

The Maghreb and al-Andalus at 250 H: Rulers, Scholars and Their Works

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In the *Annals de Saint Gall*, under the year 725, mention is made of the Saracens having crossed the Pyrenees, but there is no mention of their landing in the Iberian Peninsula in 711, a year that Spanish schoolchildren today learn by heart in the History of Spain class.¹ This is one of those cases in which a date that is significant for some people at a certain time, means nothing to others during other periods.

What about the year 250/864–865? Do the main literary sources related to the Islamic West that we have for that period—chronicles and biographical dictionaries—single that year out for any reason? Could this date serve to mark influential trends then taking shape in societies that were immersed in the process of Islamization, especially in the urban centres? An eighth/fourteenth-century annalistic chronicle, the *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus*, does not mention this year at all.² An earlier and more extensive chronicle, Ibn ‘Idhārī’s *al-Bayan al-mughrib*, on the other hand, refers to it as the year in which a number of noteworthy events took place.³

In Aghlabid Ifrīqiya, Abū al-Gharānīq Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Aghlab (r. 250–261/863–875) became the new emir in this year.⁴ He was known as Abū al-Gharānīq because of his passion for hunting cranes (Ar. *gharānīq*) which led him to incur extravagant expenses in pursuit of that pas-

1 For the *Annals de Saint Gall* see Marilyn Robinson Waldman, “The Otherwise Unnoteworthy Year 711: A Reply to Hayden White,” *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 4 (1981): 784–792. For the teaching of Medieval history in Spain see Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, C. Barquero Goñi, M.A. Carmona Ruiz, F. Luis Corral, M. Rius Pinés and J.M. Rodríguez García, *La Historia Medieval en la enseñanza secundaria obligatoria: un balance* (Madrid: UNED, 2007).

2 Luis Molina, trans. and ed., *Una descripción anónima de al-Andalus*, 2 vols. (Madrid: CSIC, 1983). On the debate about its possible autor, see Luis Molina, “Sobre el autor del *Dīkr bilād al-Andalus*,” *Al-Qanṭara* 36 (2015): 259–272.

3 Ibn ‘Idhārī (d. 695/1295), *Kitāb al-Bayān al-mughrib fī akhbār mulūk al-Andalus wa-l-Maghrib*, eds. Georges Séraphin Colin and Evariste Lévi-Provençal (Leiden: Brill, 1948–1951), 1:114, 2:98.

4 Mohamed Talbi, *L’emirat aghlabide: 184–296, 800–909. Histoire politique* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1966), 260–270.

sion, so that when he died the Public Treasury was empty. Under his successor Ibrāhīm II (r. 261–289/875–902), Aghlabid decay and the inability eventually to withstand the Ismaili threat would lead to the Fatimids' establishing their rule in Ifrīqiya in the year 297/909. If Abū al-Gharānīq's memory was associated with an unrestrained passion for hunting, Ibrāhīm II will be remembered for his unrestrained violence, and as a sadistic tyrant whose cruelty spared no member of his family.⁵ These representations have much to do with the chroniclers' writing after the end of the dynasty and with some of them having a vested interest in making the Aghlabids responsible for their own fall because of their sins: the message conveyed is that already by Abū al-Gharānīq's emirate the dynasty was doomed.⁶

Moving from Ifrīqiya to Sicily: during the year 250AH fighting continued between Aghlabid and Byzantine armies, a confrontation that had started in 212/827 with the Muslim invasion of the island, leading eventually to Muslim supremacy.⁷ On his part, the Ibādī Rustumid ruler, Abū Sa'īd Aflah b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (r. 208–258/824–872), was able to maintain a long period of peaceful control over the tribes surrounding his capital Tahert (in today's Algeria).⁸ The adherence of local tribes to Ibādism had initially been an expression of political opposition, when the Berbers⁹ had revolted against Arab rule because of persistent enslavement and economic deprivation.¹⁰

5 Annliese Nef, "Violence and the Prince: The Case of the Aghlabid Amīr Ibrāhīm II (261–289/875–902)," in *Public Violence in Islamic Societies: Power, Discipline, and the Construction of the Public Sphere, 7th–19th Centuries CE*, eds. Maribel Fierro and Christian Lange (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 217–237; eadem, "Instruments de la légitimation politique et légitimité religieuse dans l'Ifrīqiya de la fin du IX^e siècle: l'exemple d'Ibrāhīm II (875–902)," in *La légitimation du pouvoir au Maghreb médiéval: de l'orientalisation à l'émancipation politique*, eds. Annliese Nef and Elise Voguet (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), 175–192.

6 On the association of the last members of a dynasty with terror and cruelty see Maribel Fierro, "Terror y cambio dinástico en el Occidente islámico medieval," in *Por política, terror social: Reunión Científica XV Curs d'Estiu Comtat d'Urgell celebrat a Balaguer els dies 30 de Juny i 1 i 2 Juliol de 2010 sota la direcció de Flocel Sabaté i Maite Pedrol* (Lleida, Spain: Pagès Editors, 2013), 93–114.

7 Annliese Nef and Vivienne Prigent, "Guerroyer pour la Sicile (827–902)," in *La Sicilia del IX secolo tra Bizantini e musulmani*, eds. Simona Modeo, Marina Congiu and Luigi Santagati (Caltanissetta-Rome: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 2013), 13–40.

8 Ulrich Rebstock, *Die Ibaditen im Magrib (2–8, 4–10 Jh): die Geschichte einer Berberbewegung im Gewand des Islam* (Berlin: Klaus Schwartz Verlag, 1983); Brahim Zerouki, *L'imamat de Tahert* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1987); Abdelkader El-Ghali, *Les États kharidjites au Maghreb. II^e–IV^e s. / VIII^e–X^e s.* (Tunis: Centre de Publication Universitaire, 2003).

9 On the use of this term to refer to the local inhabitants of North Africa see Ramzi Rouighi, "The Andalusī Origins of the Berbers," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2010): 93–108; idem, "The Berbers of the Arabs," *Studia Islamica new series* 1 (2011): 67–101.

10 Elizabeth Savage, *A Gateway to Hell, a Gateway to Paradise: The North African Response*

In al-Andalus, the Cordoban Umayyad emir Muḥammad (r. 238–273/852–886) had coins minted in his name for the same year.¹¹ An enclosure for the ruler, the *maqṣūra*, was also built in the Friday Mosque of Cordoba and many buildings were added to the royal palace in 250 AH. Muḥammad's father 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 206–238/822–852) had initiated the effort to give the dynasty pomp and majesty based on Abbasid models.¹² The Cordoban Umayyads thus continued their progressive distancing from their subjects, intent especially on establishing a separation between themselves and the rest of the Arabs—those who had conquered the Peninsula and considered themselves entitled to rule—, while at the same time the ranks of the Umayyad administration were being opened to converts. No military expedition was organized that year to the frontier regions to fight the Christians, in spite of the fact that an annual expedition was normal practice.¹³ In 250 AH no expedition was needed, however, because prior to that year the Muslims had obtained a great victory against the king of Asturias Ordoño I (r. 850–866): the area known as Old Castile had been attacked and nineteen counts killed. Contrary to the Aghlabids, Umayyad power and legitimacy appeared to be strengthening and this strength would paradoxically cause much internal turmoil in the years to come, a turmoil that Muḥammad's great-grandson 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (r. 300–350/912–961) would eventually manage to quell, an accomplishment that contributed to legitimizing his claim to the caliphate (in 316/929).

Moving from the chronicles to biographical dictionaries: in the year 250 AH two scholars died. Their biographies are representative of larger trends. One of them was an Andalusī—a client (*min al-mawālī*)—called 'Abd Allāh b. Jābir (var. Ḥātim) who like most Andalusīs travelling to the East at that time¹⁴ stopped first in Qayrawān, where the famous mosque had been enlarged and

to the Arab Conquest (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997); Michael Brett, "The Islamisation of Egypt and North Africa," in *The First Annual Levtzion Lecture* (Jerusalem: The Nehemia Levtzion Center for Islamic Studies, 2006).

- 11 The coins can be viewed at <http://www.andalustonegawa.50g.com/MuhammadI.htm> (accessed 10 October 2017), with references to Antonio Vives y Escudero, *Monedas de las dinastías arábigo-españolas* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1893), repr. Fundación Histórica Tavera (1998); George Carpenter Miles, *The Coinage of the Umayyads of Spain*, 2 vols. (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1960).
- 12 Eduardo Manzano, "Byzantium and al-Andalus in the Ninth Century," in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*, ed. Leslie Brubaker (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998), 223.
- 13 Maribel Fierro and Luis Molina, "Some Notes on *dār al-ḥarb* in Early al-Andalus," in *Dār al-Islām/dār al-ḥarb: Territories, People, Identities*, eds. Giovanna Calasso and Giuliano Lancioni (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 205–234.
- 14 In his case to Egypt where he met the famous scholar 'Abd Allāh b. Wahb (d. 197/813), one of the most influential students of the Medinan jurist Mālik b. Anas.

embellished in 248/862–863 and where a *maḡṣūra* had also been erected by the Aghlabids. In Qayrawān, those travelling Andalusīs studied with followers of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795)¹⁵ and some also spent some time in the *ribāṭs* along the coast performing devotional practices combined with fighting if they came under Byzantine attack.¹⁶ ‘Abd Allāh b. Jābir died in one of those *ribāṭs*, that of Sūsa.¹⁷ The other figure is also an Andalusī, a scholar of greater relevance than the former. Yaḥyā b. Ḥakam al-Bakrī al-Ghazāl (156–250/772–864) was a famous poet who is said to have travelled to Constantinople in an embassy sent by the emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II to the Byzantine emperor. There, according to the narrative of his *riḥla* that must have become quite popular and delighted his fellow Cordobans, he flirted with the empress Theodora, heroically resisted the temptation of drinking wine, and devised a trick in order to avoid prostrating himself in front of the emperor. Al-Ghazāl also visited Baghdad and during his stay in the Abbasid capital he tricked the Baghdadis who derided Andalusī achievements in poetry by reciting verses of his own that he successfully passed off as having been penned by Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 199/814).¹⁸ In one of his poems, he stated that the East was envious of the West,¹⁹ an early indication of what was to become a popular theme in Andalusī literature which can be formulated, in various variations, as: “we Andalusīs live in a land close to Paradise, and furthermore it has been promised that truth will reside there till the arrival of the Hour; Easterners are not willing to acknowledge how great and good we are; had we been born in the East, everybody would be singing our praise.”²⁰

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- 15 Manuela Marín, “Ifriqiya et al-Andalus: à propos de la transmission des sciences islamiques aux premiers siècles de l’Islam,” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 40 (1985): 45–53.
- 16 Manuela Marín, “La vida en los *ribāṭ* de Ifriqiya,” in *La rābīta califal de las dunas de Guardamar*, ed. Rafael Azuar Ruiz (Alicante: Diputación Provincial de Alicante, 1989), 199–206; Nelly Amri, “*Ribāṭ* et idéal de sainteté à Kairouan et sur le littoral ifriqiyen du IIe/VIIIe au Ixe/Xe siècle d’après le *Riḡāḍ al-nufūs* d’al-Mālikī,” in *Islamisation et arabisation de l’Occident musulman médiéval (VIIe–XIe siècle)*, eds. Dominique Valérian et al. (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2011), 331–368.
- 17 On this scholar, see *Prosopografía de los ulemas de al-Andalus (PUA)*, directed by M.L. Avila and L. Molina, ID 5054: <http://www.eea.csic.es/pua/> (accessed 6 December 2016).
- 18 Muhsin Ismail Muhammad, “Al-ṣūra al-šīriyya fi šīr Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam al-Gazāl,” *Anaquel de Estudios Arabes* 14 (2003): 137–154.
- 19 Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076), *Al-sifr al-thānī min Kitāb al-Muḡtabas [al-Muḡtabas II-1]*, ed. Maḥmūd ‘Alī Makki (Riyad: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal lil-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyah, 2003), Spanish trans. Maḥmūd ‘Alī Makki and Federico Corriente, *Crónica de los emires Alhakam I y ‘Abdarrahman II entre los años 796 y 847 [Almuḡtabas II-1]* (Zaragoza: Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo, 2001), 241.
- 20 Teresa Garulo, “La referencia inevitable: al-Andalus y Oriente en la conciencia literaria de los andalusíes,” in *Al-Andalus y Oriente Medio: pasado y presente de una herencia común*,

Back in al-Andalus, al-Ghazāl introduced the cultivation of a new type of fig and the technique of producing silk; he contributed to spreading the ‘modern’ poetry of the Iraqis; he wrote a poem in *rajaz* verse (*urjūza*) on the conquest of al-Andalus; made successful astrological predictions; tried unsuccessfully to imitate a Qur’ānic sura; and ended up confessing the uncreated character of the Sacred Book repenting his former Mu‘tazilī tendencies. A courtier, a poet, and an astrologer who liked to have fun, al-Ghazāl was extremely critical of the *fuqahā’* whose social power was at that time increasing and whom he attacked in his verses.²¹

Another Andalusī scholar, called ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan (d. 335/946–947), was born in the year 250 H. He was the client of an Arab living on the upper frontier of al-Andalus and was known as Ibn al-Sindī because his grandfather’s head resembled a watermelon. In the fights that pitted the Arabized and Islamized local people (*muwalladūn*) against the Arabs, he supported the first, being famous for his group solidarity with the *muwalladūn* and his hatred of the Arabs (*kāna shadīd al-‘aṣabiyya li-l-muwalladīn wa-‘aẓīm al-karāhiyya li-l-‘arab*). For him, only the Arabs had defects, while the *muwalladūn* and slaves (*‘abīd*) only possessed virtues.²² His biography evokes the *fitna* of the second half of the third/ninth century in al-Andalus, when the Umayyads were extending their power consolidating it with increased taxation. It was then that Arab, Berber and *muwallad* lords rebelled to carve independent reigns for themselves, greatly reducing Umayyad power. This *fitna* is presented in the Arabic sources

ed. F. Roldán Castro (Seville: Fundación El Monte, 2006), 121–152; Maribel Fierro, “Entre Bagdad y Córdoba: centro y periferia en el mundo del saber islámico (siglos III/IX–VI/XII),” in *Iraq y al-Andalus: Oriente en el Occidente islámico*, ed. Salvador Peña (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl, 2009), 63–90.

21 Évariste Lévi-Provençal, “Un échange d’ambassades entre Cordoue et Byzance au IX^e siècle,” *Byzantion* 12 (1937): 1–24; Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Awsī, “Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam al-Ghazāl,” *Majallat al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Irāqī* 21 (1971): 196–213; ‘Abd al-Qādir Zamāma, “Yaḥyā b. Ḥakam al-Bakrī al-Ghazzāl,” *Manāhil* 4 (1975): 149–165; Julio Samsó, “Algunas precisiones en torno al horóscopo de Yaḥyā al-Gazāl sobre la muerte del eunuco Naṣr (marzo del 851),” in *Miscellania en homenatge al P. Agustí Altisent* (Tarragona: Diputació Provincial de Tarragona, 1991), 267–269; Monica Rius, “al-Gazāl,” in *Biblioteca de al-Andalus, De al-‘Abbādīya a Ibn Abyaḍ*, eds. Jorge Lirola Delgado and José Miguel Puerta Vilchez (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl, 2012), 1:405–408, no. 129; Sara M. Pons-Sanz, “Whom did al-Ghazāl meet? An Exchange of Embassies between the Arabs from al-Andalus and the Vikings,” *Saga-Book* 28 (2004): 5–28; Elsa Cardoso, “The Poetics of the Scenography of Power: The Embassy of Yahya al-Ghazāl to Constantinople,” *Hamsa: Journal of Judaic and Islamic Studies* 2 (2015): 54–64.

22 On him see *Prosopografía de los ulemas de al-Andalus (PUA)*, ID 5017: <http://www.eea.csic.es/pua/> (accessed 6 December 2016).

as an ethnic conflict opposing, on the one hand, the Arabs who resisted losing their political and social supremacy, and, on the other, the Arabized converts who exactly fought to put an end to the Arab privileged position. As the *muwallad* rebel Ibn Ḥafṣūn said to his fellow natives: “Too long already ... have you borne the yoke of this sultan responsible for seizing your possessions and crushing you with forced tribute. Will you allow yourselves to be trampled underfoot by the Arabs who regard you as slaves? ... Do not believe that it is ambition that makes me speak thus; no, I have no other ambition than to avenge you and deliver you from servitude!” But Arabs and non-Arabs had a common goal: to put an end to Cordoban Umayyad rule. Some modern scholars have looked beyond the ethnic representation of this *fitna* in the Arabic sources in order to propose other interpretations. Especially influential has been Manuel Acién’s understanding of it as a rebellion by the Visigothic rent lords who had managed to retain some power after the Muslim conquest and were witnessing its erosion by the strengthening of Umayyad power and by the extension of what Acién has defined as the Islamic ‘social formation’, characterized by him as the hegemony of the private and the pre-eminence of the cities.²³ After the example of these local rent lords, according to Acién, Arabs and Berbers also rebelled. They were eventually defeated and the Islamic tributary state was imposed in a process culminating with the proclamation of the caliphate by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III.²⁴

Another scholar also born in the year 250 H was the great-grandson of the Berber jurist Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī (d. 234/848), whose transmission of Mālik’s *Muwattaʿa*’ became one of the most influential legal works in the Islamic West. In fact the work eventually acquired a canonical status similar to that of al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s collections of hadith. The social and economic status of Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā’s descendants was connected to the rank and fame he had achieved as an influential scholar who mediated between the Umayyad

23 Manuel Acién Almansa, “Sobre el papel de la ideología en la caracterización de las formaciones sociales: la formación social islámica,” *Hispania* LVIII/3, no. 200 (1998): 915–968.

24 For this view see Manuel Acién Almansa, *Entre el feudalismo y el islam: Umar b. Ḥafṣūn en los historiadores, en las fuentes y en la historia*, 2nd ed. (Jaén: Universidad de Jaén, 1997). A critical response in Maribel Fierro, “Four Questions in Connection with Ibn Ḥafṣūn,” in *History and Society*, part 1 of *The formation of al-Andalus*, ed. Manuela Marín (Hampshire, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998), 309 (text of Ibn Ḥafṣūn); idem “*Mawālī* and *muwalladūn* in al-Andalus (second/eighth-fourth/tenth centuries),” in *Patronage and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam*, eds. Monique Bernards and John Nawas (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 195–245.

emir and his subjects, a role that scholars had proven to be necessary for the dynasty in the first half of the third/ninth century.²⁵

What can be concluded from what the Arabic sources here consulted have to say regarding the year 250H?

First, besides what the texts do say, there are also the silences. There is a huge area—corresponding to al-Maghrib al-aqṣā, roughly equivalent to present-day Morocco—on which nothing is mentioned regarding that year. In some parts of that area the Idrisids, the founders of Fez, ruled. On them we have some fragmentary literary information and also coins that allow us to establish their dynastic succession.²⁶ We know that the ruler in the year 250AH was Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad (r. 249–252/863–866) who is said to have led a dissolute life and to have been unable to stop the fragmentation of Idrisid territory among the many claimants from his family who got support from Berber tribes such as the Luwāta, the Kutāma and the Ghumāra.²⁷ The Idrisids were descendants of the prophet Muḥammad through his grandson al-Ḥasan (d. 49/670), their eponym Idrīs (d. 175/791) having arrived in the previous century (year 170/786–787) from the East. The Idrisids shared such Eastern origins with the Aghlabids of Ifrīqiya, the Rustumids of Tahert and the Cordoban Umayyads, whose ancestors were all foreign to the lands over which they now ruled.²⁸ What happened to the Idrisids after they settled in the extreme Maghreb was of interest for the surrounding Aghlabid and Umayyad polities as well as for the travellers and geographers who visited North Africa or wrote about it, and thus chronicles written outside Idrisid territory included information about them. The Idrisids themselves, however, do not seem to have developed a his-

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- 25 Maribel Fierro, “El alfaquí beréber Yahyà b. Yahyà, ‘el inteligente de al-Andalus,’” in *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus*, eds. María Luisa Avila Navarro and Manuela Marín (Madrid: CSIC, 1997), 8:269–344; for Yaḥyā’s descendants see Manuela Marín, “Una familia de ulemas cordobeses: los Banū Abi ‘Īsà,” *al-Qanṭara* 6 (1985): 291–320. On the great-grandson born in 250H see *Prosopografía de los ulemas de al-Andalus (PUA)*, ID 2082: <http://www.eea.csic.es/pua/> (accessed 11 November 2019).
- 26 A critical reappraisal of the sources on the Idrisids is being carried out by Chafik T. Benchekroun, “Les Idrissides: l’histoire contre son histoire,” *al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 23, no. 3 (2011): 171–188; idem, “Rāšid et les Idrissides: l’histoire ‘originelle’ du Maroc entre marginalisation et idéalisation,” *Al-Qanṭara* 35, no. 1 (2014): 7–27.
- 27 Daniel Eustache, “Idrisids,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.; accessed 9 October 2017 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3495; Muḥammad Inaoui, “Le soutien des tribus berbères aux émirs idrissides au Maghreb,” in *Le Maghreb, al-Andalus et la Méditerranée occidentale (VIIIe–XIIIe siècles)*, ed. Ph. Sénac (Toulouse: Editions Méridiennes, 2007), 97–182.
- 28 Gabriel Martínez-Gros, “Le passage vers l’Ouest: remarques sur le récit fondateur des dynasties Omeyyade de Cordoue et Idrisside de Fès,” *al-Masāq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 8 (1995): 21–44.

toriography of their own. They built the famous Qarawiyyīn mosque in Fez on the left bank of the Wādī Fās five years before 250H (in 245/859). A woman called Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad al-Fihri, who came from Qayrawān to Fez with her family, was credited with the mosque's foundation, although the inscriptions do not support such a claim.²⁹

Much less is known about those polities in al-Maghrib al-aqṣā founded by the local people, those to whom we refer as Berbers,³⁰ specifically by the Barghawāṭa along the Atlantic coast and the Midrarids in Sijilmasa. The Midrarids were Ṣufri Kharijites.³¹ As Kharijites, knowledge was of paramount importance in their conception of the imamate, but they did not produce any chronicle and no works are known to have been written under their rule. The same holds true for the other polity in the area: the Barghawāṭa,³² whose territory stretched along the Atlantic coast towards the interior as far as the south-west of Idrisid Fez. They had a religion of their own with a prophet called Ṣāliḥ (alive in 131/744) to whom a Berber 'Qur'ān' was revealed. This Ṣāliḥ is not to be confused with the pre-Islamic prophet Ṣāliḥ killed by those to whom he preached and whose grave was said to be located in Ifriqiya.³³ As for the prophet of the Barghawāṭa, thanks to him a new religion emerged, usually understood as a Berber nativistic reaction to Islam. His claim echoed Qur'ān 14:4: "And We have sent no Messenger save with the tongue of his people, that he may make all clear to them."³⁴ Ṣāliḥ's descendant Yūnus b. al-Yasa' (d. 271/884) went to the East to study. This trip can be seen as the counterpart to that already mentioned performed East-West by those founders of local polities in the Maghreb who were not locals: now, a local ruler had to travel West-East to gain legitimacy through knowledge.³⁵ One of Yūnus b. al-Yasa's teachers in *kalām* and

29 Gaston Deverdun, "Appendice: Les inscriptions historiques," in *La mosquée al-Qaraouiyyin à Fès*, ed. Henri Terrasse (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1968), 77.

30 See above note 9 on the use of this term.

31 Charles Pellat, "Midrār," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., accessed 9 October 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5181; Paul Love, "The Sufiris of Sijilmasa: Toward a History of the Midrarids," *Journal of North African Studies* 15, no. 2 (2010): 173–188.

32 Ahmad al-Ṭāhirī, *al-Maghrib al-aqṣā wa-mamlakat Banī Ṭarīf al-Barghawāṭiyya khilāl al-qurun al-arba' al-hijriyya al-ūlā* (Casablanca: Maṭba'at al-Najāḥ al-Jadidah, 2005); see also R. Le Tourneau, "Barghawāṭa," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., accessed 9 October 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1231; M. Dernouny, "Aspects de la culture et de l'islam du Maghreb médiéval: le cas de l'hérésie Bargwata," *Peuples méditerranéens: revue trimestrielle* 34 (1986): 89–97.

33 Ella Landau-Tasserou, "Unearthing a pre-Islamic Arabian Prophet," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 21 (1997): 42–61.

34 Arthur John Arberry, trans., *The Koran Interpreted* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

35 On the travels East-West see note 28. According to some sources it was the founder of the Barghawāṭa religion, Ṣāliḥ, who performed the travel West-East.

jidāl is alleged to have been the heretic Ghaylān al-Dimashqī (d. 125/743).³⁶ The acquisition of religious knowledge (*ilm*) that his trip to the East implied served to legitimize Yūnus b. al-Yasaʿ as a ruler, while violence helped him to extend the new religion during his long reign (228–271/842–884). The political entity he established would last for four centuries, eventually to be destroyed by the Almoravids and the Almohads. The Barghawāṭa Berber ‘Qurʾān’ consisted of eighty sura’s, often titled with the name of a prophet. They celebrated their fast in the month of Rajab instead of Ramadan, in their prayers they used certain Berber formulas, they had dietary prohibitions, such as eating eggs and the heads of animals, and their leaders’ saliva was employed for curing.

Further to the East, in the central Maghreb, were the lands of the Zanāta, Berber nomads moving from Ifrīqiya to the basin of the Muluya. The Zanāta had converted to Islam when the Umayyads had ruled from Damascus, and with a degree of loyalty that varied according to their needs, they considered themselves to be clients of the Umayyads who ruled in Cordoba. The leader of the Wāṣiliyya, a sect located in the Qaṣr Ibn Sinān along the route from Oran to Qayrawan, was from among the Zanāta. They believed in the doctrines of Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ (d. 131/748), one of the founders of Muʿtazilism, whose followers had fled to the Maghreb after the failure of the ‘Alid al-Nafs al-Zakiyya’s rebellion (in 145/762), which they had supported. The geographer Ibn Khurradādhbih (3rd/9th century) stated that there were Muʿtazilis living on the coast near Ceuta, while according to Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), 30,000 Wāṣilis lived near Tahert.³⁷ These were groups that did not develop any historiography of note, nor did they mint coins. This explains why their history is little known, especially when compared to the rich information we have about other ruling dynasties in the region who did promote writing about themselves: the Khariji Ibādīs, the Aghlabids of Qayrawan and the Cordoban Umayyads.

Another thing of note is that the period around the year 250H saw an increase in constructing activities. New mosques were built in towns such as Fez and Tunis, while old ones were enlarged or modified as already mentioned. According to Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), nearly 10,000 forts, “constructed of stone and mortar and furnished with iron gates”, were built in Ifrīqiya, both along the coast and on the western frontier. Many must have been strongholds

36 On him see Steven C. Judd, “Ghaylan al-Dimashqi: The Isolation of a Heretic in Islamic Historiography,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 2 (1999): 161–184.

37 Carlo Alfonso Nallino, “Rapporti fra la dogmatica muʿtazilita e quella degli Ibāditi dell’Africa Settentrionale,” *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 7 (1916–1918): 455–460.

of the Byzantine *limes* which were only now restored.³⁸ At Sūsa, the rampart dates, according to an inscription, from 245/859. In al-Andalus, new fortresses were built to control the paths across the mountains leading to Toledo. One such fortress was Madrid.³⁹ The Christians were in fact starting an expansionist policy, especially under king Alfonso III (r. 866–910) and the Umayyads had to strengthen their frontiers. Hydraulic developments for irrigation and other needs were carried out both in al-Andalus and the Maghreb bringing prosperity to regions with poor water supply.⁴⁰

Mosques and *ribats* changed the physical landscape and also brought with them new sounds. The Islamic call to prayer (*adhān*) inscribed on the surrounding urban space the powerful presence of the new religious beliefs brought by a people, the Arabs and their clients, who spoke a new language. During the period here considered, the use of Arabic increased among the local populations who added it to the local languages: Latin and the emerging Romance languages in al-Andalus, and some Latin, but mostly the Berber languages in North Africa.⁴¹ Still, even in al-Andalus, where the Arabs had settled on the land mixing with the population and thus favouring Arabicization, there were still many rural areas that remained unaffected by the new sounds: as Ibn Ḥawqal (4th/10th century) explained, in some parts of the Iberian countryside still mostly populated by Christians these knew nothing of urban life.⁴² In North Africa, the Ibāḍīs—for all their allegiance to an Arab prophet and their acquisition of a religious memory of historical events that had taken place in remote lands—also remained largely attached to the Berber context with its communal values, and the Berber language continued to be used to convey doctrines, stories and emotions.⁴³ The scarcity of Arab settlements greatly

38 Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, ed. Beirut (1408/1988), 4:256, ed. Bulaq (1284/1868), 4:201.

39 Christine Mazzoli-Guintard and María J. Viguera, *Madrid, petite ville de l'Islam médiéval (IXe–XXIe siècles)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

40 Patrice Cressier, "Villes médiévales au Maghreb: recherches archéologiques," in *Histoire et archéologie de l'Occident musulman (VIIe–XVe siècle): al-Andalus, Maghreb, Sicile*, ed. Philippe Sénac (Toulouse: Editions Méridiennes, 2012), 117–140.

41 Cyrille Aillet, *Les mozarabes: christianisme, islamisation et arabisation en Péninsule Ibérique (IXe–XIIe siècle)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2010); Dominique Valérian, *Islamisation et arabisation de l'Occident musulman médiéval (VIIe–XIIe siècle)* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2011).

42 Ibn Ḥawqal (4th/10th century), *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J. Kramers, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum II* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 111.

43 Mohamed Meouak, "Les élites savantes ibadites et la problématique linguistique au Maghreb médiéval: l'usage de la langue berbère," in *Biografías magrebíes: identidades y grupos religiosos, sociales y políticos en el Magreb medieval, Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus 17*, ed. Mohamed Meouak (Madrid: CSIC, 2012), 87–137; idem, *La langue berbère au*

reduced the process of Arabization especially in the extreme Maghreb, while in al-Andalus it progressed to the extent that some of the *muwallad* rebels are known to have employed poets to sing their merits and attack their rivals, and such poetry was recited and written in Arabic.⁴⁴ Arabic poetry performed a crucial ceremonial role in both Umayyad and Aghlabid courts, and the names of the poets active there have been preserved for posterity. In fact, the number of poets whose names are known for al-Andalus by 250H is extremely high (a total of 112) especially if compared to Ifriqiya (a total of 19).⁴⁵ But we do not have much evidence of poets using the Arabic language in the other Maghrebi polities, except for the first two Idrisid rulers.

Different methods have been devised in order to assess the process of Arabization and Islamization in al-Andalus and North Africa such as name patterns and mosque construction.⁴⁶ The rise in the number of religious scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) in those regions is a crucial indicator of Islamization.⁴⁷ This rise was always accompanied by an increase in the circulation of Arabic works, and the teachings and materials contained in such works shed light on the concerns and needs of both the old and the new Muslims. In the following analysis of works circulating in the area around the year 250H, the main focus will be on the Andalusian case, although reference will also be made to North Africa.⁴⁸ The data here considered are those collected in the *History of the*

Maghreb médiéval: textes, contexte, analyses (Leiden: Brill 2015); see also Pierre Guichard, "Une 'Méditerranée berbère' durant le haut Moyen Âge?" in *Le Maghreb, al-Andalus et la Méditerranée occidentale (VIIIe-XIIIe siècle)*, ed. Philippe Sénac (Toulouse: Editions Méridiennes, 2007), 9–18.

44 Maribel Fierro, "Genealogies of Power in al-Andalus: Politics, Religion and Ethnicity During the Second/Eighth-fifth/Eleventh Centuries," *Annales Islamologiques* 42 (2008): 29–56.

45 See below Table 2.1.

46 Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); Leopoldo Torres Balbás, *Ciudades hispanomusulmanas* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Dirección General de Relaciones Culturales, 1985).

47 Maribel Fierro and Manuela Marín, "La islamización de las ciudades andaluses a través de sus ulemas (ss. II/VIII-comienzos s. IV/X)," in *Genèse de la ville islamique en al-Andalus et au Maghreb occidental*, eds. Patrice Cressier and Mercedes García-Arenal (Madrid: CSIC-Casa de Velázquez, 1998), 65–98.

48 I have devoted a specific study to the case of Ifriqiya: Maribel Fierro, "Writing and Reading in Early Ifriqiya," *Promissa nec aspera curans: mélanges offerts à Madame le Professeur Marie-Thérèse Urvoy* (Presses universitaires de l'Institut Catholique de Toulouse, 2017), 373–393. Miklos Muranyi's numerous studies on the oldest mss. from Qayrawān provide valuable information on the circulation of works under the Aghlabids. A recent contribution is that by Jonathan E. Brockopp, *Muhammad's Heirs: The Rise of Muslim Scholarly Communities, 622–950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), which is not discussed here as it appeared when this article was in press.

Authors and Transmitters of al-Andalus (HATA) that can be consulted online, as well as those collected in the *History of the Authors and Transmitters of the Islamic West* (HATOI).⁴⁹ In both HATA and HATOI, the data on authors and their works and transmitters and their transmissions are structured according to fifteen thematic sections⁵⁰ and in each section their names and the titles of the works they wrote or transmitted are listed following a chronological order, which has helped selecting those works known to have circulated between the Muslim conquest and the generation of scholars who were active during the year 250 AH. In order to provide a 'human' context to the quantitative analysis, the career of one influential religious scholar will be used as the thread to guide us through the intellectual developments then taking place.

Muḥammad b. Waḍḍāḥ al-Umawī (d. 287/900) was a Cordoban scholar who travelled to the East close to our year 250 H, between 231/845 and 245/849. This was his second travel and it was motivated by his newly acquired interest in hadith.⁵¹ He had embarked on his first journey in ca. 218/833, returning to al-Andalus before 231/845, and he had undertaken it moved by his initial interest on asceticism and his desire to learn about Muslim pious men and women (*al-'ubbād wa-l-'awābid*). He was not alone in such interest: one of his companions was completely devoted to asceticism and in this he was followed by like-minded Muslims to the extent that they resembled monks (*kāna lahu aṣḥāb ka-l-ruhbān*).⁵² This interest in asceticism and piety may perhaps be connected with their Christian background, as both Ibn Waḍḍāḥ and his companion were

49 <http://kohepocu.cchs.csic.es/> (last accessed 9 October 2017) The data used for Ifrīqiya are approximate as when the analysis was carried out this database was still under preparation.

50 1. Qur'ān. Qur'ānic Sciences; 2. Hadith; 3. *Fiqh*; 4. Dogmatics. Religious Polemic; 5. Asceticism. Mysticism. Works of religious contents; 6. Geography. History; 7. Poetry; 8. Adab; 9. Grammar. Lexicography; 10. Pharmacy. Gastronomy. Medicine. Veterinary Science. Zoology; 11. Astrology. Astronomy. Mathematics. Meteorology; 12. Agriculture. Alchemy. Botany. Chemistry; 13. Philosophy. Music. Politics; 14. *Fahāris*; 15. Others (Bookbinding. Games. Interpretation of Dreams. *Kutub al-'ilm*. Occult Sciences and Magic. War. Unspecified Works).

51 Maribel Fierro, "Ibn Waḍḍāḥ," in *Biblioteca de al-Andalus, Enciclopedia de la Cultura andalusí*, ed. Jorge Lirola Delgado (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl, 2007), 5:545–558, no. 1294.

52 Maribel Fierro, "Religious Beliefs and Practices in al-Andalus in the Third/Ninth Century," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 66 (1993): 15–33; see also Manuela Marín, "Zuhād de al-Andalus (300/912–420/1029)," *al-Qanṭara* 12 (1991): 439–469; Christopher Melchert, "The Piety of the Hadith Folk," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002): 425–439; idem, "Quantitative Approaches to Early Islamic Piety," in *Sources and Approaches Across Disciplines in Near Eastern Studies: Proceedings of the 24th congress, Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Leipzig, 2008*, eds. Verena Klemm et al. (Leuven-Paris-Walpole: Peeters Publishers, 2013), 91–100.

descendants of local converts. Travel from al-Andalus to the East at that time involved crossing the Straits by sea and then going by land through Ifrīqiya towards Egypt,⁵³ and Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's was no exception as he is known to have stayed in Qayrawān. Although there is no direct evidence, interest in the lives and practices of pious and devout Muslims could have led Ibn Waḍḍāḥ to visit "a mountain [in north-eastern Ifrīqiya] called Adar from which Sicily can be seen. Around the mountain there is a community devoted to the service of God. They have given up the world and live in the area of the mountain along with the wild animals. Their dress is made from rushes (*bardiyy*) and their food is taken from the plants of the earth and the fish of the sea, only as they have need. Many of them are known for the power of their supplicatory prayers. This mountain is well-known because of the people who have lived there humbly before God ... since the conquest of Ifrīqiya."⁵⁴

The data regarding the works that circulated in al-Andalus by the year 250 H (both those written by non-Andalusī and by Andalusī authors) show that the number of ascetic and devotional works was slightly higher than that of hadith works (46 and 42 respectively).⁵⁵ These were only surpassed by legal works (123) while they doubled those dealing with Qur'ānic sciences (23).⁵⁶ The topics of such ascetic and devotional works were the description of Paradise and of the signs of the Hour, the virtues of the first generations of Muslims and of great figures such as 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101/720) and Mālik b. Anas who functioned as models of perfection, as well as the merits of specific places and times, sermons and admonitions against suspect practices such as singing, together with general teachings about asceticism, scrupulous abstinence of what was to be considered illicit and the moderation and control of one's desires. Almost

53 Jorge Lirola Delgado, *El poder naval de al-Andalus en la época del califato omeya* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993); Luis Molina, "Lugares de destino de los viajeros andalusies en el *Tarīj* de Ibn al-Faraḍī," in *Estudios Onomástico-Biográficos de al-Andalus*, ed. Manuela Marín (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988), 1:585–610.

54 Marston Speight, "Muslim Attitudes toward Christians in the Maghrib during the Fatimid Period, 297/909, 358/969," in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Y. Haddad and Wadi Z. Haddad (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 1995), 184–185, quoting al-Bakri (d. 487/1094), *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, trans., Baron de Slane (Alger: Typ. A. Jourdan, 1857), 84. The scholar from Qayrawān Khālid b. Abī 'Imrān transmitted that men were allowed to make invocations to God asking for His help, which suggests a debated issue: Fierro, "Writing and Reading in Early Ifriqiya."

55 The differentiation between them is based on the contents: a work like 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb's *Kitāb al-wara'* contains mostly hadith materials, but it has been included in the section dealing with asceticism and devotional works because those materials are focused on a specific topic. Hadith works are here considered those that collect hadith on a variety of topics.

56 See Figure 2.1 below.

half of them (20) were written by Andalusī, although the kind of authorship involved needs to be understood in the context of the times, as we shall see.

During his first stay in the East, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ acquired a new interest: *fiqh* and hadith. Not that these two disciplines were unknown in Cordoba before he left his hometown.⁵⁷ His teacher Yahyā b. Yahyā al-Laythī—as already mentioned—was the most famous transmitter of Mālik's *Muwattaʿa* in al-Andalus, while another teacher, ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (d. 238/852), is credited with more than one hundred works in which he collected hadith and other types of material on a variety of subjects having to do with religious knowledge.⁵⁸ Law and more specifically Mālikī law was the subject matter of most of the works circulating in al-Andalus: 123 titles, of which 98 are credited to Andalusī authors. This is almost 80% of the total number of works. The earliest legal works circulating in al-Andalus were different *riwāyāt* of Mālik's *Muwattaʿa* (there were fourteen of them) and 'auditions' (*samāʿ*, pl. *asmīʿa*): notes taken by Andalusī students from Medinan, Egyptian and North African teachers such as Mālik himself, Ibn al-Qāsim (d. 191/806), Ashhab (d. 204/819), Saḥnūn (d. 240/854) and others. Thus, 'authorship' needs to be qualified: what Andalusī were writing were mostly selective compilations of what they had heard or taken from others, this being a general characteristic of most works circulating during this period.⁵⁹ Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's *Kitāb al-bidaʿ* serves to illustrate this point.⁶⁰ This is a treatise against

57 On the first see Ana Fernández Félix, *Cuestiones legales del Islam temprano: la 'Utbiyya y el proceso de formación de la sociedad islámica andalusí* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003); Mateusz Wilk, "Le malikisme et les Omeyyades en al-Andalus," *Annales Islamologiques* 45 (2011): 101–122. On the latter Maribel Fierro, "The Introduction of *ḥadīth* in al-Andalus (2nd/8th–3rd/9th Centuries)," *Der Islam* 66 (1989): 68–93. HATA provides information on extant studies in these and other disciplines.

58 On Yahyā b. Yahyā see note 22 above; on ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb see Maria Arcas Campoy and Dolores Serrano Niza, "Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ilbīrī, ʿAbd al-Malik," in *Biblioteca de al-Andalus, De Ibn al-Dabbāg a Ibn Kurz*, eds. Jorge Lirola Delgado and José Miguel Puerta Vilchez (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl, 2004), 3:219–227, no. 509.

59 A general overview of the writing and reading practices around Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's times in Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, trans. Shawkat M. Toorawa (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); see also Lale Behzadi and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Concepts of Authorship in Premodern Arabic Texts* (Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press, 2015). For the Andalusī case see also Walter Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-Iqd al-farid des Andalusiers Ibn ʿAbdrabbih (246/860–328/940): ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1983).

60 What follows is taken from Muḥammad b. Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurṭubī (d. 287/900), *Kitāb al-bidaʿ (Tratado contra las innovaciones)*, ed., trans. and study Maribel Fierro (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988). The edition of Asad b. Mūsā's *Kitāb al-zuhd* consulted is that by R.G. Khoury (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976). Later editions (Cairo-Damascus, 1993 and Beirut, 1999) have not been checked.

beliefs and ritual practices condemned by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ as innovations, i.e., lacking a precedent in the religious tradition. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ in fact is arguing against other scholars for whom such beliefs and practices were acceptable teachings, thus revealing a contested arena in which derogatory labels are attached to that with which one is in disagreement.⁶¹ Although the work is attributed to Ibn Waḍḍāḥ, it was his student Aṣṣbagh b. Mālik (d. 299/911 or 304/916) who compiled the work preserved in two manuscripts. It contains 288 transmissions that can be divided into two clearly differentiated groups. First, there are 26 transmissions (10%) that Aṣṣbagh b. Mālik received from different teachers and that complement the bulk of 262 (90%) that he received from Ibn Waḍḍāḥ. This last group can be divided into three blocks: 202 transmissions (77%) that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ received from three of his Eastern teachers, two Egyptians and one from Ifrīqiya (Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. Abī Maryam, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣadafī⁶² and Mūsā b. Muʿāwiya (d. 225/839)); 42 transmissions (17%) that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ received from 11 teachers who appear more than once but not more than eight times in the *isnāds*, and finally 13 transmissions that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ received from teachers who are mentioned just once (5%).

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ thus compiled materials from 26 teachers. Their geographical origin is as follows:

Syria: 10
 Egypt: 8
 al-Andalus: 3
 Iraq: 2
 Ifrīqiya: 2
 Ḥijāz: 1

The number of transmissions Ibn Waḍḍāḥ received from each of these 26 teachers are:

Teachers from Egypt: 187 transmissions
 Teachers from Ifrīqiya: 31 transmissions
 Teachers from Syria: 18 transmissions

61 Jonathan Berkey, "Tradition, Innovation and the Social Construction of Knowledge in the Medieval Islamic Near East," *Past and Present* 146 (1995): 38–65; Rachel Ukeles, *Innovation or Deviation: Exploring the Boundaries of Islamic Devotional Law* (PhD diss., Harvard University 2006).

62 The death dates of these two are unknown. The first was the son of Saʿīd b. Abī Maryam (d. 224/838).

Teachers from Iraq: 10 transmissions
 Teachers from al-Andalus: 6 transmissions
 Teachers from the Ḥijāz: 4 transmissions

Thus, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ learned most of the transmissions he compiled from Egyptian and North African teachers. The three most important teachers were the Egyptians Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. Abī Maryam and Muḥammad b. Yahyā al-Ṣadafī, together with the North African Mūsā b. Muʿāwiya. These were traditionists who had no influence whatsoever in the Eastern lands, as shown by the fact that they have no entry in Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* and similar works. Other teachers are better known such as Ibn Abī Shayba al-Kūfī (159–235/775–849) whose *Musnad* was taught by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ in al-Andalus and from whom he received 8 transmissions, all of them found in the final two chapters of the *Kitāb al-bidaʿ*, which have an eschatological content. Those transmissions may have been taken from the *Musnad*. Other possible titles that may have included materials recorded in Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's *Kitāb al-bidaʿ* are Sufyan al-Thawrī's (d. 161/778) *al-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr* and his *Kitāb al-adab*, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fazārī's (d. 185/801) *Kitāb al-siyar*, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ's (d. 197/812) *Muṣannaf*, Ibn Mahdī's (d. 198/813) *Kitāb fī al-sunna*, and Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād's (d. 228/842) *Kitāb al-fitān*. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ is in fact known to have learned such works through *isnāds* that correspond to those quoted in his *Kitāb al-bidaʿ*.⁶³ As regards the presence of Mālikī materials, Mālik is present with six transmissions that record his opinion about certain innovated ritual practices and only one is a quotation from the *Muwattaʿ*. While Mālik's student Ibn Wahb appears as an independent scholar in 23 transmissions, other students of Mālik such as Ibn al-Qāsim (d. 191/806), Ashhab (d. ca. 204/819) and Ibn Kināna (d. ca. 186/802) are mere transmitters of Mālik's opinion. Al-Awzāʿī's (d. 157/774) presence is stronger than that of Mālik.

None of these works, however, is the main source of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's *Kitāb al-bidaʿ*. The bulk of the transmissions it contains originates from the Umayyad Egyptian scholar Asad b. Mūsā (d. 212/827) with 148 transmissions, which corresponds to 56% of the 262 transmissions that Aṣḥab b. Mālik received from Ibn Waḍḍāḥ. The distribution is uneven according to each of the twelve chapters into which the work—as it has reached us—is divided, with three chapters not including any. In his *isnāds*, Asad b. Mūsā transmitted from many of his teachers, who number a total of 59. Asad b. Mūsā was a member of the

63 For such transmissions see Fierro's study in Muḥammad b. Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurtubī, *Kitāb al-bidaʿ*, 39–44.

Umayyad lineage and this must have been the main reason that Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was attracted to him given his loyalty to the Umayyads. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ was in fact the descendant of a slave manumitted by the first Cordoban Umayyad emir who then became an Umayyad client. Asad b. Mūsā's works were highly popular for a time in Egypt (he is quoted many times in the *Futūḥ Miṣr* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), the famous historian who also had links to the Umayyads), in North Africa (he is quoted in Abū al-'Arab's *Kitāb al-miḥan*)⁶⁴ and in al-Andalus (he was quoted not only by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ but also by 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb). Asad b. Mūsā's reputation did not last: for all his pro-Umayyad sympathies, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) eventually pronounced him to be *ḍā'if* and neither he nor Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071) quoted any of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's transmissions from Asad b. Mūsā which are also almost completely absent in the six canonical collections, with only Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā'ī quoting him. Asad b. Mūsā wrote a *Kitāb al-zuhd wa-l-'ibāda wa-l-wara'* that circulated in al-Andalus but is not known to have been transmitted by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ. Asad b. Mūsā's extant *Kitāb al-zuhd*, probably a part of that other work, has only one transmission in common with the *Kitāb al-bida'*. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ in fact took most of Asad b. Mūsā's teachings from two of Asad's Egyptian students, Muḥammad b. Sa'īd b. Abī Maryam and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ṣadafi. The latter was mostly interested in eschatological materials, while Ibn Abī Maryam mixed Asad's teachings with those of Nu'aym b. Ḥammād (d. ca. 228/844). Thus, Asad's contribution to the *Kitāb al-bida'*, although the most important in quantitative terms, did not give it its final shape. In the *Kitāb al-bida'* there are different layers that have been interwoven in a complex transmission process resulting in a choral ensemble directed by Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's and his student Aṣḥab b. Mālik's batons. Moreover, not everything Ibn Waḍḍāḥ taught on the subject of innovated practices and beliefs is contained in the *Kitāb al-bida'* transmitted by his student Aṣḥab b. Mālik. In an opuscle (*juz'*) by Khalaf b. 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 494/1101) in which he censored the celebration of the festivals of *nayrūz*, *mahrajān* and the *mīlād* of Jesus (Nativity) as innovations, there are materials from Ibn Waḍḍāḥ transmitted by another of his students, Aḥmad b. Ziyād (d. 326/938) and two of them can be found in the *Kitāb al-bida'*. The rest of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's materials quoted by Ibn Bashkuwāl are absent in the *Kitāb al-bida'*, but could easily have been included in it given their contents. Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's *Kitāb al-bida'* as it has reached us preserves his oral teachings according to the shape given to

64 Abū l-'Arab al-Tamīmī (d. 333/945), *Kitāb al-miḥan*, ed. Yaḥyā W. al-Jubūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1408/1988); Meir Jacob Kister, "The *Kitāb al-miḥan*: A Book on Muslim Martyrology," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 20 (1975): 210–218.

them by one of his students, Aṣḡagh b. Mālik, who added and subtracted to his teacher's transmissions as he deemed convenient, following in this the steps of those who had preceded him.

There is of course nothing specifically Andalusī in the compilation process that has been described here: in his *Kitāb al-bida'* Ibn Waḡḡāḡ was not departing from the practices he had learned during his travels, practices that are reflected in works by Eastern authors such as Ibn al-Mubārak's (d. 181/797) *Kitāb al-zuhd wa-l-raqā'iq* or Aḡmad b. Ḥanbal's (d. 241/855) *Kitāb al-zuhd*, or by Ibn Waḡḡāḡ's contemporaries in Ifrīqiya, such as Muḡammad b. Saḡnūn (d. 256/870) in his *Ādāb al-mu'allimīn*.⁶⁵

Ifrīqiya displays a very similar pattern as that found in al-Andalus: around 250AH, *fiqh* works were also at the top (with a total of 93), while hadith works and works dealing with asceticism and devotional matters showed also substantial numbers (25 and 17 respectively). There is, however, a noteworthy difference between al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya: theology.

The Cordoban 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb narrated that one day when he was in the house of Ziyād Shabtūn, an Andalusī who had studied with Mālik b. Anas, his teacher received a letter. Ziyād wrote something in the document, added his seal and sent it back. Then he told those who were with him: "Do you know what the sender of the letter was asking me? He wanted to know if the plates of the scales in which man's actions will be weighed on the Day of Resurrection are made of gold or of silver. I have answered him that Mālik has transmitted from Ibn Shihāb that the Prophet said: 'Man shows his submission to God by not being concerned with that which is outside his competence'".⁶⁶ Andalusīs seem to have followed the advice as very little theological activity took place in the Iberian Peninsula at the time, but 'submission to God' as recommended in the hadīth was not the only reason: the Umayyads in general did not promote such discussions in their court nor did they encourage reflection on God, His attributes and other dogmatic matters. This may have been related to their support for predestination and their rejection of other theological views,⁶⁷ but also by their opposition to the Abbasids and therefore their control of the reception

65 Ḥasan Ḥusnī 'Abd al-Wahhāb, ed., *Ādāb al-mu'allimīn* (Tunis: Dār al-Kutub al-Sharqiyya, 1931), French trans. Gerard Lecomte, "Le livre des règles de conduite des maîtres d'école par Ibn Saḡnūn," *Revue d'Études Islamiques* 21 (1953): 77–105, Sebastian Günther, "Advice for Teachers: The 9th Century Muslim Scholars Ibn Saḡnūn and al-Jāḡiz on Pedagogy and Didactics," in *Ideas, Images and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam*, ed. Sebastian Günther (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 79–116.

66 al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (Beirut: Mu'assasāt al-Risāla, 1985), 9:312.

67 Susana Calvo Capilla, "Justicia, misericordia y cristianismo: una relectura de las inscripciones coránicas de la Mezquita de Córdoba en el siglo X," *Al-Qanṭara* 31 (2010): 149–187.

of Iraqi intellectual trends.⁶⁸ On the contrary, the Aghlabids, given their links to the Abbasids, were subject to the influence of the theological trends coming from the East. In Qayrawān scholars debated precisely those issues that Shab-tūn disliked, including among others the creation of the Qur'ān, the vision of God in the afterlife and whether the faith of a believer can be asserted by man, and groups such as the Mu'tazila⁶⁹ and the Murji'a were active.⁷⁰ Factional violence arose among them and the Abbasid *miḥna* also impacted Ifrīqiya. The theological effervescence in Ifrīqiya and the silence in al-Andalus are a powerful reminder of the great extent to which scholars were dependent on political power, and that the threat of coercive action often had a tangible effect on what scholars wrote or did not write.

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's engagement with theological issues was limited, although by the time he returned from his second travel to the East the increase in the number of Andalusīs who had visited Iraq and had been exposed there to new ideas and ways of doing things animated the theological scene.⁷¹ With his interest in *fiqh*, hadith and asceticism Ibn Waḍḍāḥ attracted more than 200 students to his classes, making a lasting impact in the Andalusī world of scholarship, in spite of having been criticized for his faulty knowledge of Arabic—a criticism voiced by those scholars of Arab background who resented the growing numbers of non-Arabs in the realm of religious scholarship.⁷²

A specific regional religious identity was being forged in the Islamic West by the year 250H with the relevance given, for example, to Mālik's *Muwaḥḥa*' and with the selective appropriation of Eastern materials. This was a selection in which the rulers had some influence as happened in the case of the Cordoban Umayyads's opposition to theological inquiry that determined the scarcity of theological debate in al-Andalus. The decisions taken by the schol-

68 This would have been the case of Hanafism and also of Mu'tazilism, on which see Sarah Stroumsa, "The Mu'tazila in al-Andalus: The Footprints of a Phantom," *Intellectual History of the Islamic World* 2 (2014): 80–100.

69 The penetration of the Wāṣiliyya (who were Mu'tazilis) among the Berber population of the central Maghreb has already been mentioned, but apart from the references quoted above not much more is known about them and by Fatimid times (4th/10th century) they seem to have disappeared.

70 Mohamed Talbi, "Theological Polemics at Qayrawan during the 3rd–9th Century," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 43 (1984): 151–160, and Camilla Adang, "Intra- and Interreligious Controversies in 3rd/9th Century Qayrawan: The Polemics of Ibn Saḥnūn," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 286–310.

71 Mahmud Ali Makki, *Ensayo sobre las aportaciones orientales en la España musulmana* (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos, 1968); Maribel I. Fierro, *La heterodoxia en al-Andalus durante el periodo omeya* (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura, 1987).

72 Examples can be found in Fierro, "Genealogies of Power in al-Andalus," 32.

ars themselves were of course also crucial but on their rationale the evidence provided by the sources is scarce and thus its elucidation requires a close reading of such sources and their contextualization. As shown at the beginning of this paper, by that same year scholars from the Islamic West such as al-Ghazāl had already developed a certain degree of self-esteem regarding their own literary and scholarly achievements. Scholars of non-Arab origins resented Arab privilege and prejudice as part of the growing process of Islamization that went together with the spread of the Arabic language, indispensable in dealing with those who ruled and for the comprehension of the religion they had brought with them and to which many were converting. With the increasing numbers of Muslims the construction of mosques intensified as well as the engagement of the believers in devotional practices located in specific locations such as the ribats. The acceptance on the part of the rulers of the need for a scholarly establishment charged with the interpretation of the religious law encouraged the prevalence of *fiqh* works in both the transmission and the production activities of the local scholars. Such scholarly activities were closely linked to a developing urban life with rulers engaged in strengthening its Islamic character through the appointment of judges and other Islamic officials (such as the inspector of the market, the director of the Friday prayer and the official preacher) and who allowed—and supported—scholars to transmit their teachings in learning circles in the mosques. In those areas where urban development and the process of Arabization were weaker, such as in the territories under Idrisid control, the scholarly establishment was almost completely absent. In the areas where Ibadism took roots, specific scholarly traditions developed but it took time before scholars started writing about themselves.⁷³

By the year 250H, both Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus had vibrant intellectual circles in which scholars—under the surveillance of the rulers—discussed or avoided discussing issues mostly formulated by their Eastern teachers⁷⁴ to which they responded and reacted in ways that can be linked to local developments and concerns. In other words, they ‘digested’ materials that originated in the East through complex processes of appropriation, adaptation, selection and rejection still to be more fully explored in order to better understand

73 Maribel Fierro. “Why and How do Religious Scholars Write about Themselves? The Case of the Islamic West in the Fourth/Tenth Century,” *Mélanges de l’Université Saint-Joseph* LVIII (2005): 403–423; Allaoua Amara, “Remarques sur le recueil ibadite-wahbite *Sīyar al-masā’ih*: retour sur sa attribution,” *Al-Andalus-Magreb* 15 (2008): 31–40.

74 Such as those listed above (the creation of the Qur’an, the vision of God in the afterlife and whether the faith of a believer can be asserted by man) and see also the references in note 71.

TABLE 2.1 Works circulating in al-Andalus as compared to those circulating in Aghlabid Ifrīqiya and among the North African Ibāḍiyya⁷⁵

Disciplines	al-Andalus	Ifrīqiya	Ibāḍiyya
Philosophy	0	0	0
Fiqh	123	93	5
Poetry	112	19	1
History	54	8	1
Asceticism and devotion	46	25	1
Hadith	42	17	1
Unspecified works	42	15	0
Koran	23	7	5
Adab	23	6	0
Grammar	16	7	0
Astrology, astron., maths	12	1	0
Theology	10	37	1
Medicine	7	13	0
Music	2	0	0
Politics	1	0	0
Interpretation of dreams	1	0	0
Faḍā'il al-'ilm	1	0	0
Alchemy, agriculture	0	0	0
Fahāris	0	0	0

the dynamics between global trends and local contexts.⁷⁶ All these intellectual efforts taking place in the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula, however, were almost completely ignored in the East: in his famous *Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995) does not quote any author from al-Andalus and only one from Ifrīqiya, 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386/996) who was his contemporary.⁷⁷ It would still take some time before al-Andalus and the Maghreb

75 Table and Figure prepared with the help of Luis Molina (Escuela de Estudios Arabes, CSIC-Granada) with data taken from HATA (Historia de los Autores y Transmisores de al-Andalus) and HATO1 (*Historia de los Autores y Transmisores del Occidente islámico*)

76 Very few Easterners travelled West while during this period most Maghrebi and Andalusī scholars had to perform the *riḥla* to the East in order to precisely become scholars: they were very well aware that *'ilm* (religious knowledge) and other types of sciences were to be found there.

77 Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995), *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Verlag von

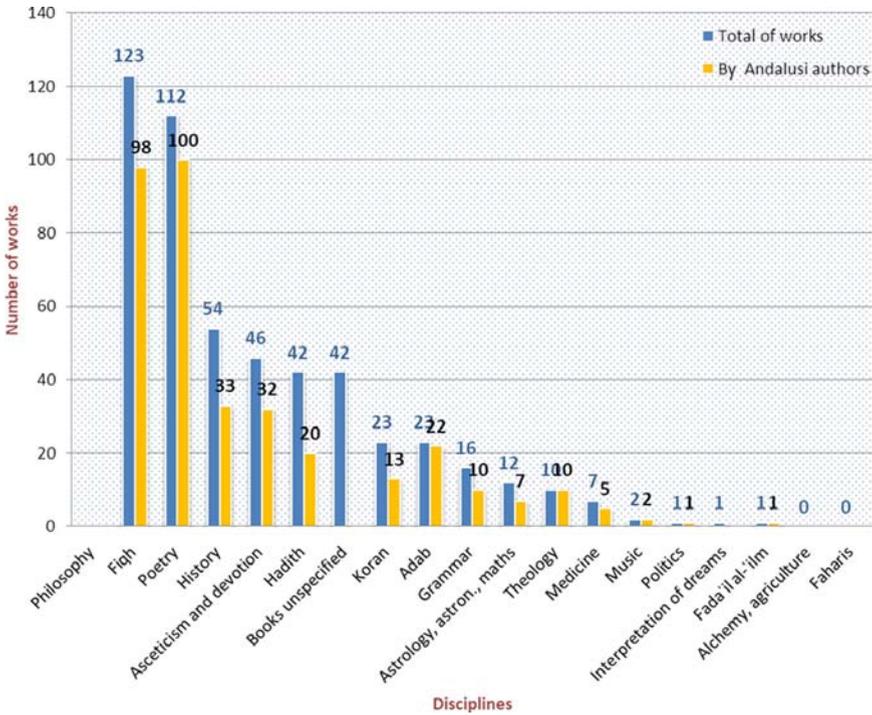


FIGURE 2.1 Number of works and their subject matters that circulated in al-Andalus around 250H

would become fully integrated in the realm of ‘global’ Islamic religious scholarship. But this takes us far from the year 250H and it is a story to be told elsewhere.⁷⁸

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F.C.W. Vogel, 1871–1872), English trans. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of Ibn al-Nadīm*, 2 vols. (New York-London: Columbia University Press, 1970). I analyse the information on the Maghreb and al-Andalus in this work in a forthcoming study.

78 The research project *Local contexts and global dynamics: al-Andalus and the Maghreb in the Islamic East*, directed by Maribel Fierro and Mayte Penelas (2017–2020) with funding of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitivity (FFI2016-78878-R), has as its main aim precisely to trace the ways in which the knowledge produced in the Islamic West travelled to and impacted on the rest of the Islamic world.

has formed the basis of this article. What I present here is based on my forthcoming book *Knowledge and politics in the Medieval Islamic West*. The table and figure at the end have been prepared with the help of Luis Molina. This paper was prepared within the framework of the research project *Practicing knowledge in Islamic societies and their neighbours* (PRAKIS), financed by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Anneliese Maier Award 2014). I wish to thank Víctor de Castro for his help.

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