
Saints and ascetics (*awliyāʾ, oh zuhhād*) are prominent amongst the human *faḍāʾil* – some living, while the memories of others are still revered – of Tabaristān. Sufis, in the sense of *piṛs* and *mūrids*, are mentioned as popular when the text covers the 1300s, although ascetics (*zāhid, zuhhād*) were, as I have demonstrated, mentioned in the context of notables, Sayyids, and Imams. Ibn Isfandiyār’s writing ends at some point in the sections that cover the 13th century, as Ibn Isfandiyār’s portion of the work is dated to 613/1216. After this point someone else – an anonymous author who continued the text – takes over, although precisely where in the text this occurs is unclear.

Many of these friends of God (*awliyāʾ*), or saints, and ascetics have tombs in Tabaristan, and their tombs or shrines are often attributed with miraculous powers. The saints and ascetics whose tombs are in Tabaristan include the curiously violently named Shaykh Abū al-ʿAbbas Qassāb (“the Butcher”). Shakyh Abu Jaʿfar al-Hanātī’s shrine allegedly housed a Qurʾan copied by ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭalib’s son Muḥammad by a woman from the Banu Ḥanīfa, known as Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (16-81/637-700 or 701). The Qurʾan’s power was such that those who swore falsely on it died horribly within the year. Those who dare to drink wine in the quarter of Aliabad, by the Gate of Zindanakuy, are cast out of Aliabad, while the Shaykh Abu Turāb is not credited with any such power. The tomb of Qādī Hishām, who was known for his literary powers (in both Arabic and Persian), is in the quarter of Awamma-kuy and near the tomb of Shām-i-Āl-i-Muḥammad.

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At least one saint, Qutb-i-Shālusī, counted Sultan Sinjar amongst his students (Sultan Sinjar khrīqa-e ou pūshīd o be sūma ou āmad) and amongst those who visited his monastic cell. Ibn Isfandiyār transmits a story which credits Qutb-i-Shālusī with visionary powers, since he allegedly knew the moment when Sultan Sinjar’s minister Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad Bū Tawba – who Qutb-i-Shālusī pointedly refers to as Muḥammad-i-bī-Tawba (‘the Unrepentant’), and who had disliked and allegedly persecuted Qutb-i-Shālusī – dies. Qutb-i-Shālusī’s cell (sūma) apparently still existed at the time of Ibn Isfandiyār.601

Some tombs, however, are misidentified, and Ibn Isfandiyār notes that some tombs are mistaken for those of saints or ascetics or Companions. One such example is the tomb of Maṣqala b. Hubayra al-Shaybānī (who unsuccessfully invaded Tabaristan), who bought slaves – women and children from the Banu Nājiya who had reverted to Christianity, and whom ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib had subsequently fought – from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib but had been unable to fully pay his debt. Ibn Isfandiyār notes that it is located where he was killed, which is on the road between Kajū and Kandasān. The ignorant and common people (awwām al-nās) visit it as a shrine and mistake it for a tomb of one of the Sahaba.602

Ibn Isfandiyār also binds Tabaristan to the Prophet by noting the sacred relics of the Prophet of Islam, members of his family, and friends of God that are housed in Tabaristan. As Ibn Isfandiyār relates, al-Jāḥiz includes in his Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-

601 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ţabaristān, 131; Browne, Abridged Translation, 81.
602 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Ţabaristān, 157-158; Browne, Abridged Translation, 100.
Tabīʾīn a story about the last Umayyad caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, known as Marwan II (r. 127-132/744-750). During his confrontations with Abū Muslim’s army and not wanting to surrender relics of the Prophet of Islam, Marwan II ordered one of his most trusted servants to bury the staff and cloak of the Prophet ("qadīb o burda") in the sand and chop off the head of the servant’s daughter to prevent her from revealing the hiding place of the relics. Marwan II’s men also took this same servant himself captive, but the servant balked: “If you kill me, the location of the inheritance [meaning the Prophet’s staff and cloak] will remain lost.” Marwan II realized that the servant was right. The servant showed Marwan II and his men where he had hidden the Prophet’s relics. Ibn Isfandiyār records, on the basis of Abu’l-Faraj Ḥusayn b. Hindu’s Kitāb-i Amthāl-i-Muwallada, who reports on the authority of Ibn Durayd, who wrote the Kitāb-i Humayra, that Kaʾb b. Zuhayr received this mantle from the Prophet in reward for a panegyric qasīda. Muʾawiya then bought this mantle for 20,000 dirhams, which is now in the possession of the Abbasid caliphs ("in sāʾat dar dast khulafāʾ-ye BaniʿAbbas ast").

There are multiple ways in which authors of local histories attribute the success of the city – ranging from material success to salvation on the Day of Judgment – to the piety of its denizens. Local history as a form of showcasing the piety and virtues – and the consequent material bounty of the city – continues after the period under consideration here. In her study of the 15th-century history of Yazd, the Tārīkh-i Jadīd-i

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603 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 166.

604 Ibn Isfandiyār, Tārīkh-i Tabaristān, 166; Browne, Abridged Translation, 110.
Yazd by Ahmad ibn Husain ʿAlī Ḥāfizī. Miller underscores how the author considers the locals’ piety a source for the prosperity of Yazd. Tārīkh-i Jadišt-i Yazd contains characteristic markers of Persian local histories, and it focuses on the religious sites and pious inhabitants of the city. It also includes foundation stories, descriptions of the urban topography, and irrigation systems, in addition to narratives about the rulers, political events, and disasters – including famine, epidemic, flooding – that occurred in Yazd.

Miller argues that “the work must be seen as an exposition of the devoutness of the people of Yazd” and, moreover, “the ultimate source of prosperity was God and the hardworking, pious Yazdis had received his blessings.” It is the piety of the Yazdis, physically manifested in mosques and madrasas and embodied in Sufi shaykhs and holy men, that was the source of prosperity for Yazd. Therefore, patterns highlighted in this chapter about the literary self-fashioning of Persian local histories articulating a dual identity that is simultaneously deeply local and Persian and embedded within the Islamic narrative can be seen in works composed after the period of consideration for this study.

This chapter offered some examples of the nexus between various modes of piety and the subsequent authority it conferred in local histories in early Islamic Persia. The authors of Persian local histories employed various modalities of piety and literary devices in portraying the virtues of their cities. This in turn bound the city to key moments and characters in Islamic and cosmic history. By embedding the city deep into the fabric of Islamic history and its continued development, the authors of these city

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605 Ahmad ibn Husayn ibn Ṭalib, [fl. 1435-67], Tārīkh-i Jadišt-i Yazd/ Bi-kushish-I Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Ibn Sīnā, 1345 [1966]).

histories fostered a sense of local Persian Islamic identity along the twin bases of piety and authority.

Examples from the *Tārīkh-i Qum, Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, and *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān* illustrate the ways in which the authors of these Persian local histories employed historiographical and rhetorical strategies for legitimation to articulate a spatio-communal Muslim Persian identity that along the twin bases of piety and authority that was a balancing act: simultaneously Persian and local and global and Islamic. Examples from *Tārīkh-i Qum* focus on traditions about Fāṭima al-Maʿṣūma, *ziyārat* to her tomb and shrine. Sacred etymologies and foundation narratives adduced in *Tārīkh-i Qum*, in *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*, and *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān* craft and articulate identities for themselves that are simultaneously deeply local and Persian and also firmly embedded within the framework of Islamic history. These sacred etymologies compress and flatten time to connect to a pivotal Qur'anic and prophetic moment for the city.

The broader historical questions that informed this chapter included whether persistence of tribal affiliation in Arab areas – and the comparative lack of it in Iranian cities – created a disproportionate emphasis on the city as the unit of measure in Iranian local histories. The evidence from this chapter cannot conclusively answer this question. The second question as whether the resilience of tribal affiliations persisted even in cities. For Qum, the answer is yes. Arab tribal affiliation was extremely important in Qum, but not in Bukhara or Tabaristan. In Tabaristan, it is affiliation with Alids that takes on primary importance. Finally, there was the question of how did inter-tribal conflict and the organization – both administrative and physical – of the people within the city (both Arab-Arab and Arab-Persian) affected communal relations and strife in the city, and how
this situation differed in Persia compared to elsewhere. In Tārīkh-i Qum and Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan, the focus is on the dynamic between local authority and the central government and the tensions between them in terms of tax collection and political independence. Since Qum was settled by Ashʿari Arabs, the text does not highlight inter-tribal tensions but rather the tensions between the Arab settlers and the local population and the central caliphal administration. The answer to this final question will naturally differ from city to city and depend on how each urban area was settled.

Beneath the notional and idealized “ʿumma” in all its multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-racial iterations, these Persian local histories evidence an attempt to simultaneously articulate and formulate a spatio-communal Persian Muslim identity unique to them. The focus on faḍāʾil in Persian local histories and the other connections of the particular city to Muhammad and prophetic authority that the local histories assert articulate a longing, if we can call it that – or perhaps a sense – of a localized Persian-Muslim spatio-communal identity more pertinent for the lives of the authors and the denizens of the growing Persian cities than an illusory and distanced notion of the Muslim ʿumma more broadly.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

“None among my Companions dies in a land except that he will be resurrected as a leader and a light for those people on the Day of Resurrection.”\(^{607}\)

This dissertation has explored the forms and functions of dreams as well as Sahaba, Tabi’un, Sayyids, and their traditions as mechanisms of legitimation in Arabic and Persian language city and regional histories from the 4\(^{th}/10\(^{th}\) – 7\(^{th}/13\(^{th}\) centuries. It has also examined the ways in which Persian local and regional histories lay claim to prophetic authority and sanctity through foundation legends of cities, tombs of saints and pious visitations to them, the social, institutional, and literary processes at play in the attribution of sainthood, and the roles of saint veneration, shrine visitation, and the sacralization of place. This project has asked a historiographical question: what are the ways in which Persian local and regional histories assert legitimacy and privileged access to Muhammad, the prophetic experience, and a blessed role in the Islamic umma? Why do Persian local histories assert a privileged connection with the Prophet and what are the ways in which they do this? At each stage a discussion of the texts has been grounded in their appropriate social, literary, political, sectarian, institutional, and geographic contexts. Discussion of local and regional histories have been placed in the context of other literary genres that engage similar themes, including biographical material, chronicles, and dynastic histories.

\(^{607}\) al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb 45 al-manāqib, Bāb 60, hadith 4239, p. 977. See also page 1 of this dissertation for a slightly different translation of this *hadith.*
The sources for this study were local and regional histories from the 4th/10th to the 7th/13th centuries. The main Persian language local histories were *Tārīkh-Sīstān* (anonymous, 5th/11th century), *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan* by Ibn Isfandiyar (d. after 613/1217), *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* by Narshakhi (text dedicated in 332/943 or 4), *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq* by ʿAlī ibn Zayd Bayhaqī, known as Ibn Funduq (d. 1169 or 70), and *Tārīkh-i Qum* by Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Qummī (d. 1015 or 16). The Arabic language *Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus* by Ibn al-Qūṭiyah (d. 977) documented the conquest of Islamic Spain. This study has considered these texts in light of the genres of commemorative literature and the dynamics, both rhetorical and physical, of the sacralization of space in medieval Persia.

In some bases, such as *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* and *Tārīkh-i Qum*, the original Arabic composition is no longer extant and we only have a later Persian translation. In the case of *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* we have a later translation from the Arabic into Persian by Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-Qubavī in 522/1128-9, which was then abridged in 574/1178-9 by Muḥammad ibn Zufar ibn ʿUmar, who also added to the work from other texts. For *Tārīkh-i Qum* original Arabic version written in the 10th century is now lost and survives only in the form of a later Persian translation from the Arabic made in 805-6/1402-3 by Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Malik Qummī. These texts were produced by many hands, translated, and transmitted over centuries, and it is not always possible to determine where the work of one author, compiler, translator, or copyist ended and where another’s began.

The methodology of this dissertation has been consistently functionally skeptical in approaching hadith study and historical writing. The historicity of an event, claim, or chain of transmission has not been important for this study. What has been important is
that the author chose to include in his work a particular explanation, etymology, narrative, association with a Companion or pious exemplar as a noteworthy aspect central to the formation of the city’s history and identity. Dreams, traditions, and the inclusion of narratives about sacred and pious exemplars, saints, as well as members of the family of the Prophet, can be read as modes of social history that elucidates the concerns of the scholars and historians.

These texts reflect the extensive demographic and cultural shifts took place in Persia during the 4th/10th to the 7th/13th centuries extensive demographic and cultural shifts took place in Persia. Persia country became majority Muslim, the center of intellectual and political gravity within Islam moved eastward into Persia from its former basis in Arab territories, and a major revival occurred in Persian cultural and literary production. Rapidly growing cities in Iran were focal points of intellectual, religious, and cultural activity. This period is also marked by the rise of local dynasties in Khurasan, or eastern Persia, including the Sunni Tahirids (fl. 3rd/9th century), Saffarids (fl. 3rd/9th century), Shiʿi Buyids (334–447/945–1055), Samanids (204-395/819-1005), and Ghaznavids (367–583 /977-8 –1187) during an era of significant assertion of local autonomy.

The earliest texts examined in this dissertation date to the 4th/10th century, when local histories emerged and when authors began to write history not just in Arabic but also in Persian. The development of local historical writing in Persia was, up to the 4th/10th century, primarily in Arabic, after which material in the Persian language developed and achieved general acceptance in the 5th/11th century. Local Persian dynasties, including the Daylami and Kurdish dynasties, sponsored and produced historical writing in the 4th/10th century in order to legitimize their presence within the
broader sweep of Islamic history. However, not all of the texts addressed in this study were produced for the courts. There was the increasing use of Persian language in writing in the 5th/11th century, including Persian translations of works originally written in Arabic, which dates to the era of the Ghaznavids.

Dream narratives in local and regional histories were molded and presented in service of broader aims of the authors and the larger narrative of the particular local history. Dreams function in literary sources as a means by which authors coached sectarian critiques, legitimized events, people, ideas, and places, and aired the concerns of the day. Some of these dream narratives in local histories took the shape of polemical or sectarian dreams, while others were premonitory or had legitimating functions. *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan*, dream manuals, and biographical dictionaries contain polemical or sectarian dreams, and *Tārīkh Iftitāḥ al-Andalus* incorporates a premonitory dream and a dream that validates the conquest of al-Andalus. A dream adduced in *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā* has the Prophet appear in Bukhara to approve of a local pious exemplar’s reading of the Qur’an before the Prophet.

This study also highlighted miraculous learning in dreams and dream narratives in biographical dictionaries and grounded a discussion of specific examples from local histories in the broader social, political, literary, and sectarian developments during the era. This situated the role of dreams and dream interpretation in its relation to the corpus of Qur’an, *hadith*, and commentary literature. Material from the Sufi tradition about Khiḍr demonstrated similarities in the legitimating function of dreams and the role that Khiḍr plays as a legitimator in Islamic mysticism.

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The intention of an analysis on the purpose and function of dreams was to expand the use of local histories and integrate a discussion of dream narratives from local histories into a broader framework that encompasses the discourse of literary self-representation in the context of a localized identity. Dream narratives provide fecund ground for analysis when they are integrated into the mosaic framework of literatures that informs early Islamic historiography.

Sahaba, Tabi’un, Sayyids, and their traditions also function in local and regional histories as tools of legitimation. Claims of heirship or association with the Prophet are one amongst multiple literary strategies employed in local and regional histories to forge links with foundational moments and characters in history. Sahaba, Tabi’un, Sayyids, and their traditions function as legitimating narrative devices, and through them authors posit a powerful form of lineage and heirship to the Prophet by binding a city or region to foundational moments and characters in history. This literary framework of heirship and legitimacy also includes seeing the Prophet, Companions, abdāl, and pious characters in dreams, sacred etymologies involving Muḥammad, Gabriel, Iblīs, or Qur’anic moments, and narratives about the tombs of saints and other important Muslims located in the city or region.

Other related modes of literary legitimation that assert a form of Islamic heirship and authority that is non-biological or supra-biological. This contrasts with the genealogically-based prestige accorded to descendants of Sahaba, Tabi’un, notable hadith transmitters, and the descendants of the Prophet. These modes of literary legitimation include prophetic, sacred, or invented genealogies, and dual claims that assert both a Persian imperial past and an Arab-Islamic past. These are significant components of
historical memory and self-representation and should be considered in tandem with the forms of legitimation vis-à-vis Sahaba, Tabi‘un, and Sayyids and their traditions. Examples from Tārīkh-i Qum, Tārīkh-Bayhaq, and Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristan to illustrate how the author binds a city or a region to Sahaba, Tabi‘un, and Sayyids, as well as other forms of non-biological or supra-biological heirship, to amplify the city or region’s legitimacy.

Critical to the examination of mechanisms of legitimacy and authority in local and regional histories was an exploration of the nexus between various modes of piety and the subsequent authority it conferred in local histories in early Islamic Persia. The authors of Persian local histories employed various modalities of piety and literary devices in portraying the virtues of their cities; this in turn bound the city to key moments and characters in Islamic and cosmic history. By embedding the city deep into the fabric of Islamic history and its continued development, the authors of these city histories fostered a sense of local Persian Islamic identity along the twin bases of piety and authority.

These claims to prophetic authority, piety, and sanctification include foundation legends of cities; tombs of saints and pious visitations to them; the social, institutional, and literary processes at play in the attribution of sainthood; and observations about place-based sanctity, saint veneration, shrine visitation, and the sacralization of place. Narratives, etymologies, and pious individuals and places adduced in local and regional histories underscore how these texts articulated an identity simultaneously deeply local and Persian and also firmly embedded within the framework of Islamic history. Islamic legitimacy and a Persian Muslim identity clearly constituted pressing issues in Persia that framed the composition of local and regional histories. Authors employed historiographical and rhetorical strategies for legitimation to articulate a spatio-communal
Muslim Persian identity that along the twin bases of piety and authority that was a balancing act: simultaneously Persian and local and global and Islamic.

Beneath the notional and idealized “umma” in all its multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-racial iterations, these Persian local histories evidence an attempt to simultaneously articulate and formulate a spatio-communal Persian Muslim identity unique to them. The focus on fadāʿil in Persian local histories and the other connections of the particular city to Muḥammad and prophetic authority that the local histories assert articulate a longing or a sense of a localized Persian-Muslim spatio-communal identity more pertinent for the lives of the authors and the denizens of the growing Persian cities than an illusory and distanced notion of the Muslim umma more broadly. Persians did not have or make a greater or lesser claim on global Islam and legitimacy. However, these texts do evidence the dynamic of how these authors were part of a broader cultural and intellectual process of making the global – the entire Muslim umma – local and distinctly Persian.

The Persian local and regional histories emphasized different elements of identity in terms of what it meant to be Muslim and belong to a specific place. For Qum, a Perso-Muslim identity was heavily influenced by Arab tribal connections. Ashʿari Arabs settled Qum, and this connection to an Arab past became a point of prestige for the Qummis. Alid sayyids, Shiʿi Imams, and members of the Ahl al-Bayt were another dominant component of Qummi self-representation. In contrast, Tabaristan emphasized its pre-Islamic heritage of local rulers in the absence of the kind of strong Arab tribal influence seen in Qum. Identity in Tabaristan was no less localized and regionally specific than Perso-Muslim identity in Qum. However, Ibn Isfandiyār emphasized the local Alids and the descendants of regional rulers from the Sasanian era.
Bukhara, located on the far eastern band of the Islamic Empire, reached out to a more grandly mythical past. By dreaming the Prophet into Bukhara to acknowledge as legitimate the Qur’an reading of a local pious exemplar, Narshakhī reached directly to the Prophet through a dream encounter. Instead of achieving privileged access to the Prophet through his descendants, ulama, or Alids, a dream encounter brings the Prophet to Bukhara. In light of hadith that the Prophet seen in a vision is really Muḥammad, and that Satan cannot take Muḥammad’s form, the Prophet has as good as come to Bukhara. The sacred etymology for Bukhara in the form of a prophetic tradition transmitted on the authority of Salmān al-Farīsī links Bukhara to both the Prophet and one of his most prominent Companions, the Persian Salmān.

Given the broad geographical range of the cities and texts explored in this dissertation range from Bukhara in the far east, Bayhaq in Khurasan, Qum in the central region, with Tabaristan on the south of the Caspian, it may be that the very notion of Iranian cities is problematic. On what basis do we compare Bukhara, which had the pre-Islamic native ruling dynasty of Būkhār Khudāt (or Būkhārā Khudāh)609, with the pre-Islamic settlement of Qum or the collection of villages in Tabaristan on the southern shores of the Caspian? The notion of the Iranian or Persian city becomes problematic when we are confronted with the paucity of common grounds between cities and regions when we compare their specifics beyond the broadest aggregation of geographical and linguistic identity as belonging to the historical Persian Empire. A continuation of this project will consider what other models may be more nuanced or productive than considering these varied and distant regions as simply Iranian or Persian.

There are several directions for future research for which the present study has laid some groundwork. One direction of future research is to research whether and how hadith mentioned in local city histories evidence regionally differentiated thematic concerns. This current project has taken a broader look at the traditions adduced in local and regional histories about the about the city, its Sahaba, its virtues, its etymologies, and its relationship to Muḥammad and other prophets and pivotal figures in the Islamic and pre-Islamic tradition. In a future study, identifying possible thematic consistency amongst local hadith transmitters is important, because the collection of hadith was simultaneously a centripetal and centrifugal process.

A second future avenue of research related to the current project is more comparative historiographical study of other local and regional histories from the geographic peripheries of the Islamic empire. These new sources would include more Arabic language local histories from roughly the same period, such as Futūḥ Misr by Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/870). This text is from the genre of conquest literature – like Tārīkh Iftitḥal al-Andalus by Ibn al-Qūṭīyah (d. 977) – and it shares some similar characteristics with the Persian local and regional histories covered in this dissertation.

For example, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam bookends his work with hadith about the virtues of Egypt and provides an extended introduction about the region’s pre-Islamic history and merits. As the leader of the conquest of Egypt, Ṭāmr ibn al-ʿĀs is portrayed as a founding hero, as are Sahaba who came to Egypt during the conquest and bring through their being, learning, and piety Islamic legitimacy to Egypt. In Khalidi’s words, “There can be little doubt of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam’s broad intention: to place Egypt firmly on the religious map of Islam. Conquered by distinguished Companions of the Prophet, the
country still retained many of the mosques, palaces, and other public works that are their memorial.\textsuperscript{610} The work is bookended by traditions of the Prophet, Companions and early Egyptians transmitters about the virtues of Egypt. This is resonant with the \textit{faḍā'il} sections in Persian histories that frame discussions of the conquest, settlement, and residents of the region in similar terms. \textit{Futūḥ Misr} also ends with hadiths arranged by transmitters (\textit{musnad}) who settled in Misr.

Andalus is also another future potential site of inquiry. The same Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam penned \textit{Futūḥ Afrīqiyā wa-al-Andalus}. Working on al-Andalus, Maribel Fierro has analyzed how genealogical lore was used by Arabs, Berbers and the native population of the Iberian Peninsula to assert positions of power. Particularly notable in Fierro’s study how non-Arabs converts were integrated into Arab genealogies through the \textit{nisba} of al-Ansārī during the 4\textsuperscript{th}/10\textsuperscript{th} century, and how there was such a profusion of Muslims with that \textit{nisba} in al-Andalus.\textsuperscript{611} By focusing attention on contemporary works – though they were written in different places under different circumstances – along the peripheries of the Islamic empire in Egypt, Persia, and Andalus, a future study could investigate whether these histories of the same or similar genre shared characteristics and, if so, what they were and what the forces may have been that shaped these similar characteristics.

\textit{Tārīkh Ifītāḥ al-Andalus} by Ibn al-Qūṭīyah (d. 977) covers the Islamic conquest of the region, and although it does not share the focus in format and content on hadith like \textit{Futūḥ Misr}, it does use dreams about Muhammad as a narrative device. One dream confers validity on the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus by Tāriq ibn Zīyād, while another

\textsuperscript{610} Tarif Khalidi, \textit{Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 66.

furthers the structure of the narrative by providing an explanation for the loss of Seville.

It will be productive to explore whether the histories written, as it were, on the geographic margins of the Islamic empire share characteristics and, if so, what they are and why they share these characteristics.

Anatolia will be another region to look to flesh out a comparative historiographical picture, since the process of Islamization occurred in Anatolia roughly 500 years after it did in Iran. Anatolia was ruled, amongst others, by the Persian Achaemenids, Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, and the Seljuk Turks before the Ottomans gained full and indisputable control of the region in the 15th century and Anatolia was subsequently Islamized. Future work will test in Anatolia the hypothesis about the differences the character of Arab and Persian cities. This hypothesis suggests that the ancientness of the Arab cities’ coupled with their sizeable minority religious populations – such as Christians in Damascus and Cairo and Jews in Baghdad – meant that, in comparison, the newer, smaller, the character of Iranian cities with very small Zoroastrian and Jewish communities made them, in a sense, more Muslim. Being neither Arab nor Persian and forming a physical as well as metaphorical bridge between Central Europe and Western Asia, it will be particularly useful to explore the character of the city in Anatolia.

One hypothesis to test in a future study if whether these tendencies so clearly seen in the Persian local histories, which articulate a spatio-communal identity centered on the twinned virtues of piety and religious authority, are also seen in Egyptian, Andalusian, and Anatolian texts because it is part of the dynamic of cities on the physical peripheries
of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates negotiating their relationships with the physical center.

A third line of inquiry is to explore material about Khiḍr and city histories. This would consider whether material about Khiḍr entered dream narratives through the avenue of Sufism. In other words, did Khiḍr gain currency in dream narratives as a function of the development and proliferation of the mystical tradition? Khiḍr is an initiator onto the Sufi path, and Khiḍr appears in dreams and visions in a tradition in which dreams and visions play an important role. As Trimingham observed early on, “Visions of the Prophet and al-Khadir were the decisive point in the authorization of an illuminate to strike out along his own way. They were a convenient way of obtaining permission from long-dead Sufis to teach their doctrines and awrād, thus leading some people to assume the continuity of line from al-Junaid or another early Sufi.”612 This study would consider whether material about Khiḍr developed and spread in mystical literature and from there find its way into local and regional histories, or whether the development and incorporation of Khiḍr early and permeated multiple genre roughly simultaneously.

Additionally, this would also consider the relationship between Khiḍr and messianic notions in city histories. As the tradition about the Day of Resurrection transmitted by Salman al-Fārisi adduced in Tārīkh-i Bukhārā demonstrates, city histories can have a messianic aspect. Khiḍr is also a messianic figure. Thus, in their messianic aspects, both Khiḍr and city histories resonate particularly well with Shi‘i notions of Mahdi and eschatological ideas. This line of inquiry would explore whether and how

612 Trimingham, Sufi Orders, 190.
Khiḍr functions a trope and vehicle for Shi‘i ideas of the Mahdi and messianic beliefs in city histories.

A fourth direction is to look at later local and regional histories and to determine whether the patterns that emerge in writing from the 4th/10th – 7th/13th century continue in later writing, or whether they change and, if so, when they do. This would explore whether the focus on dreams – including those with pious local exemplars, Muḥammad, and Khiḍr – a focus on Sahaba, Tabi‘un, saints, their traditions, and a strong focus on the city as a locus of sacrality and legitimation continue in later centers as the genres of local and regional historical writing further developed.

Other issues to consider include whether different modes of piety and legitimation gained traction in different places at different times. For example, does citing Muḥammad and his Companions in earlier texts cede to stories about Khiḍr, ulama, or other holy men who have some sort of connection with the Prophet in later generations? In other words, is it more efficacious for the author to emphasize one type of Prophetic legacy (saints and other prophets) over another (ulama, Sahaba, Tabi‘un) in different times and places and, if so, why? This question also considers whether certain elements – such as dreams and visions including those of Khiḍr and Muḥammad – gained currency through the popularization of Sufism or whether this phenomenon become a common mode of legitimation independent of the popularization of Sufism and affiliated institutions.

Also important is the partisan/ta‘ifa affiliation of the author, if it is known, and whether and how that affected his composition of history. It is worth considering if there are examples of Shi‘i writers focusing on ‘Alī instead of Muḥammad, or whether this
phenomenon was more common in Persia. A related consideration is whether the author or his sources have particular interest in rehabilitating or reinforcing a particular character or transmitter’s image. Did the author, for example, cite hadith himself or include in his book many hadith on the authority of a particular transmitter? Writing on classical Arabic biographical literature, Cooperson offers useful observations about the rehabilitated images of certain transmitters with the inclusion of stories by later scholars who transmitted them to bolster the credentials of those people on whose authority they transmitted hadith.613

At this stage it is at least clear that the focus on dream narratives with pious local exemplars, Muhammad, and Khidr, a focus on Sahaba, Tabi’un, saints, and their traditions, and a strong focus on the city as a locus of sacrality and legitimation are examples of authors weaving together myth and history in the service of pietistic belief expressed in a tradition of the Prophet: “None among my Companions dies in a land except that he will be resurrected as a leader and a light for those people on the Day of Resurrection.”614

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613 Cooperson offers an example: “Yet both accounts must be evaluated in light of Sulayman’s evident preoccupation with acquitting himself of the suspicion that attached to judges, and with his awkward position as a Hadith-scholar drawn into the orbit of a heretical caliph. Whether Sulayman circulated the exculpatory reports in his own defense is unclear. But later Sunni scholars would have had an interest in establishing his orthodoxy: many of the most prominent, including Ibn Hanbal, Abu Zur’a, and al-Bukhari, recited Hadith on his authority.” Cooperson, Classical Arabic Biography, 56-57.

614 al-Tirmidhi (d. 892), Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Kitâb 45 al-manâqib, Bab 60, hadith 4239, p. 977.
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Appendix of hadith cited in the dissertation


Page in dissertation: 1, 19-20, 253, 266

English translation: “None among my Companions dies in a land except that he will be resurrected as a leader and a light for those people on the Day of Resurrection.”

Hadith:

ما من أحدهم من أصحابي يموت إلا مزيداً فانداً ونوراً لهما يوم القيامة


Page in dissertation: 74, 130

English translation: “Whoever sees me in sleep has seen me, for Satan cannot appear in my form, and the dream of the believer is 1/46th part of prophecy.”

Hadith:

مَن رأى في النَّارِ فَقَدْ رأى الشَّيْطَانُ لَأ يَتَخَيلَ بِهِ وَرْؤُيَاهُ الْمُؤْمِنُ جَزَءٌ مِّن سِنَةٍ وَأَرْبَعِينَ جَزَءًا مِّن النُّوبَةِ

Page in dissertation: 111

English translation: The Prophet said: “Nothing remains of prophecy except mubashshirāt [good tidings],” and when asked “what are al-mubashshirāt?” he answered “al-mubashshirāt are good dreams” (“Lam yabqa min al-nubūwwa illa al-mubashshirāt, qālū ‘wa mā al-mubashshirat?’ qāla al-ruʿyā al-ṣāliha.”

Hadith:

تفسير: يَقُولُ لَمْ يَقِيلَ مِنَ الْبِنُوَّةِ إِلَّا الْمُبِشَّرَاتُ قَالَوا وَمَا الْمُبِشَّرَاتُ قَالَ الْرُّوُيَّةُ الصَّالِحَةٌ


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English translation: Tirmīḏī includes variations of this tradition with different isnads, some of which cite dreams as a different part of prophecy including: an indeterminate part of prophecy (juʿīn min ajzāʾ) and 1/40 part of prophecy.

Hadith:

تفسير: إِنِّ الرُّسُالَةَ وَالْبِنُوَّةَ قَدْ أَنْقَطَعَتْ فَلاَ رَسُولُ بَعْدَيْهِ وَلَا بَيِّنَى قَالَ فَنَشْقَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَقَالَ الْمُبِشَّرَاتُ قَالَوا يَا رَسُولُ الْلَّهِ وَمَا الْمُبِشَّرَاتُ قَالَ رَوْيَا الْمُسْلِمُ وَهُوَ جَزَءٌ مِّنْ أَجْرٍ اْنَّ النِّبَوَّةِ

تفسير: رُوُيَّاً المُؤْمِنِينَ جَزْءٌ مِّنَ أَرْبَعَيْنِ جُزِّيَّةٍ مِّنَ الْبِنُوَّةِ
Hadith:

إنّا اقترب الزمان لم تَكَ روَى المؤمن تَكِّرَب وأصدقهم روَى أصدقهم حديثا وروى المسلم جزء من سنة وأربعين جزء من النبوة والرويا ثلاثة فألذوه الصالحة بشرى من الله والرويا مِن تَحيِين الشيطان والرويا مَا يحدث بها الرجل نفسه فإذا رأى أحدكم ما يكره قلبه ولتفل ولا يحدث بها الناس قال وأحب القيِّد في النوم وأكره القيِّد تاب في الدين

Citation: Tirmidhi (d. 892), Sunan al-Tirmidhi, vol. 2, Kitab 30 al-ru’yâ, Bab 1, hadith 2439, p. 585.
Page in dissertation: 112-113

English translation: These are “al-ru’yâ al-sâliha,” which are “bushra,” or good tidings or good news from God indicated in the Qur’an – “al-ladhiňa âmanû wa kânu yattaqwana, lahun al-bushra fit al-âhâyat al-dunya wa fit al-âkhirat” in Sura Yûnus, or Sura 10:63-64; bad dreams which sadden the dreamer are from Satan, “al-ru’yâ min ta’hzîn al-Shai’tân”; and the third type of dream is what man’s own mind suggests to himself, “al-ru’yâ mimmâ yu’hadithu biha al-rajul nafsahu.

Hadith:

Citation: al-Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, Kitab 92 al-Ta’bir, Bab 10, hadith 7079, pp. 1415.
Page in dissertation: 130

English translation: “Who sees me in a dream sees me in waking life, because Satan does not take my appearance (“Man râ’ni fî al-manâm fa-sayarâ’ni fî al-yaqadha, wa lâ yatamaththu al-Shai’tân bi.”

Hadith:

من رأى في النَّوم فسأَرَأى في اليقظة ولا يَتَمَّكَّل الشَّيْطَانُ بِهٍ
Citation: al-Bukhari, Ṣahīḥ Bukhariṭ, Kitāb 92 al-taʾbīr, Bāb 10. hadith 7080, p. 1415. For example, “Mān rāʾi ʾī fī al-maḥām fā-qad rāʾi ʾī, fa-inna al-Shaṭṭān lā yatakhayyalu bī wa ruʿyā al-mūʾīn juzʾ min sītta wa arbaʿīn juzʾ an min al-nubuwwa – “Whoever sees me in sleep has seen me, for Satan cannot appear in my form, and the dream of the believer is 1/46 part of prophecy.”

Page in dissertation: 130

English translation: Bukhari includes in his Ṣahīḥ other variations of this tradition, some of which include elements about dreams being 1/46th of prophecy.

Hadith:

من رأى في النَّوم فقد رأى فإن الشيطان لا يتخلَّي بي ورؤى المؤمن جزء من سنته وأربعين جزءًا من النبوة

Citation: For example, see Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī (ca. 821-875) Ṣahīḥ Muslim/Abī al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Nīsābūrī, 2 vols. (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Jamʿīyat al-Māknaz al-Islāmī, 2000), vol. 2, Kitāb 43 al-ruʿyā, Bāb 1, hadith 6034 p. 976.

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English translation: Canonical Sunni collections also include prophetic hadith which state that, if one has a bad dream, one should spit three times to the left.

Hadith:

يَقُولُ الرؤْيَا مِنِ اللَّهِ وَالحْلَمُ مِنِ الشِّيْطَانِ فَإِذَا حَلَّمَ أحَدُكُمْ حَلَّمًا يَكْرِهُهُ فَلْيَنْبِهِ عَنْ يَسَارِهِ كَلَا وَلَيْتَعْفَدُ الْحَلَّمُ مِنِ شَرِّهِ فَإِنَّهَا لِنَبِيَّ نَضْرِه

Page in dissertation: 131

English translation: There are many traditions in the canonical hadith collections that give a firm warning against lying, on the pain of the impossible task of having to tie a knot between two grains of barley at the end of times on the Day of the Resurrection (“man tahallama kādhīban kallafa yaum al-qiyāmat an yāʾqid baina shaʿbīna wa-lān yāʾqid bainahumā”).

Hadith:

مَنْ تَحَلَّمَ كَانَ بِكَلِفَةِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَنْ يَعْقِدَ بَيْنَ شَعْرَتِيْنِ وَلَنْ يَعْقِدَ بَيْنَهُمَا

Citation: al-Bukhārī, Sahīh Bukhārī, vol. 3, Kitāb 92 al-ta'īb, Bāb 45, hadith 7128, p. 1423-1424.

Page in dissertation: 131

English translation: Bukhārī, for example, includes a similar hadith on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbas, that whoever lies about a dream – “man tahallama bi-ḥulm lam yarahu” – will be punished with the same impossible task to tie a knot between two grains of barley (“kallafa an yaqid baina shaʿratayn”).

Hadith:

مَنْ تَحَلَّمَ بِحَلَمِ لَمْ يَرْهَ كَلِفَةٌ أَنْ يَعْقِدَ بَيْنَ شَعْرَتِيْنِ وَلَنْ يَعْقِدَ بَيْنَهُمَا

أَذْنَهُ الَّذِيْنَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ صَوْرٌ صَوْرَةٌ عَلَبٌ وَكَلِفَةٌ أَنْ يَنْفَعُ فِيهِ وَلَيْسَ بِيَافِعِ
English translation: More explicit prophetic hadith warm against lying about the Prophet and affirm that Muḥammad seen in a dream must truly be Muḥammad, for Satan cannot take his form. Such a hadith transmitted on the authority of Abu Hurayra from the Prophet states, “whoever tells a lie against me intentionally, then let him occupy his seat in Hell-Fire.

Hadith:

َتَسْمَوْا بَاسْمَى وَلَا تَكْتُنَّوَا يَكْتِبْنَى وَمَنْ رَأَى فِي الْمَنَامَ فَعَدًّا رَأَى فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَا يَتَمَثَّلُ فِي صُورَتِي وَمَنْ كَذَّبَ عَلَىٰ مَتَعَدًّا فَلَبِينَوَا مَعْدَةً مِّنَ النَّارِ

English translation: A refrain that emerges from canonical hadith about dreams is that bad dreams are caused by Satan, and one should not share these dreams. In a hadith related in Ibn Majah’s Sunan, a man approaches the Prophet to tell him about a bad dream he had. The Prophet responds by saying that if one has a bad dream it is caused by Satan toy ing with him, and that he should therefore not tell anyone about it: “idha la’iba al-Shaiṭān bi-aḥadikum fī manāmihi fa-lā yuhaddithunna bihi al-nas.”

Hadith:

رَجُلٌ وَهُوَ يُخْطُبُ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ رَأَيْتِ الْبَارِحَةَ فِي مَا يَرُى الْشَّيْطَانُ كَانَ عَنْقَيَ ضَمْرَتِي وَسُقُطَ رَأْسِي فَانْبَعَتْ فَأَخْتَحَتْ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه إِذَا أَلْبَى الْشَّيْطَانُ بَيْحَدَكَمْ فِي مَنَامِهِ فَلَا يَفْخُرُ بِهِ النَّاسَ
Citation: Muslim, Ṣahīḥ Muslim, Kitāb 43 al-ruʿyā, Bāb 3, p. 980.

Page in dissertation: 133

English translation: Muslim’s Ṣahīḥ includes various hadith in which the Prophet states that one should not tell others of bad dreams, which are the caused by Satan.

Hadith:

باب: لا يُخبرُ بِبَلَاءِ الشَّيْطَانِ

For example, hadith 6062, page 980:

لاَ تَخَبِّرْ بِبَلَاءِ الشَّيْطَانِ بِكَ فِي النَّامِ