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Book Review

Al Salimi, Abdulrahman, and Wilferd Madelung, eds. *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2018. ISBN: 9789004330641. 390 pp. \$144 cloth. \$144 ebook.

and

Al Salimi, Abdulrahman, ed. *Ibadi Texts in Oman from the 3rd/9th Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2021. ISBN: 9789004473102. 383 pp. \$179 cloth. \$179 ebook.

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Ibādīsm has witnessed an increased uptick in attention over the past few decades.¹ Recent

1. The following list is far from being exhaustive. On the Iraqi origins of Ibādīsm and the development of Ibādī *fiqh*, see Ersilia Francesca, *Teoria e pratica del commercio nell'Islām medievale. I contratti di vendita e di commenda nel diritto ibādīta* (Naples: Istituto per l'Orient C. A. Nallino, 2002); eadem, "The Formation and Early Development of the Ibadi *Madhhab*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2003): 260–77; eadem, "‘Put the Ocean between Them’: Fornication as Permanent Impediment to Marriage in Early Ibādī Islam," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 50 (2021): 101–39. On Ibādīsm in Iraq and Oman, see John C. Wilkinson, "The Early Development of the Ibādī Movement in Baṣra," in *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, ed. G. H. Juynboll, 125–44 (Carbondale/Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982); idem, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); idem, *Ibādism. Origins and Early Development in Oman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). On North African Ibādī networks and history, see Cyrille Aillet, "Tāhart et l'imamat rustamīde (c. 160/777–296/909) : matrice orientale et ancrage local," *Annales islamologiques* 45 (2011): 47–78; idem, "A Breviary of Faith and a Sectarian Memorial: A New Reading of Ibn Sallām's *Kitāb* (3rd/9th Century)," in *Ibadi Theology. Rereading Sources and Scholarly Works*, ed. E. Francesca, 67–83 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2015); idem, "Warjlān, un foyer de l'ibadisme médiéval aux marges du Sahara," in *L'ibadisme dans les sociétés de l'Islām médiéval. Modèles et interactions*, ed. C. Aillet, 207–44 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018); idem, "Connecting the Ibādī Network in North Africa with the Empire (2nd–3rd/8th–9th Centuries)," in *Transregional and Regional Elites – Connecting the Early Islamic Empire*, ed. H.-L. Hagemann and S. Heidemann, 421–43 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020); idem, *L'archipel ibadite : une histoire des marges du Maghreb médiéval* (Lyon/Avignon: CIHAM-Éditions, 2021); Paul M. Love, *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa: Manuscripts, Mobilization, and the Making of a Written Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). On Ibādī creed and historiography, see Ersilia Francesca, "La fabbricazione degli *isnād* nella scuola ibādīta: il *Musnad* di ar-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb," in *Law, Christianity and Modernism in Islamic Society: Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. M. F. van Reeth, 39–50 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998); Valerie J. Hoffman, *The Essentials of Ibādī Islam* (New York: Syracuse University Press,

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publications have highlighted the value of studying what is commonly referred to as sectarianism and the historical trajectory of sectarian movements.² Rather than considering Sunnism as the orthodoxy—that is, the purportedly authentic reflection of the “rightful” religious position—contemporary scholars have emphasized the necessity of reckoning with the diversity of Islamic views and positions in the fields of creed, political thought, and law.³ This is particularly true for the formative period of Islam that has been convincingly compared to a competitive “marketplace of religious ideas,” to borrow Adam Gaiser’s words.⁴

This new wave of scholarly interest is particularly welcome because Ibādism has been so neglected in the past. Historically, the movement has been regarded suspiciously as a relatively obscure offshoot of Khārijism.⁵ In both Sunnī and Shī‘ī sources, the Ibādīs are often identified as supporters of sectarian groups (*firqa*) that are steeped in zealotry, position themselves in fierce opposition to statehood, and promote indiscriminate violence.

2012); eadem, “The Development of an Ibādī Textual Tradition in the Arabian Peninsula,” *Nouvelles Chroniques du manuscrit au Yémen* 3 (2021): 5–38; Adam R. Gaiser, *Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers: The Origins and Elaboration of the Ibādī Imamate Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); idem, “The Ibādī ‘Stages of Religion’ Re-examined: Tracing the History of the *Masālik al-Dīn*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 73 (2010): 207–22; idem, “Ballaghanā ‘an an-Nabī: Early Basran and Omani Understanding of *sunna* and *siyar*, *āthār* and *nasab*,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 83, no. 3 (2020): 437–48; Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991); Ismail Albayrak, *Approaches to Ibādī Exegetical Tradition* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2020). On the Ibādī manuscript tradition, see ‘Amr K. Ennami, “A Description of New Ibadī Manuscripts from North Africa,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 15, no. 1 (1970): 63–87; Josef van Ess, “Untersuchungen zu einigen ibādītischen Handschriften,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 126, no. 1 (1976): 25–63; Enki Baptiste “Des vallées du pays ibadite aux littoraux du sultanat : une histoire patrimoniale des manuscrits ibadites omanais,” *Arabian Humanities* 15 (2022). Two major and useful historiographical encyclopedias have also been published recently. See Martin H. Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya: A Bibliography* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2016); Muḥammad K. Imām (dir.), *Mi’a kitāb ibādī* (Muscat: MNHC, 2013).

2. Adam R. Gaiser, *Sectarianism in Islam: The Umma Divided* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

3. For an examination of these challenges, see the worthy recommendations of Christian C. Sahner, “What Is Islamic History? Muslims, Non-Muslims and the History of Everyone Else,” *The English Historical Review* 138, no. 592 (2023): 379–409, esp. 397–403.

4. Adam R. Gaiser, *Shurāt Legends, Ibādī Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism, and the Making of an Early Islamic Community* (Columbia: South Carolina University Press, 2016), 4–5; the expression is also used by Aillet, *L’archipel ibadite*, 211, 218.

5. On Khārijism, see Hannah-Lena Hagemann and Peter Verkinderen, “Kharijism in the Umayyad Period,” in *The Umayyad World*, ed. A. Marsham, 489–517 (New York: Routledge, 2020), which provides a clear and recent overview on Khārijite history. Also, William Montgomery Watt, “Khārijite Thought in the Umayyad Period,” *Der Islam* 36, no. 3 (1961): 215–31; Laura Veccia Vaglieri, “Il conflitto ‘Alī-Mu‘āwiya e la secessione khārigita riesaminati alla luce di fonte ibādite,” *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 4 (1952): 1–94; Patricia Crone, “A Statement by the Najdiyya Khārijites on the Dispensability of the Imamate,” *Studia Islamica* 88 (1998): 55–76; eadem, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 54–65; eadem, “Ninth-Century Muslim Anarchists,” *Past & Present* 167 (2000): 3–28; Hannah-Lena Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition: Heroes and Villains* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021); Annie C. Higgins, “Early *Shurāt/Khawārij* Poetry: Catalytic *Qaṣīdas*,” in *Today’s Perspectives on Ibadī History*, ed. R. Eisener, 83–91 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2015); Adam R. Gaiser, “Source-Critical Methodologies in Recent Scholarship on the Khārijites,” *History Compass* 7, no. 5 (2009): 1376–90.

The dearth of scholarly attention devoted to Ibāḍism has been further compounded by the fact that its influence on Islamic history has been deemed to be of minor importance when compared to Muʿtazilism, Ashʿarism, or Ismāʿīlism. Furthermore, the tendency to lump together Khārijism and Ibāḍism has contributed to a lack of clarity,⁶ hindering an accurate understanding of the peculiar history of Ibāḍism and of its contribution to the formation of Islamic theology and *fiqh*. Accordingly, the presentation of the sources that are newly edited by Abdulrahman Al Salimi and Wilferd Madelung in the two books under review requires us to briefly unpack Ibāḍī history and to introduce its founding figures.

The genesis of the Ibāḍī movement took place in Baṣra in the first quarter of the second/eighth century, within a milieu dominated by men who belonged to the southern Arabian tribes of Qaḥṭān and Yaman. These tribes had moved from Yemen, Ḥaḍramawt, and Oman to Iraq during or shortly after the Islamic conquests. Jābir b. Zayd al-Azdī (d. ca. 91/711),⁷ who is often considered as the founding father of Ibāḍism, settled in Baṣra during the Umayyad period. He belonged to the Azd, a major Yemeni tribe that had migrated from the Sarāt mountains to Oman, the Ḥijāz, Syria, and Iraq at some point in the pre-Islamic period. The Azd would soon form the backbone of Ibāḍī missionary and political activities in eastern Arabia. Although Ibāḍism developed in close contact with proto-Sunnism,⁸ Jābir b. Zayd also laid down the first layers of Ibāḍī *fiqh* by positioning himself against his proto-Sunnī peers, especially in the fields of corporal purity and social relationships.⁹

After Jābir's death, Abū ʿUbayda Muslim b. Abī Karīma (d. between 145/762 and 158/775) took over the leadership of the Ibāḍī *majālis* of Baṣra. In later sources, he is usually regarded as the second imam of the Iraqi community. Together with Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib al-Ṭāʿī (d. ca. 150/767), Abū ʿUbayda planned the dissemination of Ibāḍism throughout the Umayyad empire that was already undergoing a severe political fragmentation. They organized missionary activities spearheaded by the “bearers of knowledge” (*ḥamalāt al-ʿilm*). These were men allegedly from North Africa and Oman, secretly trained in Baṣra and dispatched to spread the Ibāḍī creed. While there is a paucity of detailed information regarding the dissemination of Ibāḍism, it is reasonable to hypothesize at this juncture that the tribal networks that connected Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula may have played a pivotal role in this process.

6. On the ambiguous relationship between Khārijism and Ibāḍism, see Gaiser, *Shurāt Legends*; idem, “In Them Are Good Models’: Ibāḍī Depictions of the *Muḥakkima*,” in *Today’s Perspectives on Ibadi History*, ed. R. Eisener, 75–83 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2017); Enki Baptiste and Adam R. Gaiser, “Early Ibāḍī Historiography: The Case of the *Khawārij*,” in *Between Rebels and Rulers in the Early Islamic World: Power, Contention and Identity*, ed. H.-L. Hagemann and A. Grant (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming); Valerie J. Hoffman, “Historical Memory and Imagined Communities: Modern Ibāḍī Writings on Khārijism,” in *Historical Dimensions of Islam: Essays in Honor of R. Stephen Humphreys*, ed. J. Lindsay and J. Armajani, 185–200 (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 2009).

7. Patricia Crone and Fritz Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 301–3.

8. On the relationship between Ibāḍism and proto-Sunnism in Iraq, see Abdulrahman Al Salimi, ed., *Early Islamic Law in Basra in the 2nd/8th Century: Aqwāl Qatāda b. Diʿāma al-Sadūsī* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), esp. 1–25.

9. Francesca, “La fabbricazione,” 41–46, 54–55; eadem, “Ibāḍī Law and Jurisprudence,” *The Muslim World* 105 (2015): 209–23, esp. 210–11.

These connections tightened when Iraqi Ibādīs provided support to armed Ibādī-inspired rebellions that broke out in the peripheral regions of the caliphate in the 740s.¹⁰ The uprisings led to the establishment of the first—albeit short-lived—Ibādī imams which were soon crushed by the Umayyads and then by the ‘Abbāsids. Later on, in the second part of the second/eighth century, al-Rabī‘ b. Ḥabīb al-Farāhīdī (d. 170/786)—another Omani—succeeded Abū ‘Ubayda.¹¹ Upon al-Rabī‘’s death, he was replaced by Abū Ayyūb Wā’il b. Ayyūb al-Ḥaḍramī (alive in 192/807–8), who likely hailed from the mountainous Ḥaḍramawt region, which would provide shelter for an Ibādī community, at least in the middle of the second/eighth century and from time to time until the sixth/twelfth century.¹² During the time of Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. Ruḥayl (d. between 195/811 and 205/820),¹³ who is commonly presented as the last Ibādī ‘*ālim* of Baṣra,¹⁴ Ibādism is said to have withdrawn from Iraq to Oman and North Africa, where the control of the caliphate had been loosening.

Today, Ibādism is a minority within the minorities of the Islamic world and no longer plays a political role. It is still present in North Africa, where Ibādīs are essentially concentrated in the Mzāb region, on the island of Djerba, and in the Jabal Nafūsa, a mountain range located southwestern Libya. On the eastern shores of the Arabian Peninsula, northern Oman remains the stronghold of Ibādism, although the sultanate has never explicitly claimed to be Ibādī *per se*.¹⁵

Following the death of his father, Sa‘īd b. Taymūr, in 1970, Qābūs b. Sa‘īd (d. 2020) assumed control of the sultanate.¹⁶ It was not until his Omani revival policy (*nahḍa*), that many sources became available for study. The country opened up to the world, and soon afterwards, John C. Wilkinson and Gerald R. Smith, two British scholars, accessed the manuscripts collected by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture (hereafter MNHC) in the Ibādī hinterland and brought to Muscat on the coast. Wilkinson and Smith provided the first inventories of these sources in 1978.¹⁷ Although Wilkinson published

10. On the North African uprisings, see Aillet, *L’archipel ibadite*, 113–18. On the rebellion of ‘Abd Allāh b. Yahyā in Ḥaḍramawt, see my recent reconsideration in Enki Baptiste, “*La khuṭba d’Abū Ḥamza al-Shāri : soulèvement ibādite et rhétorique de la contestation en péninsule Arabique au second siècle de l’Islam. Traduction commentée d’une version inédite du sermon*,” *Al-‘Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā. The Journal of Middle East Medievalists* 32 (2024): 165–249, esp. 167–85.

11. Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, 305–8.

12. *Ibid.*, 308–9.

13. *Ibid.*, 309–13.

14. On his place in Ibādī sources, see Abdulrahman Al Salimi, *Ibādism East of Mesopotamia: Early Islamic Iran, Central Asia and Iran* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2016), 156; Enki Baptiste, *L’ibādisme omanais: histoire et mémoire d’un mouvement dissident aux marges de l’Empire* (PhD diss., Université Lumière Lyon-2, 2023), 1:91–92, 548.

15. On modern Oman and Ibādism, see Marc Valeri, *Le sultanat d’Oman. Une révolution en trompe-l’œil* (Paris: Éditions Kharthala, 2007).

16. Rabi Uzi, *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society: Oman under Sa‘īd bin Taymur, 1932–1970* (Brighton/Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2006).

17. Gerald R. Smith, “The Omani Manuscript Collection at Muscat. Part I: A General Description of the MSS,” *Arabian Studies* 4 (1978): 161–90; John C. Wilkinson, “The Omani Manuscript Collection at Muscat. Part II: The Early Ibādī *Fiqh* Works,” *Arabian Studies* 4 (1978): 191–209.

shortly afterwards several meticulous and pioneering studies on the Omani Ibādī corpus and the history of the community in the Arabian Peninsula,¹⁸ the sources have remained inaccessible to non-specialists. This is due to several challenges that have significantly shaped the field of Ibādī studies over the last decades.

Indeed, new source materials were published in Oman shortly thereafter, viz. the *Bayān al-sharʿ*, a huge *fiqh* encyclopedia of 72 volumes attributed to Abū Bakr al-Kindī, an important Ibādī *ʿālim* who lived between the end of the fifth/eleventh and the beginning of the sixth/twelfth centuries.¹⁹ Since the 1970s, Sayyida Ismāʿīl Kāshif has taken great strides in editing Ibādī sources, as in the case of the major compilation of epistles (*sīra*; pl. *siyar*) published under the title *al-Siyar wa-l-jawābāt li-ʿulamāʾ wa-aʿimmat ʿUmān*.²⁰ One should mention at this juncture that in the Ibādī context, the term *sīra* refers to an epistle. Unlike their North African peers, the Iraqi and Omani Ibādīs never used the word *sīra* in its classical meaning, viz. a biography.²¹ Some *siyar* are short (a few pages long), whereas others can count almost a hundred pages in their edited versions. However, it is worth noting that the editions produced in Oman during the last quarter of the twentieth century often lacked a critical apparatus and were riddled with substantial flaws, making the sources (extremely) difficult to read. Furthermore, with the exception of the epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān,²² almost no Iraqi and Omani Ibādī sources have been translated.

Ibn Dhakwān's personal life and dates are shrouded in obscurity and have been a matter of debate.²³ Nevertheless, his theological and polemical *sīra* has quickly become a key source for historians examining Ibādī history from an internal perspective. Indeed, it has been postulated that Ibn Dhakwān's epistle encapsulates the Ibādī formative view on the first *fitna* and echoes the fierce debates surrounding the political legitimacy of the Umayyads. In their detailed and meticulous commentary of the text, Patricia Crone and Fritz Zimmermann argue for the authenticity of the *sīra*, which was likely to have been written either in Khurāsān, in Oman, or in Iraq between the end of the Umayyad caliphate and the last decades of the second/eighth century. They identify instances of intertextuality—

18. John C. Wilkinson, "The Ibādī *Imāma*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 3 (1976): 535–51; idem, "Oman and East Africa: New Light on Early Kilwan History from the Omani Sources," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14, no. 2 (1981): 272–305; idem, "Ibādī Ḥadīth: An Essay of Normalization," *Der Islam* 62, no. 2 (1985): 231–59.

19. Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Kindī, *Bayān al-sharʿ*, ed. Aḥmad b. Ḥamād al-Khalīlī *et al.*, 72 vols. (Muscat: MNHC, 1982–93).

20. Sayyida I. Kāshif, ed., *al-Siyar wa-l-jawābāt li-ʿulamāʾ wa-aʿimmat ʿUmān*, 2 vols. (Muscat: MNHC, 1986).

21. Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*, 23–26; Abdulrahman Al Salimi, "Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Siyar*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55, no. 1 (2010), 115–62, esp. 116–21; idem, *Ibādīsm East of Mesopotamia*. It is worth noting that, prior to the seventeenth century at least, eastern Ibādī *ʿulamāʾ* did not display any particular interest in compiling Muḥammad's story as Ibn Hishām did in his *Sīra al-nabawiyya*. In the sixth/twelfth century or at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century, Abū Saʿīd al-Qalhātī composed a *Kitāb al-Kashf wa-l-bayān* which contains a hundred-page long section on the Prophet. However, al-Qalhātī is less concerned with the life of the Prophet than with his legal legacy.

22. Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim ibn Dhakwān*.

23. On Ibn Dhakwān, and for a short summary of the debates on his life, see Adam R. Gaiser, "Ibn Dhakwān, Sālim," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., ed. Kate Fleet *et al.* (Leiden: Brill Online).

first highlighted by Michael Cook in his seminal book *Early Muslim Dogma*²⁴—between Ibn Dhakwān’s epistle and Islamic religious sources composed in supposedly the same milieu, such as the *Kitāb al-Irjā’* commonly attributed to Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, or alternatively other Ibādī *siyar* edited by Kāshif in the *Siyar wa-l-jawābāt* collection. This allows them to demonstrate that early Ibādīs were not isolated from other sectarian groups. Instead, these religious sources were part of a broader historiographical network, they convincingly claim, and are therefore useful for tracing the formation of sectarian creeds during the first two centuries of Islam.

However, Crone and Zimmermann’s authoritative study has not significantly prompted non-specialists to use Ibādī sources in a more systematic manner, nor did it spur Ibādī specialists to pursue the edition and translation of additional sources—at least not before the beginning of the 2010s. Indeed, since 2011 and their recovery of two Ibādī epistles that had long been considered lost,²⁵ Abdulrahman Al Salimi and Wilferd Madelung (d. 2023) have published numerous studies on Ibādism and Ibādī legal and theological literature.²⁶ The two books under examination here are good testaments to their intellectual legacy. Both scholars have acquired considerable experience in the field of early Islamic religious sources. Madelung is well known for his pioneering works on Zaydī Shī‘ism and religious trends in the Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, and Central Asia.²⁷ Since Al Salimi received his PhD from Durham University in 2001,²⁸ he has continued to research and edit Ibādī sources. He is also credited with a full translation of three epistles composed in Khurāsān between the fourth/tenth and the fifth/eleventh centuries.²⁹ The current revival of Ibādī studies owes much to him.

24. Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

25. Abdulrahman Al Salimi and Wilferd Madelung, ed., *Early Ibādī Literature: Abu l-Mundhir Bashīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb*, *Kitāb al-Raṣf fi l-Tawḥīd*, *Kitāb al-Muḥāraba and Sira* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011).

26. Among these publications are two books dedicated to ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī, a prominent Ibādī scholar who lived in the second/eighth century in Kūfa. However, his legacy remains under-explored compared to that of Baṣran ‘ulamā’. Both books contain a number of theological epistles that display an alternative Ibādī view on a range of religious issues such as God’s unicity (*tawḥīd*), predestination (*qadar*), the imamate or the names and the statutes (*al-asmā’ wa-l-aḥkām*). Abdulrahman Al Salimi and Wilferd Madelung, ed., *Early Ibādī Theology: Six kalām Texts by ‘Abd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Abdulrahman Al Salimi, ed., *Early Ibadi Theology: New Material on Rational Thought in Islam from the Pen of al-Fazārī (2nd/8th Century)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

27. Wilferd Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran* (Albany, NY: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988); idem, “The Early Murji’a in Khurāsān and Transoxiana and the Spread of Ḥanafism,” *Der Islam* 59 (1982), 32–39; idem, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), among many other pioneering works.

28. Abdulrahman Al Salimi, “The Omani *Siyar* as a Literary Genre and Its Role in the Political Evolution and Doctrinal Development of Eastern Ibadism, with Special Reference to the Epistles of Khwarizm, Khurasan and Mansura,” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2001).

29. Al Salimi, *Ibādism, East of Mesopotamia*.

In two pathbreaking papers published successively in 2009 and 2010, Al Salimi provided an in-depth and almost exhaustive appraisal of the Iraqi and Omani *siyar* and then attempted to identify the main themes at stake.³⁰ However, a comprehensive historiographical study on Ibādī literature is still outstanding. On the one hand, such a study would allow for a more nuanced understanding of these early Islamic epistles, moving beyond the catch-all term of *sīra*. On the other hand, it would be beneficial to focus on early Ibādī sources not as a standalone literature produced by a marginal and heterodox group, but as one among many intellectual traditions in early Islam. As mentioned above, Crone and Zimmermann's 2001 book has paved the way. Such a method has the meaningful advantage of placing Ibādī epistles in their wider literary and religious contexts of production. It also has the merit of highlighting the scholarly competition between various Muslim religious groups in and around Iraq during the formative period of Islam.

At this juncture, the publication of a new set of Iraqi and Omani *siyar* is thus of great significance. Most of the epistles had hitherto remained unedited, although Al Salimi previously identified them as worthy of consideration in his two papers on Ibādī literature. These two new volumes provide scholars with a remarkable corpus of little-known sources that are thoroughly and carefully edited and that could lay the ground for a seminal investigation into an early sectarian literature.

The first volume under consideration, *Ibādī Texts from the 2nd/8th Century* (hereafter *IT8*), was published by Al Salimi and Madelung in 2018. The subsequent volume, *Ibādī Texts in Oman from the 3rd/9th Century* (hereafter *IT9*), was edited by Al Salimi alone in 2021. Both volumes comprise Arabic critical editions of 14 and 23 *siyar*, respectively, accompanied by an overarching editorial introduction for each. In contrast to Kāshif's pioneering edition of the *Siyar wa-l-jawābāt*, based on a unique manuscript that intermingles epistles from the second/eighth century with others written in the sixth/twelfth century, Al Salimi and Madelung proceed in chronological manner. They single out a set of *siyar* they deem particularly representative of Ibādī thought for each century. Within the volumes, the texts are organized chronologically according to their supposed period of writing, from the earliest to the latest.

The texts edited in *IT8* and *IT9* are based on a sample of late Ibādī manuscripts that are briefly presented by Al Salimi and Madelung in the introductions to the two volumes (pp. 9–10 for *IT8*, and 25–26 for *IT9*). Four of these manuscripts are housed in private Omani libraries, namely the Maktabat Nāṣir b. Rāshid al-Kharūṣī of 'Awābī, the Maktabat al-Sālimī of Bidiyya, the Maktabat al-Sayfī of Nizwā, and the Maktabat al-Būsa'īdī in Muscat. One additional manuscript is held by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture. In addition to the Omani manuscripts, Al Salimi and Madelung also utilized one manuscript held in the private library of Ghālib b. 'Alī al-Hinā'ī (d. 2009), the last Ibādī imam, who sought refuge in Dammām (Saudi Arabia) in 1959 following his defeat by Omani sultan Sa'īd b. Taymūr.

30. Al Salimi, "Identifying the (Ibādī/Omani) *Siyar*"; idem, "Themes of Ibadi/Omani *Siyar*," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54, no. 2 (2009): 475–514.

It is worth mentioning that none of these manuscripts date to the medieval period. Most are copies of earlier works that are no longer extant in their original forms and that were made under the Ya‘ariba imams towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century or during the twelfth/eighteenth century.³¹ Consequently, the history of the manuscripts raises pivotal questions about authenticity, transmission, and the circulation of information within and outside the Ibādī community. These questions require critical examination or, at the very least, discussion.³² Regrettably, the editors provide only technical information about the manuscripts, including the place and the date in which they were copied and the name of the scribe, if mentioned.

The *IT8* volume is introduced with a cursory presentation of the sources. Considering the dearth of scholarship on Ibādī sources, one would have anticipated a more substantial discussion of the texts as a corpus rather than discussing the texts one by one. A more robust contextualization of the *siyar* within the broader framework of their writings would also have been welcome. Moreover, some of the editors’ assertions need to be debated, such as the statement that Shabīb b. ‘Aṭiyya’s *sīra* was written “after the ‘Abbāsīd invasion of Oman,” which is dated incorrectly as having occurred in 123/741 whereas scholarly consensus and narrative sources date this event to 134/751 (p. 6). Likewise, Al Salimi and Madelung affirm without solid evidence that Khalaf b. Ziyād al-Baḥrānī’s epistle was “evidently” addressed to the Ibāḍīs in Oman (p. 7). What is more, the biographical information provided by Al Salimi and Madelung on Khalaf is drawn from a later source, a *sīra* attributed to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī. The latter is known to have retrospectively rationalized the history of early Ibādism from the vantage point of his own time in the fourth/tenth century. As I have been unable to unearth these details elsewhere in the medieval Ibādī corpus, one must be cautious with such information.

In contrast to *IT8*, the introduction of the *IT9* volume is well structured and thus proves more useful for scholars. Al Salimi develops a number of thought-provoking hypotheses that warrant further investigation. Notably, he presents the 23 *siyar* as forming a corpus in themselves. The Omani scholar addresses the engagement of the ‘*ulamā*’ with scriptural sources, particularly the Qurʾān and the Prophetic ḥadīth. He also highlights the significant developments that transpired in Ibādī historiography during the third/ninth century.

The critical apparatus provided in both books are very helpful. Indeed, Qurʾānic quotations are properly referenced within the text as well as in a thematic index located at the end of the volumes, along with an index of Prophetic ḥadīth. Additionally, each volume contains a comprehensive geographical index and an exhaustive list of the individuals and sectarian groups mentioned in the *siyar* (for example, ahl al-Nahrawān, the Khawārij, the Murjiʿa, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, etc.). This feature is convenient for navigating through the texts and allows for cross-reading.

31. John C. Wilkinson, “A Historic Perspective on the *Nahḍa*,” in *Oman, Ibadism and Modernity*, ed. A. Al Salimi and R. Eisener, 25–35 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2018).

32. To the best of my knowledge, Hannah-Lena Hagemann is the only one who has highlighted the issue so far. See Hagemann, *The Khārijites in Early Islamic Historical Tradition*, 28–29.

The *IT8* volume sheds new light on the formative period of Ibāḍism in Iraq and Oman, when the movement first developed as a religious and political group. In Baṣra, Abū ‘Ubayda and Abū Mawdūd Ḥāḥib played a pivotal role in the theological and juridical debates inside the Ibāḍī community. They wrote two short *siyar* on predestination (*qadar*) and repentance (*tawba*) (no. 5, pp. 94–104; no. 6, pp. 104–12). Abū ‘Ubayda is also credited with an epistle of his own, dedicated to the alms tax (*zakāt*) and addressed to his North African supporters (no. 8, pp. 118–46).³³ The text expresses the will of the western Ibāḍīs to live in accordance with new sectarian rules that were under development further east. Thus, the *siyar* edited in the *IT8* volume provide evidence of the emergence of Ibāḍism as a political movement and the development of a genuine Ibāḍī creed. In addition to the theological and *fiqh*-focused *siyar* of Abū ‘Ubayda and Abū Ḥāḥib, the *sīra* of Wā’il b. Ayyūb, who resided in Baṣra during the last quarter of the second/eighth century, arguably epitomizes the formation of a nascent Ibāḍī creed. It encapsulates the first Ibāḍī profession of faith (*‘aqīda*), although here Wā’il b. Ayyūb employs the expression “genealogy of Islam” (*nasab al-islām*)³⁴ (no. 12, pp. 306–28). The epistle embraces the main religious and juridical issues that arose during the second/eighth century in a didactic manner, providing a comprehensive overview of these topics.

Establishing a new Ibāḍī ethic was also a key objective of Abū Mawdūd in his *sīra* (no. 3, pp. 60–80) wherein he urges his fellow believers to fear God (*taqwā*), to undertake systematic consultation (*shūrā*) among themselves upon every important matter, and to act in accordance with their words. In Abū Mawdūd’s *Sīra*, we encounter one of the earliest mentions of the cornerstone idea asserted by Ibāḍīs that faith encompasses both word and deeds (*al-qawl wa-l-‘amāl*). Therefore, Abū Mawdūd Ḥāḥib appears as a proponent of activism (*shirā’*), as opposed to quietism (*qu‘ūd*).³⁵ In the middle of the second/eighth century, activism against those depicted as “tyrants” indeed became a rallying cry within the Iraqi and Omani communities.

The *siyar* are accordingly of considerable value to the study of the Ibāḍī stance on rebellion and political violence. In an especially lengthy *sīra* (no. 11, pp. 222–306), Khalaf b. Ziyād al-Baḥrānī (d. ca. 134/751) outlines the legal principles governing warfare within the context of the formation of the first Ibāḍī imamate. Indeed, he is known to have settled in Oman—perhaps in the 740s—where he was part of the council of *‘ulamā’* who advised al-Julandā b. Mas‘ūd (r. 132–34/749–51). His intricate and theoretical *sīra* is dedicated to the legal issue of “the names and the statutes” (*al-asmā’ wa-l-aḥkām*). It testifies to the overwhelming need for Ibāḍīs to establish a doctrine on the treatment of enemies in case of an armed conflict. Indeed, Khalaf b. Ziyād argues that the treatment of enemies should vary depending on whether they are polytheists (*ahl al-shirk*), idol worshippers (*ahl al-awthān*), non-Ibāḍī Muslims (*ahl al-qibla*), the people of rebellion (*ahl al-iṭ‘ān*), the people of war (*ahl al-muḥāraba*), the people of association (*ahl al-walāya*), and so on.

33. On the *sīra*, see Ersilia Francesca, “Law and Politics in the Early Ibāḍī Communities: Abū ‘Ubayda al-Tamīmī’s *Risāla* to Abū ‘l-Khaṭṭāb al-Ma‘āfirī,” in *L’ibadisme dans les sociétés de l’Islam médiéval. Modèles et interactions*, ed. C. Aillet, 72–88 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), which offers an in-depth analysis of the epistle.

34. On the *nasab al-islām*, see Al Salimi, *Ibāḍism East of Mesopotamia*, 41–44; Baptiste, “L’ibāḍisme omanais,” 1:329–32.

35. On the tensions between *shirā’* and *qu‘ūd* during the Baṣran period, see Wilkinson, *Ibāḍism*, 171–77.

The *siyar* also document the competing memories of the first civil war, the great *fitna*. The debate over the legality of ‘Uthmān’s murder is critically engaged by ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād, the eponymous and purported founding father of Ibādism,³⁶ in his letters supposedly addressed to the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 66–86/685–705) (no. 1, pp. 19–44). The last *sīra* of the *IT8* volume is anonymous and is incidentally the only epistle of the volume that was arguably not composed in Baṣra or in Oman. The text is titled *Mukhtaṣar min kitāb fihi aḥdāth ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān* (no. 14, pp. 350–68) and its authorship has been attributed by Madelung to al-Haytham b. ‘Adī, a Kūfan *akhbārī* who died in 207/822.³⁷ As indicated by the title, the *sīra* is concerned with the innovations (*bida‘*) that ‘Uthmān is seen to have introduced, which ultimately led to his assassination. The arbitration (*taḥkīm*) that ‘Alī presided over during the battle of Ṣiffīn is at stake in Ibn Ibād’s second letter, which is likely to have been addressed to a Shī‘ī (no. 2, pp. 44–60). The great *fitna* is also a matter of smoldering and acrimonious debates in Shabīb b. ‘Aṭīyya’s epistles (no. 9, pp. 146–212; no. 10, pp. 212–22). The Omani *‘ālim* emphasizes the necessity of taking a position on the conflict and criticizes the “doubters” (alternatively named the Shukkāk or the Murji‘a) who advocate the benefit of suspending judgment (*wuqūf*) over the dramatic events that tore apart the *umma* after the reign of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. It is quite clear that the refusal to take a stance was a bone of contention, as demonstrated by the severe rebukes directed towards the “people of doubt” (*ahl al-shakk*) in the anonymous reply (*radd*) that was addressed to them (no. 13, pp. 328–50).

As for the *siyar* in the *IT9* volume, they date to the period of the second Omani imamate (177–280/793–893). In 177/793, Ibādī *‘ulamā’* vanquished a coalition of Omani tribal leaders who had ruled the region on the behalf of the ‘Abbāsids for almost fifty years. Following the battle, Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Affān (r. 177–79/793–95) was appointed imam. From the late second/eighth century to the last years of the third/ninth century, six Ibādī imams succeeded each other until a civil war erupted in 273/886. Between 272/886 and 280/893, Oman was wreaked by internecine struggles after the overthrow of al-Ṣalt b. Mālik (r. 237–73/851–86), who had been in power for more than thirty years. The internal rivalry turned into a regional conflict when an ‘Abbāsīd expeditionary corps invaded Oman, almost stamped out the Ibādīs, and brought the region back into the bosom of the Iraqī empire.³⁸

36. On the controversy over the existence of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād, and the authorship of the letters usually attributed to him, see Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 51–67; Wilferd Madelung, “‘Abd Allāh Ibn Ibād and the Origins of Ibādīyya,” in *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam: Proceedings of the 22nd Congress of L’Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, ed. B. Michakel-Pikulsk and A. Pikulsk, 51–57 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008); idem, “‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād’s Second Letter to ‘Abd al-Malik,” in *Community, State, History and Change: Festschrift for Prof. Riḍwān al-Sayyid on his 60th Birthday*, 7–17 (Beirut: al-Shabka al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Abḥāth wa-l-Nashr, 2011); idem, “The Authenticity of the Letter of ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibād to ‘Abd al-Malik,” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 132 (2012): 37–43.

37. Wilferd Madelung, “Al-Haytham b. ‘Adī on the Offences of the Caliph ‘Uthmān,” in *Centre and Periphery within the Borders of Islam: Proceedings of the 23rd Congress of l’Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants*, ed. G. Contu, 47–51 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012).

38. On the place of Oman in the ‘Abbāsīd empire during the fourth/tenth and the fifth/eleventh centuries, see Enki Baptiste, “Oman dans l’écosystème impérial irakien au premier âge abbasside et à l’époque buyide : entre marginalité construite et convoitises politiques (seconde moitié du VIII^e – seconde moitié du XI^e siècle),”

The epistles included in the *IT9* volume demonstrate the evolution of Ibāḍī historiography after the transfer of the Ibāḍī center of gravity from Iraq to Oman and the establishment of a long-lasting imamate in eastern Arabia. The third/ninth century is often considered as a golden age of Ibāḍism by later ‘*ulamā*’. Even if this retrospective view should be approached with caution and nuanced, the Omani Ibāḍī community nonetheless did experience a period of swift economic, political, and religious growth. The coastal city of Ṣuḥār, on the shores of the Indian Ocean, became a commercial and cosmopolitan nerve center at the outlet of the Persian Gulf.³⁹ The increasing presence of non-Ibāḍī merchants in Oman is well-attested by the sources. As a result, Indian pirates started to plunder ships, enticed by the resources. They used to roam the Gulf with small vessels, raiding the ports and coastal cities and then quickly seeking shelter in secluded inlets. This forced the Ibāḍī imams to take urgent action. The *sīra* of Munīr b. al-Nayyir al-Ja‘lānī is of considerable interest in understanding how the Omani Ibāḍī community addressed the challenge of piracy (no. 4, pp. 52–66). Likewise, in the second half of the third/ninth century, the sixth imam, al-Ṣalt b. Mālik, sent a letter to the *shurāt*—the Ibāḍī volunteers—who were dispatched to Socotra to squelch a rebellion launched by the local Christian community (no. 17, pp. 200–211). The *sīra* demonstrates that by the third/ninth century Ibāḍism had become a major political force in the Indian Ocean; some later chronicles even assert that Ghassān b. ‘Abd Allāh and al-Muhannā b. Jayfar gathered ships to create a navy and enforce Omani-*cum*-Ibāḍī law on the sea.

These epistles are worthy of attention because they address the issue of the imamate and how the institution should ideally work. The *siyar* also allow access to the Ibāḍī memory of the first political models—including some of the most iconic Companions such as Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, as well as those among the Khārijites who rebelled against the Umayyads—whose life and deeds are supposed to inspire the imams. Along with the legal letters that Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb addressed to his fellow Ibāḍīs settled in North Africa and Ḥaḍramawt (no. 15, pp. 157–72; no. 16, pp. 172–200), the *siyar* unveil early layers of Ibāḍī political thought. Some of the epistles are embedded in theoretical considerations, such as that attributed to al-Muhannā b. Jayfar al-Yaḥmadī (r. 226–37/840–51) (no. 14, pp. 138–57). The imam was arguably skilled in legal matters, as he addressed technical issues such as marriage (*bu‘ūla*), divorce (*ṭalāq*), prayer (*ṣalāt*), and the status of the slave (*raqīq*).

Other *siyar* in this volume clearly pinpoint the effective balance of power within the imamate and the way the institution was regulated. It appears that the imam was advised by a council of scholars, as demonstrated by many *siyar* (see, for examples, no. 1, pp. 35–38; no. 2, pp. 38–42; no. 10, pp. 126–30; no. 11, pp. 130–34; no. 12, pp. 134–36; no. 13, pp. 136–38). These are short letters—no more than three or four pages in the edited versions—that one or more religious men dispatched to an imam. The prominent ‘*ulamā*’ who authored these letters advocated for the *naṣīḥa* or the *shūrā*, which refers to the good advice that a knowledgeable person is asked to provide freely to promote fair and just governance. These

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39. On Ṣuḥār in the medieval period, see Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Mundhirī, *Tārīkh Ṣuḥār al-siyāsī wa-l-ḥaḍārī min zuḥūr al-islām ḥattā nihāyat al-qarn al-rābi‘ al-hijrī* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ulūm al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Ṭibā‘a wa-l-Nashr, 2008).

principles are depicted as both a political and religious requirement. The response (*jawāb*) of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb to al-Ṣalt b. Mālik on the “people in prison” (*ahl al-sijn*) is a good example (no. 19, pp. 218–24). It shows how a man versed in *‘ilm* is expected to render practical assistance to a leader who is committed to meting out justice.

During the third/ninth century, creed was still a matter of debate in Oman and other places where Ibādī communities had settled. Such disputes occasionally gave rise to tensions within the community, as evidenced by several *siyar*. In the late second/eighth century or early third/ninth century,⁴⁰ the Ibādī community was torn apart when Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl, a proponent of the Baṣran *‘ulamā’*, confronted Hārūn b. al-Yamān, who was supported by the Kūfan community led, at that time, by ‘Abd Allāh al-Fazārī (d. after 179/795). The *disputatio* focused on theological topics, but it primarily exemplifies the fierce competition between the two Iraqi strongholds of Ibādism that were struggling to impose their creed upon outlying communities. Abū Sufyān endeavored to promote the view of the Baṣran *‘ulamā’* that had held sway over Oman (no. 5, pp. 66–88; no. 6, pp. 88–101). Meanwhile, Hārūn upheld the views of al-Fazārī and received backing from the Ibādīs in Ḥaḍramawt and Yemen (no. 7, pp. 101–10). Later, Hārūn b. al-Yamān and al-Fazārī’s stances were edged out. As a result, academic literature has largely overlooked the history of Ibādism in Kūfa, which deserves to be reassessed.⁴¹

Likewise, and despite the exile from Iraq to Oman and the region’s geographical remoteness, the Ibādīs of Oman were not shielded from the ongoing and acrimonious debates over the nature of the Qur’ān that occurred in Bagdad after the ‘Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mūn (r. 198–218/813–33) launched the *miḥna*. Indeed, ‘Azzān b. al-Ṣaqr, an Ibādī *‘ālim*, is credited with an epistle dedicated to the nature of the Qur’ān (no. 20, pp. 224–33), which is thought to be one of the earliest surviving texts written on the issue. Moreover, Al Salimi has logically chosen to incorporate the letter (*risāla*) on the same matter attributed to the fourth imam of Tāhart, Muḥammad b. al-Aflaḥ (r. 261–81/874–94) and arguably sent to the Omanis (no. 21, pp. 233–46).⁴²

The publication of this new collection of *siyar* by Al Salimi therefore represents a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of Ibādism in the third/ninth century, unfortunately still scant due to the lack of edited sources. It is worth mentioning that the *Siyar wa-l-jawābāt* compilation published by Kāshif in 1986 did not contain much material on the second Ibādī imamate. To the best of my knowledge, the only period of the third/ninth century that has hitherto been relatively well documented is the one that saw the outbreak of civil war in its final years, thanks to the numerous epistles edited by Kāshif in 1986, such as Abū al-Mu’tḥir’s *Kitāb al-Aḥdāth wa-l-ṣifāt* and *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-l-burhān bi-l-shāhidayn*, or Abū Qaḥṭān Khālīd b. Qaḥṭān’s *Sīra*. These *siyar* have the significant advantage of having been composed while the civil war was raging in Oman. As a result,

40. The exact dates of the debate have been a matter of discussion. See Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle*, 311–12; Hoffman, “The Development of an Ibādī Textual Tradition,” 19–21.

41. The recent editions of epistles attributed to al-Fazārī should encourage further investigations in the next decades. See footnote 26 above.

42. On this *sīra*, see Vanna Cremonesi, “Un antico documento ibādīta sul Corano creato. La *Risālah* dell’Imām rustamide Muḥammad Abū l-Yaqzān,” *Studi Magrebini* 1 (1966): 133–78.

they offer invaluable insight, albeit steeply partisan, into the crisis. Conversely, historians have heretofore lacked sources that would help them to grasp mechanisms of power and means of legitimation during the heyday of the Omani imamate. Recent studies have overwhelmingly relied on *fiqh* sources of the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries, which provide a comprehensive and well-organized exposition of the theory of the imamate but are rather late. Therefore, the *IT9* volume fills the gap that had prevailed until now between the Iraqi-*cum*-formative period of Ibādism and the twilight of the medieval Ibādī imamate, at the end of the sixth/twelfth century.

Among the *IT8* and *IT9* epistles, some had already been edited in Kāshif's compilation, *al-Siyar wa-l-jawābāt*. This is the case with respect to 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād's letter to 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and Shabīb b. 'Aṭīyya's *Sīra* for *IT8*.⁴³ As for *IT9*, one will find a new edition of the epistle Hārūn b. al-Yamān sent to his adversaries during his clash with Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl and the latter's responses. The *siyar* of Munīr b. al-Nayyir, Hāshim b. Ghaylān, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, and Abū al-Muṭṭhir have also been reedited. Madelung and Al Salimi's reedition is welcome given the poor quality of Kāshif's first edition, which lacked a critical apparatus. However, the reason that Al Salimi (and Madelung for the first volume) chose these specific *siyar* instead of others from the same periods is not explained in their introductions. In *IT9*, for example, the last epistle of the volume is a later text, composed by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bisyāwī (d. ca. 364/975), in the second half of the fourth/tenth century (no. 23, pp. 280–331).⁴⁴ One wonders why Al Salimi went so far beyond the third/ninth century to include this *sīra* in the book, while omitting the *Kitāb al-Aḥdāth wa-l-ṣifāt*, the *Kitāb al-Bayan wa-l-burhān* attributed to Abū al-Muṭṭhir al-Ṣalt b. Khamīs al-Kharūṣī, and Abū Qaḥṭān Khālīd b. Qaḥṭān's *Sīra*. Indeed, these three texts are masterpieces of the late third/ninth century Ibādī literary tradition and shed light on the internal strife that led to the dismantling of the Ibādī community in Oman. Although they had already been included in the *Siyar wa-l-jawābāt* collection, it would have been useful for scholars to have them freshly edited with the same care and skill that Al Salimi (and Madelung) brought to the texts included in the two volumes. Al Salimi justifies this omission by asserting that al-Bisyāwī's *sīra* encapsulates and exemplifies many of the internal evolutions that Ibādī historiography experienced between the course of the third/ninth and the fourth/tenth centuries. While this assessment is not wrong, the same rationale could have been made for Abū al-Muṭṭhir's epistles or for Ibn Baraka's *Kitāb al-Muwāzana*, composed in the first half of the fourth/tenth century.

In terms of structure, the epistles are printed in descending page order in the *IT8* volume: from page 44 to 19 for 'Abd Allāh b. Ibād's first letter; from 60 to 40 for the second one; from 80 to 60 for Abū Mawdūd's *sīra*, and so on. This editorial decision seems somewhat puzzling. It renders the quotations of the *siyar* in a scholarly work odd for an external reader, and the transition from the table of contents to the text quite uncomfortable.

43. Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya*, 1:259–60.

44. On al-Bisyāwī, see Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle*, 335–36.

Additionally, both introductions could have used additional proofreading. One can find several transliteration errors or approximations. While these small inaccuracies are usually not detrimental for those acquainted with Ibādī/Omani history, they do make the introductions less accessible to a non-specialist scholar or student. In the *IT9* introduction, we find *ʿāimma* instead of *aʿimma* (pp. 20 and 21) and *āʿmāl* instead of *aʿmāl* (p. 22). Errors occur in the transliteration of some proper names: we have *Hināʿī* instead of *Hināʿī* (p. 26), an important Azdī tribe settled in Oman and pertaining to the Mālik b. Fahm groups; *al-Basyāwī* instead of *al-Bisyāwī* (p. 15) or, alternatively *Bisyawī* or *Bisyānī*, the *nisba* of the Omani scholar who hailed from the small village of *Bisyā*; *Abū al-Mūʿraj* instead of *Abū al-Muʿarrij* (p. 7); *Shʿabiyya* instead of *Shaʿbiyya* (p. 7).

Far more problematic is the misattribution of a *sīra* to *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb b. Ḥafṣ al-Hilālī* and the blatant confusion between *Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib al-Ṭāʿī* and *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb b. Ḥafṣ al-Hilālī*. In the *IT8* volume, Al Salimi and Madelung edited a twenty-page epistle attributed to *Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib*, who is known as a prominent *ʿālim* of *Baṣra*. *Abū Mawdūd* supposedly died under the reign of the ʿAbbāsīd caliph *al-Manṣūr* (r. 137–58/754–75) and never traveled to Oman, to my knowledge. In the *IT9* volume, Al Salimi purports to edit the *sīra* of *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb*, an Omani scholar whose life is barely known. Based on other *siyar* he authored and late biographical dictionaries, however, it can be safely assumed that he lived during the same period as *Munīr b. al-Nayyir al-Jaʿlānī* or *Hāshim b. Ghaylān*. Thus, *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb* likely died in the first half of the third/ninth century. None of the sources mentions that he visited *Baṣra*. Moreover, his name does not surface in the late Ibādī biographical dictionary composed in North Africa but based on earlier—albeit lost—sources. It is therefore important to note that *Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib* and *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb* are two different persons, as Martin Custers has already pointed out.⁴⁵ However, the *sīra* presented in *IT9* as an epistle addressed by *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb* to the imam *Ghassān b. ʿAbd Allāh* (r. 192–208/808–23) is *verbatim* identical to the one edited by Al Salimi and Madelung as *Abū Mawdūd Ḥājib*’s *sīra* in *IT8*. Consequently, *Abū Mawdūd Ḥabīb*’s *sīra*, which Al Salimi mentions in his 2010 paper, still remains unknown.⁴⁶

With *IT8* and *IT9*, Al Salimi and Madelung provide refreshing perspectives on a poorly known religious and juridic literature. These two volumes offer invaluable source-material for exploring the Islamic history of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries from a different angle. The period that stretches from the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān to the stabilization of the ʿAbbāsīd dynasty turns out to be pivotal in many respects, as it saw the establishment of the highly controversial dynastic principle by the Umayyads, the formation of an Islamic empire as such, and the downfall of the Damascene caliphate. Subsequently, the major social, economic, political, and religious transformations that disrupted the Islamic societies after the so-called ʿAbbāsīd revolution led to territorial competition between the Iraqī heartlands of the ʿAbbāsīd dynasty and its peripheral provinces, within

45. Custers, *Al-Ibādīyya*, 1:194–95.

46. Al Salimi, “Identifying,” 132.

which centrifugal forces gradually increased. Oman was fully integrated into this world in motion, although it seems that neither the Umayyad forces nor their ‘Abbāsid successors were able to impose their rule over eastern Arabia, at least not lastingly.

Ibāḍism, which has long been regarded as an offspring of Khārijism, should nevertheless be reconsidered in the light of the sources available as a movement that played a pivotal role in the crystallization and definition of cornerstone theological and juridical concepts such as the association (*walāya*), the dissociation (*barā’a*) and the suspension of judgment (*wuqūf*), quietism (*qu‘ūd*) and activism (*shirā’*), predestination (*qadar*) and postponement (*irjā’*), as well as consultation (*shūrā*). The Ibāḍī ‘*ulamā*’ acknowledged a similar set of political leaders and Companions as did the Sunnis, like Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. At the same time, they also rejected others, such as ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān and the Umayyads. Indeed, the formation of the sectarian movement proceeded in a manner identical to that of other Islamic *madhhabs*. Upon initial examination, the Ibāḍis distinguished themselves from the Sunnis and the Shī‘is by their historical memory of the first *fitna*, which one can unearth in the earliest *siyar*. The Ibāḍī rereading of the civil war led to the development of a genuine political ideal.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the pioneering works of Cook, Crone, and Zimmermann paved the way for reconsidering Ibāḍism beyond a systematic affiliation with heterodoxy. More than twenty years after the publication of Sālīm b. Dhakwān’s *Sīra*, Al Salimi and Madelung have provided us with the necessary materials to investigate early Ibāḍism in Iraq and in eastern Arabia. This achievement undoubtedly enhances our understanding of the intellectual history of Ibāḍism. Further work remains to be done on the *siyar*. New translations would prove to be particularly beneficial.

Last but not least, it is hoped that my review has clarified that the newly edited Ibāḍī sources are of substantial importance not only to Ibāḍī specialists but also to all historians of the formative period of Islam. Indeed, a preliminary examination reveals that Ibāḍī intellectual developments resonated with the ongoing religious, political, and legal debates that raged in the Middle East throughout the second/eighth and the third/ninth centuries. Therefore, it is no longer possible to investigate early Islamic history without considering Ibāḍī sources.

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