

Elsa Cardoso*

‘Syria Rises to Receive the Caliph’: Umayyad Caliphal Titles from Cordoba to Damascus

<https://doi.org/10.1515/islam-2023-0022>

Abstract: The concept and image of a court is strongly associated with its main character, the sovereign around whom court life revolves. How was the Umayyad caliph named and conceptualized in al-Andalus? Keeping this in mind, the purpose of this paper is the discussion of the Umayyad Andalusī caliphal titles. Sources repeatedly stress the Umayyad legitimacy to the caliphate as heirs of the Umayyads of Damascus. In a panegyric, even Syria rises to receive the Andalusī caliph. The contrast of these titles with those reserved for rebels will also be considered. While the caliph was seen as a sun, the darkness was associated with rebels. Official titles used for bureaucracy and metaphorical titles reproduced in official letters and panegyric poetry will be considered, which were preserved in Andalusī sources such as the *Muqtabis* of Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 1075) or the *Iqd al-Farid* of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 940). Ceremonial situations will also be considered as the figure of the caliph was central and praised in official letters and panegyric poetry.

Keywords: Umayyads of al-Andalus, Umayyads of Damascus, Islamic court studies, concepts, caliphate

The Sun-Caliph: Astronomical Metaphors and the Umayyad Heritage in the West

When summarizing one of the receptions held at the palace of Cordoba, the *Qaṣr al-Khilāfa*, Ibn Ḥayyān describes poetically ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s 11 sons – as many as Joseph’s brothers – as “resplendent moons surrounding their father, a rising sun” – *aqmār zāhira yaḥuffūn min abihim shams^{an} ṭālī’at^{an}*. The first Umayyad Andalusī caliph appears as a rising sun, a *Sun-Caliph*. Although he had not yet declared the caliphal title, this metaphor presents him as an exemplary center around whom several moons orbit. Ibn Ḥayyān reports that seven of these moons would sit around his throne – *sarīruhū* – on reception days or would ride behind their

***Corresponding author: Elsa Cardoso**, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean and the Near East, Madrid, Spain, elsa.cardoso@csic.es

father while parading in Cordoba.¹ The popular symbolism of the number seven became stronger when the Fatimid dynasty declared the caliphate in North Africa. As Ismā'īlīs, the Fatimids believed in the caliphate of seven imams, acknowledged as direct descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. The use of the adjective *zāhira* in a reference to the princes (*aqmār zāhira*) addresses the religious significance associated with Prophet Muḥammad's daughter, Fāṭima al-Zahrā', from whom the Fatimids claim their genealogy.

The astronomical metaphors in poetry are also present in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's account on 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, in which he is described as the *sayyid al-khulafā'* ("lord of the caliphs"), in a remembrance of his Umayyad heritage. At the same time, he is also "the blossoming moon" – *al-qamr al-azhar*. In the verses preceding Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's famous *urjūza* to the first caliph of Cordoba, the Andalusī poet associates the ascension of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III to the rise of the new crescent moon – *badā al-hilāl jadīd*^{an}.²

These metaphors in the panegyric poetry reveal the role of astrology in the writing of history or political decision making.³ The works of Julio SAMSÓ are unprecedented in this respect, especially for the case of al-Andalus, for which he has stressed the importance of astrology, and especially *court*⁴ astrology, as one of the most developed sciences in al-Andalus.⁵ Due to their influence in official matters, the role of astrologers in the Umayyad *court* of Cordoba was envied by the *fuqahā'* and even by *court* poets who, ironically, used these metaphors, such as Ibn 'Abd Rabbih.⁶ To the unscientific character associated with astrology, the confusion between astrology and astronomy should be added.⁷ Following George SALIBA, Antoine BORRUT also examines the overlap between astronomy and astrology evidenced in sources, which became separate disciplines in the thirteenth century.⁸

Ibn 'Abd Rabbih associates the astrological phenomena of the moon to the heritage of the caliphate, belonging to the Umayyads. In the verses preceding the *urjūza*, the caliph is called the "son of caliphs" – *yā ibn al-khalā'if*. He is also "the full moon in the darkness of her [the earth]" (*yā badr ḡulamtiḥā*), as well as "her

1 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 17; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 23.

2 Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 239.

3 I would like to thank Antoine Borrut, who is working on astrological histories and historical writing, for his suggestions on the role of astrology in history writing.

4 Italics will be used when referring to Islamic *courts*, as this is a Western concept. On the concepts of *court* in al-Andalus, see CARDOSO 2020, 2021, 2023.

5 See, for example, SAMSÓ 1979, 228–243; 2007.

6 SAMSÓ 1979, 230–231.

7 SAMSÓ 1979, 230–231; VIGUERA 1977, 364.

8 BORRUT 2014, 455–501, 457–458; SALIBA 1994, 57.

rising sun” (*shams ṣubḥatihā*). The poet stresses that there were no similar examples of battles under the sovereignty of other kings (*li-malik min al-mulūk*), from pre-Islamic to Islamic times,⁹ which evidenced the memory of the first battles of Islam¹⁰ and the significance of these astrological phenomena on the auspices of a battle. Similarly, while ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III is accounted as the most eminent of the Banū Marwān and the *mu‘ayyad* (“supported by God”), he is also described as “saluting the power with the crescent moon” (*ṣabbaḥa al-mulk ma‘a al-hilāl*), “so that they both arose in the morning like two rivals in beauty.” Additionally, the following verses describe “how the land was illuminated by his light (*bi-nūrihi*) and the stirring up of evil and mischief was interrupted.”¹¹ The poet thus associates the astrological phenomena of the crescent moonlight stemming from the caliph as causing the cessation of political rebellion. The comparison of the ruler to the light has mystic resonances around the figure of the Prophet. The light of Muḥammad – *nūr Muḥammad* – was interpreted as the primitive creation of God, seen by Ibn ‘Arabī as the sun whose bright essence nourishes the spirits.¹² The light arising from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III to the earth was confirmed as divine, when he was elected as the Caliph of God (*khalīfat Allāh*), from “the best descendants of the Imāms,” an “evidence of [God’s] light.”¹³

The metaphor for the caliph as a rising sun appears to be a theme of the panegyric type, having also been used by Miquel Barceló to name a collection of his works, *El sol que salió por occidente* (“the sun arising from the West”). The title is based on ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Ḥusayn al-Qarawī’s verses:

*La-qad ṭala‘at bi-l-gharb shams khilāfatⁱⁿ
Aḍā’ lahā fī l-mashriqayn shurūq¹⁴*

The following verses also underline the Umayyad genealogy and their claims for the *two Easts*, that is, *the East and the West*: “Syria [*al-Shām*] rises to receive the Caliph, whose rights over her are old.”¹⁵ If the first Umayyad Caliph of al-Andalus

9 Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 240.

10 ALBARRÁN 2020, 138–139.

11 Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 242. See the translation of the *urjūza*: MONROE 1971, 81.

12 ALBARRÁN 2015, 90–91.

13 Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 243; MONROE 1971, 81.

14 BARCELÓ 2010, 151–169; Ibn Hayyan, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 163; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 203. Translation: “The sun of a caliphate has arisen from the West, which will shine with splendour in the two Easts.” “Por occidente ha salido el sol de un califato que ha de brillar con esplendor en los dos orientes.”

15 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 163; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 203.

was like a rising sun (*shams^{an} ṭālī^{at}^{an}*), his dynasty ascended once more under his auspices, as the *shams khilāfatin* ("the sun of a caliphate").

Another *court* poet, Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī recited a panegyric to al-Ḥakam II for the *ʿĪd al-Fiṭr* of 974. The caliph is described as the quintessence of God's creatures, "who drag their tails above the sun (*al-shams*)."¹⁶ He further compared the divine honor bestowed on the ruler (*imām*) to the honor granted to prophecy.¹⁶

The Umayyad Heritage in the East and West: The "Two Easts"

The sun appears not only as an epithet to the ruler himself, almost as a Sun-Caliph, but it was also linked to the dynastic power of the Umayyads. This heritage is frequently claimed by mentioning both the *Shām* and the *shams* in panegyrics. *Al-Shām* geographically corresponds to the regions of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. Etymologically, it means "the left-hand region," as when in western and central Arabia, one would be facing the rising sun, having Syria on the left.¹⁷ The symbolic use by the Andalusī Umayyads connects the rising of Syria (*al-Shām*) to receive the caliph with the sun rising in the West. If in al-Andalus the caliph had Syria on his right, he kept facing the rising sun coming from *al-Shām*, proclaiming the memory of the two Easts, which is meant as a reference to the East and West. Antonio VALLEJO has pointed out the symbology of "the two Easts" in Andalusī panegyrics, a feature reflected in the architecture of the Umayyad palace-city of Madīnat al-Zahrā'. The name of the main reception hall, *al-Majlis al-Sharqī* (Eastern Hall), had symbolic and legitimacy purposes rather than geographical reasons. The hall facing the *al-Majlis al-Sharqī* was named *al-Majlis al-Gharbī* and was used for the receptions of the heir apparent, who received at the same time as his father. Its name did not stress a geographical location but rather symbolized the caliphal claims of the Umayyads over the East and West.¹⁸ These claims were also used in the panegyric production of the Umayyads of Damascus. When the poets Kuthayyir

¹⁶ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 157; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 198.

¹⁷ BOSWORTH, "al-Shām," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 9, 261–262.

¹⁸ VALLEJO 2016, 445. On legitimacy features of the Umayyads of al-Andalus, see also SAFRAN 2011. For example, she points out that historical texts stress an association between al-Andalus and the East, including in poetic compositions: SAFRAN 2001, 32, 79, 181.

(d. 723), al-Aḥwaṣ (d. 728/729), and Nuṣayb (d. 726–731)¹⁹ were received by ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 717–720), Kuthayyir declared in a panegyric the justice of the caliph “between Eastern and Western parts of the entire earth” (*bayna sharq al-arḍ wa l-gharb kullihā*).²⁰

The political and dynastic references to the Umayyad heritage – *‘irṭh al-khilāfa*²¹ – are frequent in sources describing the courts of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II.

In a letter sent by two family members of the Banū Idrīs, Ibrāhīm and Abū l-‘Aysh recognize ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s right as caliph (*amīr al-mu‘minīn*). Further ahead, he also acknowledges the dynasty’s heritage to the imamate – *āthār imāmatihi*.²²

For the *‘Id al-Fiṭr* of 363/974, the poet Muḥammad b. Shukhayṣ acknowledged the heritage of Hishām as heir apparent, as he was the grandson of Marwān – a reference to the Umayyads of Damascus – and the son of the Mahdī, in a reference to his father.²³ Alejandro GARCÍA SANJUÁN has stressed the existence of a panegyric Umayyad program meant to legitimize the proclamation of Hishām as heir to the throne, as he had not reached the minimum age to rule.²⁴ In the political Mediterranean panorama of the tenth century, the use of the title *Mahdī* at the Umayyad court is significant, being a Messianic epithet with Shī‘ī resonances, echoing the rivalry with the Fatimids. Maribel FIERRO has pointed out that the Ismā‘īlīs were expecting the appearance of the *Mahdī* or Messiah in 300 AH, a year with apocalyptic connotations in the Islamic world, in which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III ascended to the throne.²⁵

Following several military campaigns, the centralization program of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was finally crowned with the surrender of Bobastro. The village was located in a mountain region near Cordoba, which allowed the Banū Ḥafṣūn to rebel against the Umayyads. After the defeat of the Banū Ḥafṣūn in 928, the remains of

19 On these poets, see ‘ABBĀS, Ṭḥsān, “Kuthayyir b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān,” *EF*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4587 (accessed June 1, 2022); PETRÁČEK, “al-Aḥwaṣ,” *EF*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0436 (accessed June 1, 2022); PELLAT, “Nuṣayb al-Akbar b. Rabāḥ,” *EF*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6000 (accessed June 1, 2022).

20 Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-‘Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. I, book 4, 333–336; Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-‘Iqd al-Farīd*, trans. (2006–2011), vol. I, book 4, 275–278.

21 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 17; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 22.

22 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 375; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* trans. (1981), 281.

23 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 162; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* trans. (1967), 202.

24 GARCÍA SANJUÁN 2008, 45–77.

25 FIERRO 2011, 19–20. FIERRO further refers to several Fatimid symbols that were appropriated by the Umayyad Caliphate, aiming at dissociating them from its rulers and ascertaining the Andalusī sovereigns as the true holders of the caliphal title.

ʿUmar b. Ḥaḥṣūn, who had died more than ten years earlier, were publicly exhumed in order to prove his apostasy to Islam. Under the Umayyad legitimacy program, he was also accused of having received envoys from the ʿAbbasid and Fatimid caliphs and, at different times, mentioned them in the *khuṭba*. This victory was celebrated by court poets such as Abū ʿUthmān ʿUbayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Idrīs, who wrote that “the darkness of her [Bobastro] infidelity faded and the sun and the moons shine over it.”²⁶ The sun and the moons clearly contrast with the darkness of Bobastro’s infidelity against the *amīr* and the religion. Furthermore, for Ibn Ḥayyān, the campaigns of the first caliph resulted in the extinction of the rebels and the coming of brightness (*ashifa*) that guided the lost ones.²⁷ As pointed out before, the mention of the light recalls the symbology of the light of the Prophet. Hishām, who was the only son of the Caliph al-Ḥakam, was called “the full moon of power” (*badr al-mulk*) who orbited around the glory in a panegyric by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Malik for the reception of the ʿId al-Aḍḥā of 974.²⁸

The Umayyads of al-Andalus are also described by Ibn ʿIdhārī as glorifying and surpassing the memory of their Eastern ancestors. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III is described as the sun who eclipses other sovereigns of his own dynasty. He was the “the son of the caliphs” (*yā ibn al-khalāʾif*) and while he honored them, at the same time he eclipsed their memory.²⁹ The mention of the Umayyad caliph as the son of the caliphs (*yā ibn al-khalāʾif*) was previously used by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Rabbih in the aftermath of the surrender of Calatayud in 937.³⁰ Ibn Ḥayyān also transmits panegyrics following this thematic trend. For the Feast of Breaking the Fast of 361/972, Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Ṭubnī recited a *qaṣīda* acclaiming the caliph as *ibn al-khalāʾif*, who had allowed prosperity to the community of Aḥmad, another given name for the Prophet Muḥammad.³¹

The astronomical phenomena described by Ibn Ḥayyān were also premonitory. In an account describing the peace agreement of 303/916–917 with the rebel ʿUmar b. Ḥaḥṣūn, in a reference to the much later adoption of the caliphal title, Ibn Ḥayyān describes ʿUmar’s intentions as resulting from the evidence of the “arising of the star of the caliphate” (*ṭulūʾ najm al-khilāfa*).³² The astronomical program present in the panegyric poetry is also expressed in the architecture and wall decoration of

26 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 221; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 170.

27 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 277; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 210.

28 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 186; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 225.

29 Ibn ʿIdhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib* (1948–1951), vol. 2, 241; Ibn ʿIdhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, trans. (1904), vol. 2, 372.

30 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 399; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 298.

31 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 83; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 106.

32 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 112; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 94.

al-Majlis al-Sharqī and *al-Majlis al-Gharbī*. Vegetal motives cover the lower panels of the halls while polygons in the shape of stars are represented in the upper ones. Manuel ACIÉN has interpreted it not as a direct Quranic reference but rather as the cosmographic representation of the nature and of the celestial world of the stars, respectively.³³ The paradisiacal meaning of the panels has been stressed by Maribel FIERRO, which is also present in the gardens of Madīnat al-Zahrā' and its terraces, reflecting the different levels of the Muslim paradise. This symbology was also a result of the rivalry between the Umayyad and the Fatimid Caliphates.³⁴

Old Titles, New Meanings in Dispute

The Umayyad *Khalīfat Allāh* Against an 'Abbāsīd Invented Memory

These astronomical references for naming the Umayyad caliph appear mostly in the panegyric poetry transmitted by sources. We shall now look more closely at the common official designation for the Umayyad caliph. *Khalīfa* appears to be the most common title given to the Umayyad ruler of al-Andalus, even for those who had not yet claimed the caliphal heritage. When mentioning the moving of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's son out of the palace of Cordoba, al-Rāzī states that the Dār al-Mulk, the residence of the Umayyad ruler, received this name as several "caliphs" (*khalā'if*) had previously inhabited it.³⁵

In the context of claiming the Umayyad heritage of the Caliphate of Cordoba, the rhetoric against the 'Abbāsīds or the Fatimids is also discussed in the sources. Ibn Ḥayyān stressed that the title really belonged to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III – *huwa bi-l-ḥaqīqa lahū* – who was the son of the caliphs.³⁶ When Muḥammad b. Khazar swore his allegiance to the caliph in 317/930, he wrote in a letter to the *amīr al-mu'minīn*, reproduced by Ibn Ḥayyān, that he was the most worthy amongst those who adopted the title – *annaka awlā bi-l-khilāfa min kull man yantaḥilu ismahā ma'aka*. At the same time, he named his previous allegiance to the Eastern Caliphate as "black ties" (*hibāl al-muswada*), apparently a reference to the color worn by the 'Abbāsīds, further proclaiming them as "the infidels of the East" (*kuffār al-mashāriqa*).³⁷

33 ACIÉN 1995, 177–195, *apud* VALLEJO 2016, 449.

34 FIERRO 2004, 301, 306, 310.

35 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 17; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 22–23.

36 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 241; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 184.

37 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 266–267; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 201–202.

But the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate was far and the rhetoric against it did not go any further, contrary to the rivalry with the Fatimids. Ibn Ḥayyān reported the death of the Fatimid Caliph 'Ubayd Allāh, in 934, while transmitting a letter sent by Mūsā b. Abī l-'Āfiya to the Umayyad sovereign, in which the Fatimid caliph is presented as 'Ubayd Allāh al-Shī'ī, *ṣāhib al-Mahdiyya*, 'amīd hādhihi al-niḥla al-mashriqiyya al-ḍālla' – "Ubayd Allāh the Shiite, lord of al-Mahdiyya of this sect of Eastern perdition."³⁸ The association of the dynasty to the right of the caliphate is also obvious when Ibn Ḥayyān names the Fatimids and his caliph, 'Ubayd Allāh, as *dawlat al-ḍalāla*, the "dynasty of the error."³⁹ The East acquires in the Umayyad West, when used in reference to the Fatimid and 'Abbāsīd Caliphates, a sense of infidelity and perdition. The political association with these two caliphates is perceived in the Umayyad West as an infidel act. The taking of the caliphal title by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III was also justified by the unrighteousness of the concurrent caliphates. Al-Maqqarī underlines how the Umayyad ruler was the first to take the title *amīr al-mu'minīn* in al-Andalus while the power of the caliphate weakened in the East and the Turks ruled over the Banū l-'Abbās.⁴⁰ This justification was also given by Ibn 'Idhārī.⁴¹

These justifications occurred while, at the same time, the first 'Abbāsīd caliphs built a deviant image of the Umayyads and associated themselves to what later would be classified as Classical Islam.⁴² If the 'Abbāsīd caliphs lost the *de facto* power, the Umayyads needed even more to react. Thus, after the taking of the caliphal title, in 929, in the letters sent to the governors of the provinces, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III underlined that everyone else who used it had unjustly appropriated the title. Furthermore, the taking of the caliphal title was not only a right but an obligation.⁴³

The use of the title of *khalīfa*,⁴⁴ as well as *amīr al-mu'minīn*, corresponded to him, as he was the son of the princes of the believers – *huwa ibn umarā'*

38 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 354; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 266.

39 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 262; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 199.

40 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1855), vol. 1, 23; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib*, trans. (1840–1843), vol. 2, 147.

41 Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib* (1948–1951), vol. 2, 161–162; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, trans. (1904), vol. 2, 261, 327.

42 On the Umayyad memory, see: BORRUT 2011.

43 *Una crónica anónima de al-Nasir* (1950), 153.

44 The discussion of the meaning of the title *khalīfa* has been the focus of several studies. The most famous of these is the study of Patricia CRONE and Martin HINDS, in which is demonstrated that the title was originally *khalīfat Allāh* and not *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, as later tradition stressed. It was used to underline the Umayyad caliphs as both religious and political authorities. This religious authority would later collapse and become dispersed in the hands of several '*ulamā'*'. At the same time, the presumption of *khalīfat rasūl Allāh* as the original caliphal title gained power under a historical framework that saw the Umayyads as corrupt and unorthodox caliphs. See CRONE / HINDS 1986.

al-mu'minīn.⁴⁵ The overstatement of the caliphal nomenclature was also used in al-Maqqarī when the historian mentions the title of *khalāfat amīr al-mu'minīn* when referring to the sovereignty of the caliph.⁴⁶

Al-khalīfa appears to be the title most used by Ibn Ḥayyān and al-Maqqarī when referring to the caliph of Cordoba, followed by *amīr al-mu'minīn*. When al-Ḥakam II received the North African tributaries Ja'far b. 'Alī al-Andalusī, his brother Yahyā, and the Banū Khazar on 360/971–72, Ibn Ḥayyān refers to the ruler as *al-khalīfa al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh*.⁴⁷ He is also referred solely as *al-khalīfa al-Ḥakam*. As mentioned before, in chronicles, the Umayyads were given the caliphal title retroactively, even before the declaration of the caliphate in 316/929–30. In his first horse ride after his accession to the throne in 300/912–13, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III is referred to by Ibn Ḥayyān as *al-khalīfa al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*.⁴⁸

However, for Ibn 'Idhārī, when the historian refers to the decision of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, the title *amīr al-mu'minīn* is favored while *al-khalīfa* is maintained when the historian transmits tenth-century panegyric poetry.⁴⁹ This tendency appears to be followed throughout the text as the ruler is mostly mentioned by his name or *laqab* or, less frequently, as *amīr al-mu'minīn*. *Khalīfa* is also mentioned frequently by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih for the rule of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, especially in the *urjūza* he dedicates to the caliph, a frequency only compared to the use of the title of *imām*.⁵⁰ Perhaps as later sources, Ibn 'Idhārī and al-Maqqarī reproduce the titles prevalent in their own times and focused less on the legitimacy propaganda evident in the works of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih or Ibn Ḥayyān.

The concept *khalīfat rasūl Allāh* appears to be inexistent in the Umayyad Andalusī sources, while *khalīfat Allāh* appears in Ibn Ḥayyān or in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih. When one day 'Abd al-Raḥmān III decided to spend the night with his wife and cousin Fāṭima, Murjān (or Marjān), a concubine of the *amīr*, congratulated her for such an honor bestowed by the *khalīfat Allāh*, as Fāṭima would be able to spend the night with the *sayyid al-bariyya* (the lord of creation), a reference with strong eschatological features.⁵¹ The fifth volume of the *Muqtabis* of Ibn Ḥayyān opens

45 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 231; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans., (1981), 177.

46 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1855), vol. I, 245.

47 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 50; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 68.

48 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 58; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 76.

49 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib* (1855), vol. I, 233; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭib*, trans. (1840–1843), vol. 2, 147; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib* (1948–1951), vol. 2, 161–162, 212–213, 240–241; Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib*, trans. (1904), vol. 2, 261, 327–328, 372.

50 Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 243–260.

51 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 10; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 16.

with this novelesque account,⁵² which aims to anticipate the good auspices of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's future and his heir. The astrological reference – *sayyid al-bariyya* (the lord of the creation) – was a sign of prosperity to the Umayyads of al-Andalus and 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's son and heir, al-Ḥakam II, son of Marjān. In her greeting, Marjān blessed Fāṭima by reciting verses that allowed her to buy the night with the caliph for herself, for ten thousand dinars, and become one of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's favorite and the mother of the apparent heir.

In Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's *urjūza*, when referring to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's military campaigns, while comparing the caliph to a light able to unite earth and heaven, the poet calls him *khalīfat Allāh* and the best descendant of the *imāms*.⁵³ He is also referred as *khalīfat Allāh 'alā 'ibādihi* ("the Caliph of God over His worshipers"), as well as *khalīfat al-raḥmān*, as well as *al-khalīfa al-mu'ayyad*, the caliph supported by God, or only *al-mu'ayyad*.⁵⁴ The use of *khalīfat Allāh* as a title is reinforced by the official text of a letter sent by the Caliph al-Ḥakam II – referred to as *'abd Allāh al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh amīr al-mu'minīn* – to the North African chieftain Abū l-'Aysh b. Ayyūb. The caliph demanded total obedience to God – *wa-amarahū bi-taqwā Allāh al-'azīm* – and commanded him the recognition of *His* caliph (God's caliph) – *wa-ṭā'at khalīfatihī*,⁵⁵ in a reference to the title *khalīfat Allāh*, which was previously attested for the Umayyads of Damascus.

According to the famous work by Patricia CRONE and Martin HINDS, the title of *khalīfat Allāh* and *khalīfat al-raḥmān* were used by *court* poets, as in the *'Iqd al-Farīd*.⁵⁶ Although the 'Abbāsīd caliph is represented later as *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, the title *khalīfat Allāh* was also used.⁵⁷ The Fatimid caliph was also *khalīfat Allāh 'alā 'alāmin*,⁵⁸ a reference that recalls the title attributed by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, *khalīfat Allāh 'alā 'ibādihi*, perhaps in a resignification of the title in the context of the political dispute with the Fatimids.

It is possible to acknowledge the existence of a reconstruction of the memory of these titles and their significance under the 'Abbasids, evidenced, for example, in the 'Abbāsīd "manual of ceremonies" of Hilāl al-Ṣābi', *Rusūm*. While al-Ṣābi' asserts that after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad Abū Bakr was called *khalīfat rasūl Allāh* or 'Umar used the title *khalīfat khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, changing it afterwards to

⁵² There is a gap in the first account of this volume.

⁵³ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 243; MONROE 1971, 81.

⁵⁴ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 254, 251, 255; MONROE 1971, 88, 86.

⁵⁵ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 111; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 142.

⁵⁶ CRONE / HINDS 1986, 17.

⁵⁷ CRONE / HINDS 1986, 13–14.

⁵⁸ CRONE / HINDS 1986, 17.

amīr al-mu'minīn,⁵⁹ at the same time, throughout his text, he refers to the 'Abbāsīd caliph as *khalīfat Allāh*. The Caliph al-Ṭā'ī lillāh was addressed by the Būyīd *amīr* 'Aḍud al-Dawla, in the ceremony which invested him, in 977, "Allāh's viceregent on His earth" (*khalīfat Allāh fī arḍihī*).⁶⁰

The Conventional *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* or the *Khalīfa*?

The title of *khalīfa* was the official designation of the Eastern Umayyad caliph, although the title *amīr al-mu'minīn* was more common.⁶¹ For Fred DONNER, the first title to be used was *amīr al-mu'minīn*. Accordingly, *khalīfat Allāh* appears attested for the first time under the sovereignty of 'Abd al-Malik, in the transitional coins representing the image known as the standing caliph. The inscription alludes to *Quran* 38: 26 in which God tells David that he made him a *khalīfa* on earth. The symbolic prophecy of the foundation of Jerusalem by David was thus used when 'Abd al-Malik was building the Dome of the Rock.⁶² In the case of the Umayyad al-Andalus, *khalīfa* was usually used in chronicles when referring to the caliph, which preceded the *laqab* or the given name, even if *amīr al-mu'minīn* was the common title mentioned in the official correspondence.

As Umayyad sources usually conceptualize and refer to the power, state, and court as *Bāb Suddat al-Khalīfa*, in a reference to the main door of Cordoba and later Madīnat al-Zahrā', the title *khalīfa* thus appears associated with the most popular representation of the Umayyads.⁶³ When mentioned in association to the gate, the titles *amīr al-mu'minīn* and *khalīfa* refer to the entrance at the court and to the submission to the caliph. When 'Abd al-Raḥmān III received the governor of Zaragoza, for the occasion of his submission in March 938, Muḥammad b. Hāshim al-Tujībī went to *Bāb Suddat al-khalīfa al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*.⁶⁴ When Ja'far b. 'Alī arrived in Cordoba to submit to al-Ḥakam II, Ibn Ḥayyān mentions how the tributaries decided to rush to the door *Sudda* of the Prince of the Believers – *al-liḥāq bi-Bāb Suddat amīr al-mu'minīn*.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Hilāl al-Ṣābi', *Rusūm*, trans. (1977), 105.

⁶⁰ Hilāl al-Ṣābi', *Rusūm* (1964), 82; Hilāl al-Ṣābi', *Rusūm*, trans. (1977), 66.

⁶¹ CRONE / HINDS 1986, 10.

⁶² DONNER 2010, 209–211.

⁶³ On the conceptualization of the court of Cordoba, symbolically and architecturally, see CARDOSO 2020, 2021, 2023.

⁶⁴ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 423; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 316.

⁶⁵ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 41; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 61–62.

But while the title *amīr al-mu'minīn* is more common in letters, it also appears in official correspondence associated with other titles. In the letter of Muḥammad b. Idrīs submitting to Cordoba after the conquest of Ceuta in 931, he addresses 'Abd al-Raḥmān III as *sayyidunā amīr al-mu'minīn* ("our lord, Prince of the Believers") and *imāmunā* ("our *imām*").⁶⁶

References to the institution of the caliphate are also documented in official correspondence. The first caliph claimed his rights to the caliphate in the East (*al-khilāfa bi-l-Mashriq*) to North African princes.⁶⁷ In reply, Mūsā b. Abī l-ʿĀfiya addressed the caliph as *amīr al-mu'minīn*.⁶⁸ In his answer to Mūsā, the caliph compares his fight against heresy as the righteous path of the *al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*.⁶⁹ Thus, while *amīr al-mu'minīn* is used commonly in caliphal correspondence as a title referring directly to the caliph, the institution of the caliphate – *khilāfa* – is mentioned as a legitimacy tool in reference to the four *rāshidūn*, which aims to underline that the Umayyad heritage goes back to ʿUthmān.

In the correspondence exchanged with the *basileus* of Constantinople, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III is called *al-khalīfa al-ḥākīm*,⁷⁰ a title that had been used by the Caliph Hishām of Damascus.⁷¹ The letter was sent to the caliph by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, which was carried by the Byzantine ambassadors received in Cordoba in 949. According to al-Maqqarī, it was written in Greek, in golden characters, on sky-blue paper, with a seal of gold with the likeness of Christ on one side and on the other those of the *basileus* and the co-emperor, his son. The letter was addressed to "the great and exalted in dignity and pride, the noble in descent, 'Abd al-Raḥmān the caliph who rules over the Arabs of al-Andalus" (*al-ʿazīm al-istiḥqāq al-mufakhir al-sharīf al-nasab 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-khalīfa al-ḥākīm 'alā al-'Arab bi-l-Andalus*). We do not know the Greek term used in the original letter. While for al-Maqqarī, transmitting from Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-khalīfa* was the translation of the term contained in the Greek letter, *De Ceremoniis*, when reporting the embassy received in Constantinople by the *amīr* of Tarsos, as a subject of the 'Abbāsīd caliph, *amerimmne* or *amermoumnes* is mentioned as the customary address to the caliph, being the Greek transcription of *amīr al-mu'minīn*.⁷²

66 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 292–293; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1967), 220–221.

67 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 305; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans., 230.

68 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 308–312; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1967), 233–235.

69 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 312; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1967), 235.

70 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* (1855), vol 1, 237; al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* (1840–1843), trans., vol. 2, 142.

71 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 35.

72 Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis*, trans. (2012), vol. 2, 570, 682–683.

Imām, Mahdī, and Amīn: Between the Umayyad Heritage and the Projection of New (Fatimid) Meanings

In the reception held for the Feast of the Sacrifice of 971, Muḥammad b. Shukhayṣ recited verses in which the Caliph al-Ḥakam II is acknowledged as *amīn Allāh*.⁷³ Another poet, Muḥammad b. Maḥāmis al-Istijī, asserted that Allāh acted through al-Ḥakam under whose rule the religion of Muḥammad (*dīn Muḥammad*) shines, while praising the “Umayyad imamate” (*imāma Umawīyya*).⁷⁴ In the occasion of the taking of the caliphal title, Ibn Ḥayyān mentions the “righteous and virtuous descent” (*sulālat al-hudā al-fāḍilīn*) of the Umayyads, who are also called “the pious imams” (*al-aʾimma al-muttaqīn*).⁷⁵ Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih also mentions the title of *imām*.⁷⁶ He further calls the Umayyad caliph “the glorious *imām*” (*al-imām al-majīd*), “the imam elected (by God)” (*al-imām al-muṣṭafā*) or “the gracious imam” (*al-imām al-mufḍil*),⁷⁷ or “the imam (God is) satisfied with” (*al-imām al-murtaḍā*).⁷⁸

Imām was also used as a title for the Umayyads of Damascus. Also, the Fatimids did not innovate in these titles as they were inherited by earlier Islamic traditions. According to CRONE and HINDS, ʿUthmān was called “a rightly guided caliph” (*khālīfatan mahdiyyan*). The *rāshidūn* caliphs Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān, together with Muʿāwīya and ʿAbd al-Malik, “were the four (sic) *khulafāʾ al-rāshidūn al-muhtadūn al-mahdiyyūn*” Sulaymān and al-Walīd were called *mahdī*, and ʿUmar II was *al-mubārak al-mahdī wa l-ḥakam al-rashīd*.⁷⁹ While *mahdī* was not an eschatological title for the Umayyads, nevertheless, according to CRONE and HINDS, these references were associated to a redeemer.⁸⁰ CRONE and HINDS further stress how the Prophet was seen as *mahdī* and *imām al-hudā*, as he had brought guidance and was sent with “guidance” (*hudā*) and *dīn al-ḥaqq*, as epigraphic coinage proclaims.⁸¹ The ʿAbbasids continued to use the same titles of the Umayyads, also styling themselves as “imams of guidance” (*imām al-hudā*) and “imams of justice” (*imām al-ʿadl*), further adopting epithets such as *al-mahdī* or *al-amīn*.⁸² It was only after the abolition of the *miḥna* in 848 and the rise of the *ʿulamāʾ* that they too became known

73 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 60; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 82.

74 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 62; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 84.

75 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 241; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 184.

76 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 245; MONROE 1971, 82.

77 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 248, 250; MONROE 1971, 85.

78 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 254; MONROE 1971, 88.

79 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 36.

80 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 37.

81 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 40, 34, note 57.

82 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 80–81.

as imams.⁸³ In the context of the Fatimid-Umayyad rivalry, the title had messianic resonances.⁸⁴ In fact, the title remained strongly associated to the Shī'ī party, as it was first used by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, son of 'Alī,⁸⁵ although the articulation of a distinct tradition dates from a much later time.

For the reception of Ja'far b. 'Alī with his brother and the Banū Khazar, in 971, the poet Muḥammad b. Shukhayṣ not only calls the caliph *imām* and *mahdī* but he also addresses him as the opposite of the figure of the Fatimid allies, such as the rebel Zīrī b. Manād. On this occasion, the head of Zīrī b. Manād was paraded in Cordoba while the poet called him Pharaoh (*fīr'awn*), associating him with rebellion.⁸⁶ While the Umayyad caliph was the *mahdī*, the Fatimids and their partisans were seen as Egyptian despots. In the same manner, the metaphor of the Pharaoh was also used to describe the famous rebel 'Umar b. Ḥaḥṣūn as a proud tyrant.⁸⁷

As shown by these examples, despite the origins of the titles *imām* and *mahdī*, new eschatological meanings were circulating in the context of the tenth century. On some occasions, the Fatimid caliph was also accounted as *imām* in Umayyad sources. For example, while submitting to the Umayyad caliphate, Ja'far b. 'Alī, governor of Masīla, is said to have broken his ties with the *imām* Ma'add.⁸⁸ FIERRO has stressed how 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's decision in taking the caliphal title was a reaction to Fatimid power. The Umayyad caliphate was declared in 300/929, a year associated with messianic expectations circulating in the Mediterranean. These beliefs resulted in a specific symbology and legitimacy tools, such as the *laqab* al-Mahdī of the first Fatimid caliph or the *laqab* al-Qā'im bi-llāh, for the first Umayyad caliph, a variation of the title of the second Fatimid caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh.⁸⁹

This political context triggered the rhetoric on the Umayyad heritage, proclaiming titles such as *amīn Allāh*, trustee of God,⁹⁰ strongly associated with the Umayyads of Damascus, as pointed out by CRONE and HINDS. At the same time, in the panegyric production, al-Ḥakam II was "king" (*malik*),⁹¹ implying the power (*mulk*) held by the sovereign.

⁸³ CRONE / HINDS 1986, 97–98.

⁸⁴ FIERRO 1989, 37.

⁸⁵ KENNEDY 2016, 58.

⁸⁶ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 54–55; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 72–73.

⁸⁷ FIERRO 2011, 97.

⁸⁸ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 41; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 54.

⁸⁹ FIERRO 2011, 97.

⁹⁰ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 60; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 82.

⁹¹ Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *al-Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 255; MONROE 1971, 88.

The symbology of the title “the *imām* of guidance” (*imām al-hudā*), recalling the orthodox caliphs and the Prophet,⁹² was also used by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III as *al-muẓaffar al-manṣūr ‘alā janībihi al-hudā wa l-nūr* – “the one rendered victorious, aided (by God), upon whose forehead lies (the imprint of) the Guidance and the Light.”⁹³ For the poet Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Ṭubnī, al-Ḥakam II was “the king crowned by the orthodoxy/guidance” (*al-malik al-mutawwaj bi-l-hudā*), victorious against the darkness,⁹⁴ making him the elected to guide mankind. Both references associate the guidance to the light, thus resonating the Prophet’s attributes.

Al-Ḥakam II was also “*imām* of justice with the crown of power” (*imām ‘adl bi-tāj al-mulk*) in a panegyric by the poet ‘Abd al-Qaddūs b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,⁹⁵ a typically Eastern Umayyad title combined with metaphors relating to the crown. In the correspondence exchanged in 974 between his general Ghālīb and the rulers of Fez, the second caliph was called *al-imām al-‘adl al-Ḥakam al-Mustaṣir, amīr al-mu‘minīn*.⁹⁶ The caliphs ‘Uthmān, Mu‘āwīya, ‘Abd al-Malik, ‘Umar II, Yazīd II, and Hishām used the variants of ‘*adl*’ as an appellation, such as *imām ‘adl*, *imām al-‘adl*, *al-imām al-‘ādil*, or *khalīfat al-‘adl*.⁹⁷

The titles of the Umayyad caliph of al-Andalus are also documented in epigraphy, especially in Madīnat al-Zahrā’. María Antonia MARTÍNEZ NUÑEZ has shown that epigraphs reproduce not only the title of *amīr al-mu‘minīn* or the *laqab* of the caliph but also the titles of *imām* or ‘*abd Allāh*’, inside *al-Majlis al-Sharqī*, as well as in the central pavilion, identified as *al-Majlis al-Gharbī*.⁹⁸ While these inscriptions did not use Quranic references, they include the *basmala*, reduced to *bi-ism Allāh*, and the blessing formula *baraka min Allāh*, followed frequently by the appellation ‘*abd Allāh*’. Official titles such as *imām* are also attested. These formulae were further reproduced in the fabrics of the caliphal *ṭirāz*, a model that implied the transformation of the original Umayyad formula with the complete *basmala* to a text favoring the sovereign.⁹⁹ According to MARTÍNEZ, the foundational epigraph of *al-Majlis al-Sharqī* and the main inscriptions of *al-Majlis al-Gharbī* witness for the first time the use of the title *imām* in epigraphical sources under the rule of ‘Abd

92 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 40, 34, note 57.

93 Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih, *al-‘Iqd al-Farīd* (1983), vol. 5, book 15, 252; MONROE 1971, 86.

94 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 94; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1965), 118.

95 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 165; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1965), 204.

96 Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 175; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1965), 213.

97 CRONE / HINDS 1986, 37.

98 VALLEJO 2016, 442.

99 MARTÍNEZ NUÑEZ 1995, 139, note 72.

al-Raḥmān III.¹⁰⁰ As we have seen, this innovation in epigraphical sources – significantly, in the foundational epigraph of *al-Majlis al-Sharqī* – is also accompanied by written sources. Before the declaration of the caliphate, the title of *amīr* was used while *amīr al-mu'minīn* was for the first time documented in 318/930.¹⁰¹ In epigraphy, the title of *'abd Allāh* is attested for the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, but also for the 'Abbāsids and Fatimids.

A Summary of Official Titles

As we have seen, in written sources, the titles of *imām*, *amīn Allāh*, or *mahdī* were mostly present in the panegyric production of al-Andalus. It could be argued that these appellations were only part of the poetic production and were only metaphors. Nevertheless, as CRONE and HINDS noted for the title of *khalīfat Allāh*, which is mainly attested in poetic sources, they were not only concepts of “flattery” but reflected “official usage, not poetic inventiveness.”¹⁰² Despite the fact that *imām*, *amīn Allāh*, or *mahdī* appear mainly in poetry, we should not forget that the panegyric production, far from being mere flattery, was quite official as it was part of the ceremonial setting of official caliphal ceremonies. The recitation, as part of the *majlis* of the caliph, was meant at addressing officially the *court* and the caliphal guests, and it is significant that it was transmitted by official Umayyad chronicles. The panegyric poetry was rather an Arabic tradition inherited by the Umayyads of Damascus, who after their fall in the East brought the panegyric *qaṣīda* to al-Andalus, which was considered a central piece of *court* ceremonial expressing the hegemony of the Arab-Muslim rule.¹⁰³

While concepts such *amīn Allāh* or *mahdī* appear mainly in poetry, *imām* is attested in the inscriptions of Madīnat al-Zahrā' and in the Mosque of Cordoba as well as in coins, which reflects its official use and not only a poetic vanity, together with the titles of *'abd Allāh* or *amīr al-mu'minīn*. The *'Iqd* attests the use of the title of *imām* not only in poetry but also in the accounts transmitted for the Umayyads of Damascus or the Umayyads of Cordoba. The *Muqtabis* also transmits this title as part of official letters. *Khalīfa*, *khalīfatuhu*, and *khalīfat Allāh* also appear in descriptive sources. *Khalīfa* is a rather common appellation when the chronicler refers to the caliph in function, either followed by his given name or his *laqab*. This leaves no

¹⁰⁰ MARTÍNEZ NUÑEZ 1995, 144.

¹⁰¹ MARTÍNEZ NUÑEZ 1995, 144.

¹⁰² CRONE / HINDS 1986, 7, 12.

¹⁰³ STETKEVYCH 2002, 254.

doubt to the usage of these titles as official concepts, together with the more traditional designation of *amīr al-mu'minīn*, predominant in the official correspondence, but not exclusively, as it is usually combined with other titles such as *imām*.

The double symbology of the caliphal titles (*khalīfat Allāh, amīn Allāh, al-imām al-'adl, mahdī*), revealing both the Eastern Umayyad influence and the rivalry with the Fatimids, is consequently mirrored in the double justification of the taking of the title: the Umayyad legitimacy and heritage, repeated to exhaustion by sources, and the opposition against the concurrent caliphates. While the institution of the 'Abbasid Caliphate was criticized for living out of an empty title, devoid of its political prerogatives,¹⁰⁴ the Fatimids were condemned for their heresy.

Eventually, the power of the Umayyads of al-Andalus fell at the hands of the *de facto* power of Muḥammad b. Abī 'Āmir al-Manṣūr, and then his sons, under the sovereignty of Hishām II, a caliph-puppet who, nevertheless, was still mentioned as *khalīfa*¹⁰⁵ and *imām*.¹⁰⁶ Finally, al-Manṣūr's son, 'Abd al-Rahmān, better known as Sanchuelo (his mother 'Abda or Urraca was the daughter of Sancho II of Pamplona), made Hishām II swear him as heir apparent, as the inheritor of the imamate – *al-imāma*. This decision triggered the fall of both the 'Amirid and Umayyad dynasties.¹⁰⁷ As FIERRO has underlined, the Umayyad legitimacy (*ḥaqq*) and its heritage (*mīrāth*) were of fundamental importance when associating a name to the caliphal institution, which could not be done lightly.¹⁰⁸ Even the taifa (*tā'ifa*) kingdoms that arose after the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate (1031) would not dare to make use of the caliphal honorific titles, with a clear tendency to avoid precise references both to the 'Amirids and to Umayyad institutions, as underlined by François CLÉMENT.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps the only reference to titles shared with the Umayyads would be the use of the *tāj* as a metaphor for power. As we have seen, the Umayyads were crowned with the “crown of power” (*bi-tāj al-mulk*). Following CLÉMENT, with five of the eleven taifa sovereigns adopting honorific titles, they settled for sultanic *laqab*, such as the “anodyne” title of *tāj al-dawla* (“the crown of the state”).¹¹⁰ Despite the triviality of the title *tāj*, the metaphor is still recognizable under the taifas as it is used carefully with the appellation of *dawla* instead of *mulk*, which was used extensively by the Umayyads even in ceramic production, as attested by archaeology.¹¹¹ This reveals

104 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib*, trans. (1840–1843), vol. 2, 147; FIERRO 2011, 94–95.

105 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1855), vol. 1, 264.

106 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1855), vol. 1, 262; al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib*, trans. (1840–1843), vol. 2, 199.

107 Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib* (1855), vol. 1, 277; al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-ṭib*, trans. (1840–1843), vol. 2, 222–223.

108 FIERRO 1989, 40–42.

109 CLÉMENT (1997), 224–228.

110 CLÉMENT 1997, 227.

111 BARCELÓ CRESPI 1993.

the importance given to the caliphal institution on al-Andalus and to its assigned official titles, as well as the recognition of a common language of power, accepted, acknowledged, and respected, even after the fall of the caliphate.

A *Sulṭān* in the Transition?

The tenth century saw the rise of ruling dynasties that usurped the *sulṭān* (central power). The caliph became a nominal ruler, though keeping the symbolic aura of the caliphal lineage. Eduardo MANZANO has pointed out that from the eleventh century onward, Muslim political theory accepted that the caliphate was not the only type of government available, and thus other rulers would seize power, holding titles such as *sulṭān*. According to MANZANO, before the eleventh century the term *sulṭān* was not used as a title as it was rather a reference to the central power embodied by the caliph, but which surpassed him, such as *ʿaskar al-sulṭān* (army of the *sulṭān*) or *rasūl al-sulṭān* (envoy of the *sulṭān*).¹¹²

Due perhaps to the important shift of authority within the medieval Islamic world, the concept of power (*sulṭān*) appears, in some cases, to have connotations as an appellation in the tenth century al-Andalus. When Ibn Ḥayyān recounts the escape of the caliph after the defeat of the battle of Simancas in 939, the concept *sulṭān* apparently was used as a title. The caliph is said to have been forced to enter the pit (*al-khandaq*), which was dug by the Christian forces as a trap for the Muslim army: "and the *sulṭān* entered with them and was carried out with *his* army, and abandoned everything of *his sawād*, which was taken" (*fa-dakhala bihim al-sulṭān muḍṭarran wa-nafadha fī ajnādihi, wa-taraka sawādahū bi-mā fīhi*).¹¹³ The action – entering the pit – and the use of the verb point out to the concept *sulṭān* as an appellation, in this particular case. It was the *sulṭān* who was forced to enter the pit, and not an abstract reference of his power, together with his army. Consequently, his *sawād* was sacked from the military camp. The chronicler adds that both the *sawād* of the army and the equipment of the *sulṭān*, his tent and his insignia of power were seized by the enemy (*wa-mulika sawād al-ʿaskar wa-ʿuddat al-sulṭān wa-surādiqahū wa-alātahū al-sulṭāniyya*).¹¹⁴ Perhaps this is not a reference to the equipment of the entourage of the caliph, as his men to whom he would delegate the power, but

¹¹² MANZANO 2019, 93.

¹¹³ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 435; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 325–326. *Sawād* refers to the royal insignia or belongings of the caliph, which in the Spanish translation appears as "real."

¹¹⁴ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 436; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 326.

rather the equipment of the caliph himself, such as his tent, his insignia, amongst which Ibn Ḥayyān specifies it was his Qurʾān and his mail coat. The mention of the seizing of the *sawād* of the caliph's army makes a distinction between the personal equipment of the caliph – in this case, the *sulṭān*'s – and the *sawād* of the military.

The Andalusī sources highlight the term *sulṭān* to identify the central power held by the caliph, such as on the occasion that the Caliph al-Ḥakam II received Jaʿfar b. ʿAlī and Ibn Ḥayyān states that they intended to be hosted by the “sacred of the Commander of the Faithful” – *ḥaram amīr al-muʾminīn* – and to abide to their power (*sulṭānuhum*).¹¹⁵ When Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Ṭawīl, lord of Huesca, was received in Cordoba in 940, he is said to have presented himself at the door of the *sulṭān* – *ʿalā al-quḍūm ilā Bāb al-Sulṭān*.¹¹⁶ Although the idea of *Bāb al-Sulṭān* enunciates also the abstract conceptualization of the *court* as the center of power (*sulṭān*),¹¹⁷ it is also true that as a synonym of *Bāb Suddat al-Khalīfa* it could also mean its new resonances as an appellation.

Thus, the concept of *sulṭān* apparently appears in some cases in its transition form, from a mere reference to the abstract concept of power to its association with the ruler, revealing a starting point in the perception of *sulṭān* as a title in tenth-century al-Andalus. This transition in al-Andalus is plausible, especially in the same context observed for the titles of *imām* or *mahdī*, which dwell between their original meanings, going back to the times of Prophet Muḥammad, and with the newly eschatological significance acquired with the messianic beliefs that both the Umayyad and the Fatimid caliphates tried to answer.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- (1950), *Una crónica anónima de al-Nasir*, ed. and trans. by Évariste Lévi-Provençal and Emilio García Gómez, Madrid/Granada: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas / Instituto Miguel Asín.
- Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (2012), *The Book of Ceremonies*, trans. by Ann Moffat and Maxeme Tall, vols. 1 and 2, Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies.
- Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (1983), *al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, ed. by Mufid Muḥammad Qumayḥa, 9 vols., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya.
- (2006–2011), *The Unique Necklace, al-ʿIqd al-Farīd*, trans. by Issa J. Boullata, 3 vols., Reading: Garnet Publishing.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII* (1965), 52; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis VII*, trans. (1967), 70–71.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V* (1979), 453; Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis V*, trans. (1981), 340–341.

¹¹⁷ CARDOSO 2020, 2021, 2023.

- Ibn Ḥayyān (1965), *al-Muqtabis fī akhbār balad al-Andalus*, ed. by 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Alī al-Ḥajjī, Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa.
- (1967), *Anales Palatinos del Califa de Córdoba al-Hakam II, por 'Isa Ibn Ahmad al-Razi*, trans. by Emilio García Gómez, Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones.
 - (1979), *al-Muqtabas li-Ibn Ḥayyān al-Qurṭubī (al-juz' al-khāmis)*. *Al-Muqtabas (V)*, ed. by Pedro Chalmeta, Federico Corriente, and Maḥmūd Ṣubḥ, Madrid/Rabat: Instituto Hispano Árabe de Cultura, Faculté des Lettres.
 - (1981), *Crónica del Califa 'Abdarraman III an-Nasir entre los años 912 y 942 (Al-Muqtabis V)*, trans. by María Jesús Viguera and Federico Corriente, Zaragoza: Anubar Ediciones, Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura.
- Ibn 'Idhārī al-Marrākushī (1904), *Histoire de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne intitulée al-Bayyano'l-Mogrib*, trans. by E. Fagnan, vol. II, Algiers: Imprimerie Orientale Pierre Fontana.
- (1948–1951), *Al-Bayān al-Mughrib fī akhbār al-Andalus wa l-Maghrib*, ed. by G. S. Colin / É. Lévi-Provençal, vol. 2, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya.
- al-Maqqarī (1840–1843), *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain. Nafḥ al-ṭib min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb wa-dhikr wazīriḥā Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb*, trans. by Pascual de Gayangos, vol. II, London: Oriental Translation Fund.
- (1855), *Nafḥ al-ṭib min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb wa-dhikr wazīriḥā Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb*, ed. by R. Dozy, G. Dugat, L. Krehl, and W. Wright, vol. I, Leiden: Brill.
- al-Ṣābi', Hilāl (1964), *Rusūm Dār al-Khilāfa. The Etiquette, Protocol and Diplomacy of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Baghdād*, ed. by Mīkhā'il 'Awād, Baghdad: al-'Ānī Press.
- al-Ṣābi', Hilāl (1977), *Rusūm Dār al-Khilāfa. The Rules and Regulations of the 'Abbasid Court*, trans. by Elie A. Salem, Beirut: American University of Beirut.

Secondary Sources

- 'Abbās, Iḥsān, "Kuthayyir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4587 (accessed June 1, 2022).
- ACIÉN, Manuel (1995), "Materiales e hipótesis para una interpretación del Salón de 'Abd al-Raḥmān III," in: Antonio Vallejo, coord., *Madīnat al-Zahrā'. El Salón de 'Abd al-Raḥmān III*, Córdoba: Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, 179–185.
- ALBARRÁN, Javier (2015), *Veneración y polémica. Muḥammad en la obra del Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ*, Madrid: La Ergástula.
- (2020), *Ejércitos benditos. Yihad y memoria en al-Andalus (siglos X–XIII)*, Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada.
- BARCELÓ CRESPI, María (1993), *Al-Mulk, el verde y el blanco. La vajilla califal Omeya de Madinat al-Zahra*. Granada: Universidad de Granada.
- BORRUT, Antoine (2011), *Entre mémoire et pouvoir. L'espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides (v. 72–193/692–809)*, Leiden: Brill.
- (2014), "Court Astrologers and Historical Writing in Early 'Abbāsīd Baghdad: An Appraisal," in: Jens Scheiner and Damien Janos, eds., *The Place to Go: Contexts of Learning in Baghdād, 750–1000 C.E.*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 455–501.
- BOSWORTH, C. E., "Al-Shām," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 9, 261–262. CARDOSO, Elsa (2020), "The Door of the Caliph in the Umayyad al-Andalus: From Conceptualization to the Articulation of Ceremonial," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Lisbon.

- (2021), “The Door of the Caliph in the Umayyad al-Andalus: From the Conceptualization to the Articulation of Ceremonial (10th–11th centuries), Doctoral thesis in history presented at the University of Lisbon in July 15, 2020. Supervised by Professor Hermenegildo Fernandes and Professor Hugh Kennedy,” *Medievalista* 30 (Julho–Dezembro): 365–385. <https://medievalista.iem.fcsh.unl.pt/index.php/medievalista/article/view/441/446>
- (2023), *The Door of the Caliph. Concepts of the Court in the Umayyad Caliphate of al-Andalus*, London: Routledge.
- CLÉMENT, François (1997), *Pouvoir et légitimité en Espagne musulmane à l'époque des taifas, Ve–XIe siècle*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
- CRONE, Patricia / HINDS, Martin (1986), *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- DONNER, Fred M. (2010), *Muhammad and the Believers*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- FIERRO, Maribel (1989), “Sobre la adopción del título califal por ‘Abd al-Rahmān III,” *Sharq Al-Andalus: Estudios mudéjares y moriscos* 6: 33–42.
- (2004), “Madīnat al-Zahrā’, el Paraíso y los Fatimíes,” *Al-Qanṭara* XXV, 2: 299–327.
- (2011), *Abderramán III y el califato omeya de Córdoba*, San Sebastián: Nerea.
- GARCÍA SANJUÁN, Alejandro (2008), “Legalidad islámica y legitimidad política en el Califato de Córdoba: la proclamación de Hishām II (360–366/971–976),” *Al-Qanṭara* XXIX.1: 45–77.
- KENNEDY, Hugh (2016), *Caliphate: The History of an Idea*, London: Basic Books.
- MANZANO, Eduardo (2019), *La corte del califa. Cuatro años en la Córdoba de los omeyas*, Barcelona: Crítica.
- MARTÍNEZ NUÑEZ, María Antonia (1995), “La epigrafía del Salón de ‘Abd al-Rahmān III” in: Antonio Vallejo, coord., *Madīnat al-Zahrā’. El Salón de ‘Abd al-Rahmān III*, Córdoba: Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, 107–152.
- MONROE, James T. (1971), “The Historical Arjūza of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, a Tenth-Century Hispano-Arabic Epic Poem,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91.1 (Jan.–Mar.), 67–95.
- PELLAT, Ch., “Nuṣayb al-Akbar b. Rabāḥ,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6000 (accessed June 1, 2022).
- PETŘÁČEK, K., “al-Aḥwaṣ,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0436 (accessed June 1, 2022).
- SAFRAN, Janina (2001), *The Second Umayyad Caliphate. The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- SALIBA, George (1994), *A History of Arabic Astronomy. Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam*, New York: New York University Press.
- SAMSÓ, Julio (1979), “The Early Development of Astrology in al-Andalus,” *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* 3: 228–243.
- (2007), *Astronomy and Astrology in al-Andalus and in the Maghrib*, London: Routledge.
- STETKEVICH, Suzanne (2002), *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy: Myth, Gender and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode*, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- VALLEJO, Antonio (2016), “El Heredero Designado y el Califa. El Occidente y el Oriente en Madīnat al-Zahrā’,” *Mainake* XXXVI: 433–464.
- VIGUERA, María Jesús (1977), *El Musnad de Ibn Marzuq* (Traducción y estudio), Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura.