

Computational Reading of Arabic  
Biographical Collections with Special  
Reference to Preaching in the Sunnī  
World (661–1300 CE)

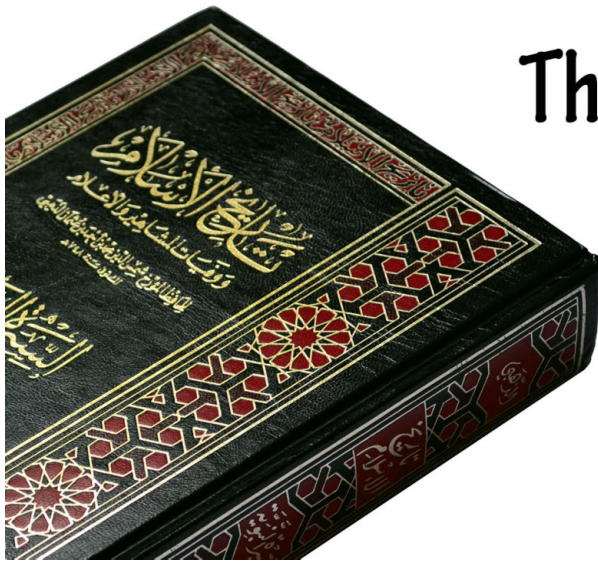
by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Near Eastern Studies)  
in the University of Michigan  
2013

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There's a graph  
for that

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# Dedication

For my family there, and my family here  
for Marina and Sasha

# Acknowledgments

Long-term projects are not possible without those whom we meet along the way. Sometimes we meet these people by sheer accident; they help and encourage us, often even unknowingly. As I look back, I realize that I have been blessed with too many happy accidents.

To my adviser, Alexander D. Knysh, I owe a debt that I will hardly ever be able to pay back. I met him over a decade ago through what seems to be a series of coincidences. It all started when one of my undergraduate professors of philosophy gave me Professor Knysh's translations of Ibn 'Arabī's mystical writings. It was this translation and his other studies of Islamic mysticism (in Russian) that convinced me to begin studying Arabic. I joined the Department of Oriental Studies at Saint-Petersburg State University only to learn that he was teaching elsewhere, at some American university. A year later, it so happened that Valerie Anishchenkova—then a graduate student at the University of Michigan, now a professor and the Director of the Arabic Program at the University of Maryland—was visiting one of her former professors at Saint-Petersburg. She introduced me to Professor Knysh who, as it happened, himself was visiting St. Petersburg a few weeks later. Since our first meeting

Professor Knysh has been guiding me through the intricate world of Islamic studies as a scholar, as a mentor, and as a dear friend.

Professor Knysh recommended me to the post-graduate program in Islamic Studies at the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (the Russian Academy of Sciences),<sup>1</sup> whose history goes back to the Russian imperial past. Senior scholars of this institution helped me make my first baby steps into the field of Arabic and Islamic studies. It was a great honor and pleasure for me to work with Professors Oleg G. Bolshakov, Irina B. Mikhaylova, Valeriy V. Polosin, Oleg F. Akimushkin, Alexei A. Khismatulin, but most importantly, with Professor Stanislav M. Prozorov. As my mentor at this academic institution, he introduced me to and guided me through the world of Arabic biographical literature. I will always cherish our study sessions at his apartment, with his ancient cat sleeping on my lap and him occasionally chuckling at my clumsy translations. It was he who introduced me to the quantitative approach to these sources and shared with me his vision of what we can learn about the pre-modern Islamic world from so much data. Together we tried to move toward this goal, relying on the method that he and his colleagues had devised decades ago. Available computational tools raised our hopes, but my application of this method, using a conventional relational database, did not get us too far. I like thinking of this dissertation project as the first solid step toward that vision, and as a continuation of my collaborative work with Professor Prozorov, whose guidance and advice I have been missing dearly in the Land of Great Lakes.

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<sup>1</sup>At the time of my studies the name of this institution was the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (the Russian Academy of Sciences).

As I continued my studies at the University of Michigan, Professor Knysh became my primary adviser and mentor. He was extremely patient and considerate while I was exploring digital methods of textual analysis, even though I still might need another decade or so to convince him to turn to the digital side of Islamic studies. At the University of Michigan I was lucky to study under Professor Sherman A. Jackson, Professor Michael D. Bonner, and Professor Andrew J. Shryock. They all invested their unique expertise, enthusiasm and humor into molding me as a scholar. Professor Jackson taught me a lot about the Qurʾān, Ḥadīth, Islamic law, Arabic grammar, and the unexpectedly exciting subject of Arabic rhetoric. His expertise and unique perspective left a lasting imprint on my thinking about these subjects. Professor Bonner's expertise in Islamic history saved me from embarrassing mistakes, while his enthusiastic support often helped me find ways out of frustrating dead ends. I deeply appreciate his support in rather mundane matters as well as his help with my spoken and written English, particularly with my scourge, *the* definite article. When my research took a sudden digital turn, Professor Shryock's unique ability to see intricate connections became crucial in pulling together disjoint elements of my work into a coherent system. It was a great honor for me to have Professor Richard W. Bulliet, a pioneer of quantitative analysis in the field of Islamic studies, as a member of my dissertation committee. His expertise and experience was invaluable in developing and testing my method of computational reading.

One hardly can get through a graduate school without making some good friends to share ideas, to get through complications that life throws on us,

and simply to hang out. I am thankful to Noah Gardiner, Nancy Linthicum, Alison Crossley Vacca, and Paul Love for being there. My special thanks are to Derek Mancini-Lander (and his lovely family) who made me and my wife feel almost at home in a foreign country. Through his critical comments in the academic setting, unconditional help in real life situations, great cooking and constant good-natured teasing, Derek became the most dear colleague to me, the most dear friend to me and my wife, and the most dear *diadia Derek* to our daughter.

My search for a working digital method was often akin to wandering in the dark. Many wonderful people helped me out. Some showed the way, others took my hand and walked me to the light. Anastasia (Nastia) Shchupak, a dear friend who happened to be a professional programmer, helped me push the juggernaut of my project in the right direction. Her father, Yuri A. Shchupak, also a programmer, led us out of some serious quagmire, which ultimately saved me hundreds if not thousands of hours of mind-numbing manual labor. Another programmer, Ben W. Brumfield, who happened to share a hotel room with me during the 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (Chicago, 2012), showed me a few simple examples of how scripting languages can be used for textual analysis. This was an epiphany moment that convinced me to learn `Python`.

My participation in “Working with text in a digital age” (2012), a three-week NEH Institute for Advanced Technology in the Digital Humanities, hosted at Tufts University (the Perseus Project), was truly a turning point. I met a great number of humanists who work with texts in different classical and early



modern languages but share the same fascination with digital methods and approaches. Living at an undergraduate dormitory and breaking bread three times a day with these great pioneers of the digital humanities allowed me to rethink entirely my approach to computational textual analysis and completely changed my vision of the possible and the impossible. Since that institute I have been staying in touch with Gregory R. Crane (Tufts University), Harry A. Diakoff (the Alpheios Project), and David J. Birnbaum (University of Pittsburgh). Their invigorating intellectual company enabled me to solve a great many small and big methodological issues, and showed me ways of thinking outside the box. I am excited to write these lines already as a postdoctoral associate at Tufts University where I will be working with Gregory R. Crane and his amazing teams at the Perseus Project (Tufts University) and the Open Philology Project (the University of Leipzig).

Our families is another important source of support and inspiration for us. I would like to thank my family in Russia—our parents Gennady and Elena Romanovs, and Vladimir and Lilia Finogenovs, our aunt Olga Igolaynen, and our *babushka* Galia for their unconditional love and support during my long years of graduate school. Last but not least, my limitless gratitude is to my dear wife Marina and sweet daughter Sasha for their love, support, warmth and patience, and for putting up with what is nothing but an oxymoron, a dissertating husband and father.

Ann Arbor, Michigan / Arlington, Massachusetts  
September, 2013

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# List of Abbreviations

## *References*

- EALL** *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*. Brill Online, 2012. Reference. University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. 2012–2013.
- EI2** *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, 2012. Reference. University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. 2012–2013.
- EI3** *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition*. Brill Online, 2012. Reference. University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. 2012–2013.

## *Primary Sources*

- TI** *Taʾrīkh al-islām* of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 CE)
- SAN** *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 CE)
- JM** *al-Jawāhir al-muḍīya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Abī-l-Wafāʾ (d. 775/1374 CE)
- TT** *Tāj al-tarājim fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Qutlūbughā (d. 879/1475 CE)
- TS** *al-Ṭabaqāt al-sanīya fī tarājim al-ḥanafīya* of al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 1010/1602 CE)
- DM** *al-Dibāj al-mudhahhab fī maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ al-madhhab* of Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397 CE)
- TM** *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-maʿrifat aʿlām madhhab Mālik* of al-Yaḥsūbī (d. 544/1150 CE)
- TFSH** *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-shāfiʿīya* of al-Shahrazūrī (d. 676/1278 CE)
- TShK** *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya al-kubrā* of al-Subkī (d. 771/1370 CE)



**TSh** *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya* of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448 CE)

**TH** *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Yaʿlā (d. 526/1133 CE)

**DhTH** *al-Dhayl ʿalā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393 CE)

**MB** *Muʿjam al-buldān* of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1230 CE)

**KA** *Kitāb al-ansāb* of al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1167 CE)

# Note on Dates, Maps and Figures

Pre-modern Muslim authors use almost exclusively the Islamic lunar (or *hijrī*) calendar. Thus, the dates are given first according to the *hijrī* calendar and then in the Common Era (Gregorian calendar), separated by slash. In most cases, when I use only years in dates (i.e., no months, no days), the year in Common Era is automatically converted from the *hijrī* year, using the simple formula for years:  $CE = AH - \frac{AH}{33} + 622$ ;<sup>2</sup> the resulting number is then rounded, thus giving the CE year that included the largest part of the AH year. For most of our purposes this is precise enough dating. In cases when more precise dating is necessary, I rely on online converters, such as the one at [IslamiCity.com](http://IslamiCity.com).

The use of color in figures and maps is crucial since it makes it possible to visualize data more efficiently. Unfortunately, it is hardly possible for my readers to reproduce colors on maps and figures the way they are supposed to. For this reason I recommend perusing figures and maps in their electronic format. Even when figures appear small in the printout or PDF, their digital forms includes high-resolution images that can be enlarged and viewed in all details.

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<sup>2</sup>See, for example: MARSHALL G. S. HODGSON, *The venture of Islam: conscience and history in a world civilization. Vol. 1. The classical age of Islam.*, volume 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974a), 21.

# Note on Transliteration

I use three different transliteration systems, but each one is confined to specific sections. In the main text I use the standard transliteration system with only one slight difference—I transliterate *alif maqṣūra* as *á*. Because of technical issues I was not able to use either the standard transliteration system or Arabic script in automatically generated graphs and maps: here I am using a combination of simplified transliteration and a simplified Buckwalter transliteration scheme. The latter was developed by Tim Buckwalter in the 1990s as a workaround to overcome numerous issues with the support of Arabic on computers.<sup>3</sup> This system is most commonly used by computational linguists who work with Arabic texts converted into Latin script. Although the overall situation with Arabic support has improved significantly over the past decade, there are still some software packages that do not provide satisfactory support for Arabic and, unfortunately for me, R turned out to be one of them. I modified the Buckwalter transliteration scheme in order to avoid complications with special characters during computational analysis.

In order to make the graphs more user-friendly, I use a simplified transliteration that does not differentiate between short and long vowels, emphatic and non-emphatic consonants. This is more readable than the Buckwalter scheme, but occasionally insufficient. For example, in simplified transliteration *shahīd* is indistinguishable from *shāhid*—both will appear as **shahid**; Buckwalter transliteration allows to keep the distinction: *shahīd* becomes **Ehyd**, and *shāhid*—**EAhd**.

All three transliteration schemes are given below: **Al** stands for “Arabic letter;” **St**—“Standard Transliteration” (if different, simplified Transliteration is given in parenthesis); **Bw**—“Simplified Buckwalter Transliteration Scheme.” (In Simplified Buckwalter Scheme capital and small letters are treated as different symbols.)

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<sup>3</sup>For more details: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckwalter\\_transliteration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buckwalter_transliteration).

Al	St	Bw	Al	St	Bw	Al	St	Bw	Al	St	Bw
ء	◌ (')	c	ا	ā (a)	A	إ	◌ (')	A	أ	◌ (')	A
آ	◌ā (a)	A	ب	b	b	ت	t	t	ث	th	v
ج	j	j	ح	ḥ (h)	H	خ	kh	x	د	d	d
ذ	dh	V	ر	r	r	ز	z	z	س	s	s
ش	sh	E	ص	ṣ (s)	S	ض	ḍ (d)	D	ط	ṭ (t)	T
ظ	ẓ (z)	Z	ع	◌ (')	C	غ	gh	g	ف	f	f
ق	q	q	ك	k	k	ل	l	l	م	m	m
ن	n	n	ه	h	h	و	◌ (')	c	و	w, ū (u)	w
ي	á (a)	y	ي	◌ (')	c	ي	y, ī (i)	y	ة	a	o

# Introduction

This dissertation is a project in the digital humanities. Over the past few years “digital humanities” has become an extremely overused buzzword, and one often gets a feeling that, as a Russian saying goes, only the lazy do not speak of themselves as digital humanists. For this reason, some clarifications are in order. The digital humanities still remain a vaguely defined field<sup>4</sup> and DH studies range widely from theoretical inquiries into possible effects of technological developments on the humanities at large to the development and application of digital methods to traditional sources. While the prevailing majority of digital humanists prefer to contribute to the area of theoretical inquiries, this dissertation is primarily about studying traditional sources with non-traditional methods.

The initial plan was to write a dissertation on the history of “public preaching” (*wasz*). My sociological background and my overall interest in Arabic biographical literature, which was firmly instilled in me by my Russian mentor Professor Stanislav M. Prozorov, steered me toward the history of “public

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<sup>4</sup>For an interesting attempt to define digital humanities, see: ANNE BURDICK et al., *Digital Humanities* (The MIT Press, November 2012), especially Chapter 4. Provocations: A Short Guide to the Digital Humanities.

preaching” through the analysis of biographical collections. In order to study preachers as a social group it was necessary to study *all* their biographies. Unfortunately, conventional close reading was of little help and a different method was necessary. In order to understand how this social group fitted into Islamic society, it was necessary to know what Islamic society was, i.e. it was necessary to study *all* other biographies as well.<sup>5</sup> Only this would allow to place preachers into a wider context of Islamic society as it is represented on the pages of biographical collections. This also required a different method.

Graduate students in our field often learn additional languages of the Islamicate world in order to advance their research. In order to solve my methodological issues I needed not a different language, but a different *kind* of language—a language that would allow me to work with texts in a radically different manner. It so happened that learning scripting languages—in my case Python and R—was the answer. These *formal* languages indeed allow one to read texts in a completely different way, no matter in what language and how long they are. They enhance and augment our ability to read by allowing us to work with practically unlimited volumes of text. They allowed me to pull together almost 30,000 biographies from al-Dhahabī’s *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, the largest biographical collection that became the backbone of my study, and start studying them as a whole.

Since digital methods have not yet entered the domain of Islamic studies, the first part of the dissertation offers a detailed explanation of “computational

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<sup>5</sup>It is still hard to speak about the society at large, but I hope that methodologically I was able to make a few steps in the right direction that would allow us to better understand the Islamic élites that are described in biographical collections.

reading” that has been developed over the past two years. This method is built upon existing digital techniques and approaches that were picked from a variety of disciplines and adapted to the analysis of Arabic biographical collections. I fully realize that the reader may find the exposition of the method painfully technical, but since the method is essential for the entire study and largely unprecedented, its inner workings must be explained in sufficient detail. Most importantly, I hope that this part will provide young scholars who are willing to step into the still uncharted terrain of digital methods of textual analysis with a desperately needed road map: something that I, to my own misfortune, did not have.

The first part is also meant to be a step toward finding a viable approach for studying the vast digital corpus of classical Islamic texts which keeps on growing practically by the minute. If Islamicists do not find a way to deal with this big issue, eventually someone else will. In this light it is worth drawing attention to an experimental study conducted by a group of *information scientists*. Published in an American academic journal,<sup>6</sup> this “computer study of the reliability of Arabic stories” attempts to evaluate the reliability of chains of transmitters (*isnāds*) in Prophetic reports (*hadīths*) using contemporary information reliability theories. Although these scientists are far from producing anything as appealing to reading public as, for example, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*,<sup>7</sup> there is no reasons to believe that our field will forever remain immune to those who might want to follow in the footsteps of Jared Diamond,

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<sup>6</sup>IBRAHIM BOUNHAS et al., ‘Toward a computer study of the reliability of Arabic stories’, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, (2010).

<sup>7</sup>JARED DIAMOND, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, 1st edition (W. W. Norton & Company, July 2005), first published in 1999.

a biologist-turn-historian.

The second part is on modeling. Extracted with digital methods, “big data” still need to be re-organized in some coherent manner in order to be useful for analysis. Modeling is a way to achieve this. As clearly defined systems of assumptions about different kinds of data and their interrelations, models are designed to provide explanations for complex processes.<sup>8</sup> Thus, this part models big data extracted from al-Dhahabī’s *Ta’rīkh al-islām* to further our understanding of the social geography of the Islamic world and major social transformations that the Muslim community underwent in the course of its early history. Although largely a road map for further research, this part provides an important chronological, geographical and social background for the last part of the dissertation.

The third part is an application of the devised method to the study of Islamic preaching. It focuses on an exploratory overview of all major forms of Islamic preaching as featured on the electronic pages of my corpus that covers about 700 years of Islamic history. Partially determined by the current state of the development of computational reading, this part studies the major forms of Islamic preaching from chronological, geographical and social perspectives that have been largely overlooked in academic treatments of this subject. The choice of establishing the overview, instead of trying to find an-

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<sup>8</sup>For valuable examples of modeling “big data,” see: FRANCO MORETTI, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (Verso, 2007); IAN MORRIS, *The measure of civilization: how social development decides the fate of nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); also see <http://orbis.stanford.edu/> for the geographical model of the Roman world, developed by Walter Scheidel and Elijah Meeks. In the field of Islamic studies: RICHARD W. BULLIET, *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).



swers to particular historical questions, was deliberate. Working with big data makes it abundantly clear that there are too many unknowns and that asking specific questions without knowing what is and what is not in the data only leads to wrong answers. At this stage, “exploratory analysis” is much more crucial than specific inquiries. One of the major goals of this part is also to demonstrate how exactly computational reading can contribute to the studies of specific phenomena and practices in the pre-modern Islamic world.

The three parts of the dissertation build upon each other, but ultimately can be treated as separate studies.

# Chapter 1

## Computational Reading

### 1.1 Defining the Corpus

#### 1.1.1 Evergrowing Corpora

[A] canon of two hundred novels, for instance, sounds very large for nineteenth-century Britain . . . , but it is still less than one per cent of the novels that were actually published: twenty thousand, thirty, more, no one really knows—and close reading won't help here, a novel a day every day of the year would take a century or so . . . And it's not even a matter of time, but of method: a field this large cannot be understood by stitching together separate bits of knowledge about individual cases, because it *isn't* a sum of individual cases: it's a collective system, that should be grasped as such, as a whole—and the graphs that follow are one way to begin this.

Franco Moretti. *Graphs, Maps, Trees*. p.4

The availability of great volumes of information in our digital age has made our life easier on the one hand, but on the other, it has made it incredibly more difficult, since such abundance of information forces us into the *stack*

## Publications on the Islamic world

according to data from Brill's INDEX ISLAMICUS the number of publications practically doubled over the past two decades (the number of published books grew almost 4 times) if compared to almost the entire preceding history of Islamic studies as a discipline: approximately 284,000 publications (with about 47,000 books) for the period of 1990-2009 against approximately 145,000 publications (with about 13,000 books) for the period of 1900-1989.

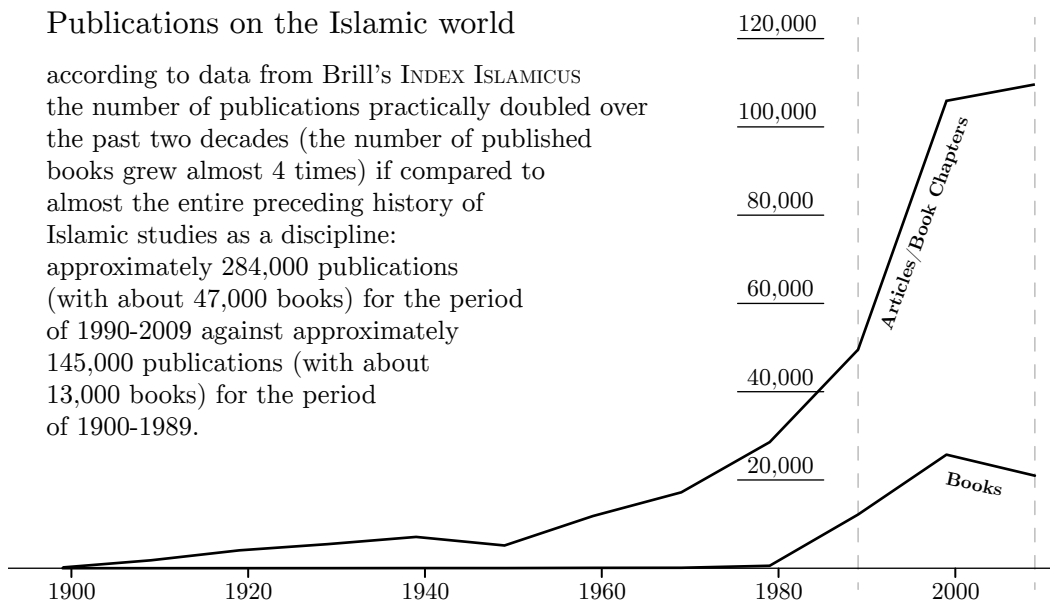


Figure 1.1: Publications on the Islamic world. SOURCE: the INDEX ISLAMICUS hosted at EBSCO, accessed via <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/>, October, 2012.

*overflow*<sup>1</sup> mode—that is, we have to deal with much more information than we can possibly process, let alone effectively analyze. According to Brill's INDEX ISLAMICUS, the largest bibliographical database on the Islamic world, the number of publications practically doubled over the past two decades (the number of published books grew almost four times!) if compared to almost the entire preceding history of Islamic studies as a field of scholarly inquiry: approximately 284,000 publications (with about 47,000 books) for the period of 1990–2009 against approximately 145,000 publications (with about 13,000 books) for the period of 1900–1989 (See Figure 1.1).

Developments in the digital world have affected the area of primary re-

<sup>1</sup>In programming, *stack overflow* is an error condition that occurs when there is no room in the stack for a new item. Often, this will overwrite the adjacent memory locations causing hard-to-trace bugs.

search as well. Historians now have access to digital forms of primary sources: scanned images of printed books, high-resolution images of manuscripts, fully-searchable versions of these texts etc. The pace of different fields in this area varies, but digital libraries of primary sources are now available for classical Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, and Chinese, as well as for early forms of European languages, such as English, German, Italian, Old Church Slavonic, etc.

The area of classical Arabic has undergone a very significant change: thousands of primary sources have been scanned and uploaded to a great number of websites all over the world. Among the largest resources of books in classical Arabic are: AL-MAKTABA AL-WAQFIYYA ([www.waqfeya.org](http://www.waqfeya.org)), MULTAQÁ AHL AL-ḤADĪTH ([www.ahlalhdeeth.com](http://www.ahlalhdeeth.com)), the INTERNET ARCHIVE ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)) and WĪKĪ MAṢḌAR ([ar.wikisource.org](http://ar.wikisource.org)); HATHI TRUST ([www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org)) offers a number of Arabic sources, which are no longer under the copyright. More important, however, is the fact that a great number of these texts have been converted into a fully-searchable format (henceforth such texts will be referred to as eTexts).

### 1.1.2 The Classical Arabic Corpus

At the moment it is hardly possible to give even an approximate estimate for the overall volume of the classical Arabic corpus,<sup>2</sup> but we can get some

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<sup>2</sup>For now I can say that in his voluminous *Hadīyat al-‘arīfīn* (“The Gift of the Knowledgeable”), Ismā‘īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī listed over 8,700 men of letters, who contributed to the treasury of Islamic written culture up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This means that the total number of books should be at least twice as many. ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla’s *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn* (“The Dictionary of Authors”) includes almost twice as many records—

glimpses by looking into the available digital libraries of classical Arabic texts. While these libraries are huge, most of them suffer from strong ideological bias and include mostly Sunnī texts that have passed the Salafī test for orthodoxy. However, even this fraction of the entire classical Arabic legacy is quite impressive. The commercially available software AL-JĀMI‘ AL-KABĪR includes 2,400 titles (approximately 5,500 volumes) and adds up to almost 400 million words;<sup>3</sup> another commercially available library, AL-MU‘JAM AL-FIQHĪ, includes over 1,100 titles.<sup>4</sup> The largest online libraries of classical Arabic texts surpass AL-JĀMI‘ AL-KABĪR and AL-MU‘JAM AL-FIQHĪ combined: as of September 2012, AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA included over 5,800 titles (over 800 million words);<sup>5</sup> AL-MISHKĀT—over 7,300; ṢAYD AL-FAWĀ‘ID—over

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approximately 16,500—and covers a slightly longer period (up to the 1950s), but it suffers from a number of issues. First of all, his work is surprisingly inconsistent and authors are often described quite haphazardly. Second, ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla regularly uses anachronistic descriptions, e.g., he often qualifies both Sunnī and Shī‘ī jurists as *usūlī*, while one rarely finds this descriptor in pre-modern Sunnī sources: e.g., 36 people in al-Dhahabī’s *Ta’rīkh al-islām* (100–700 AH) vs. 314 in *Mu‘jam al-mu’allifīn* (for the same period of 100–700 AH); at the same time important affiliations mentioned in pre-modern sources are often omitted (for example, many Shī‘ī authors are not explicitly described as such). On the other hand, ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla’s dictionary includes a significant number of non-Muslim authors, something which Ismā‘īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī’s dictionary seems to lack.

<sup>3</sup>AL-JĀMI‘ AL-KABĪR is the largest digital library offered by AL-TURĀTH (Jordan), which includes all the smaller libraries developed by this publisher; unfortunately, the program shell is the paragon of poor programming—it is barely usable and the publisher does not provide any customer support for their quite expensive product (\$400). Earlier, thematic libraries by AL-TURĀTH are easier to work with, but they offer only very basic search and browsing capabilities. Reviews/manuals for some of libraries by AL-TURĀTH will soon be available at [www.alraqmiyyat.org](http://www.alraqmiyyat.org) (written by Michael Bonner, Stanislav Prozorov and Maxim Romanov).

<sup>4</sup>AL-MU‘JAM AL-FIQHĪ was developed in the city of Qom under the patronage of *āyatullāh* al-Gulpāyagānī and includes both Sunnī and Shī‘ī texts (some in Persian); the software shell of this library is quite stable and offers better search capabilities.

<sup>5</sup>AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA is a free database shell with a decent user interface, which allows one to add any text available on the website of AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA as well as texts of suitable format from other resources; it seems to include all the texts from AL-JĀMI‘ AL-KABĪR in addition to a large selection of texts, which were added by the community of users. This library is a striking example of **crowdsourcing**, a process that

Digital Library	Media	Titles	Vols	Words	uTokens†
<i>al-Jāmi' al-kabīr</i>	HDD, Win.95	<b>2,400</b>	<b>5,552</b>	<b>394,5 mln</b>	<b>0.524%</b>
<i>al-Maktaba al-shamīla</i>	www.shamela.ws	<b>5,869</b>	no data	<b>821,5 mln</b>	no data
<i>al-Mishkāt</i>	www.almeshkat.net	<b>7,375</b>	no data	no data	no data
<i>Ṣayd al-fawā'id</i>	www.saaid.net	<b>10,159</b>	no data	no data	no data
<i>al-Mu'jam al-fiqhī</i> ††	DVD, Windows	<b>1,131</b>	<b>3,000</b> ‡†	no data	no data
<i>al-Warrāq</i>	www.alwaraq.net	<b>862</b>	no data	no data	no data

Figure 1.2: Major Digital Libraries of Classical Arabic. † uTokens show the number of unique word forms in the library; †† AL-MU'JAM AL-FIQHĪ includes both Sunnī and Shī'ī texts; ‡† the number of volumes is approximate.

10,000;<sup>6</sup> while the AL-WARRĀQ WEBSITE, perhaps the first online library to appear, had only 860 titles (Figure 1.2). It is important to stress that these are the largest and perhaps most easily accessible digital libraries/collections of texts in classical Arabic.

The contents of most of these these libraries seem rather similar and in many cases they do re-use the exact same texts. Yet, the actual number of classical Arabic titles is not easy to estimate for all of these libraries, since they often include modern titles as well. As for AL-JĀMI' AL-KABĪR and AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA, the contents of which I was able to analyze, they have a very significant number of books written by authors who died before 1900 CE, with most of the titles distributed in the period between 800 CE and

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involves the outsourcing of the task of database population to an undefined public. In the human language this means that a great number of texts were added by enthusiasts known to others largely by their online nicknames.

<sup>6</sup>AL-MISHKĀT and ṢAYD AL-FAWĀ'ID, in fact, are nothing but repositories and do not provide any tools for working with their texts.



Figure 1.3: Distribution of Digitized Arabic Sources (by Titles). The graphs of both libraries are strikingly similar, which strongly suggests that that AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA has been built upon AL-JĀMI' AL-KABĪR. Additionally, two periods vividly stand out: 801—1200 CE and 1201—1700 CE.

1700 CE: at least 2000 titles in AL-JĀMI' AL-KABĪR and 3200 in AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA.<sup>7</sup> Looking at the graph of titles from these two libraries one cannot but notice two things (Figure 1.3). First, the graphs of both libraries are strikingly similar, which strongly suggests that that AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA has been built upon AL-JĀMI' AL-KABĪR (particularly, distribution by 50 year periods). Second, two periods stand out vividly: 801—1200 CE and 1201—1700 CE.

The emphasis on these two periods does not necessarily characterize the entire corpus of classical Arabic, but they do tell us about the contents of these two libraries, especially if the creators consistently implemented their Salafi

<sup>7</sup>Quite a few authors do not have dates of death, but definitely belong to the classical period.

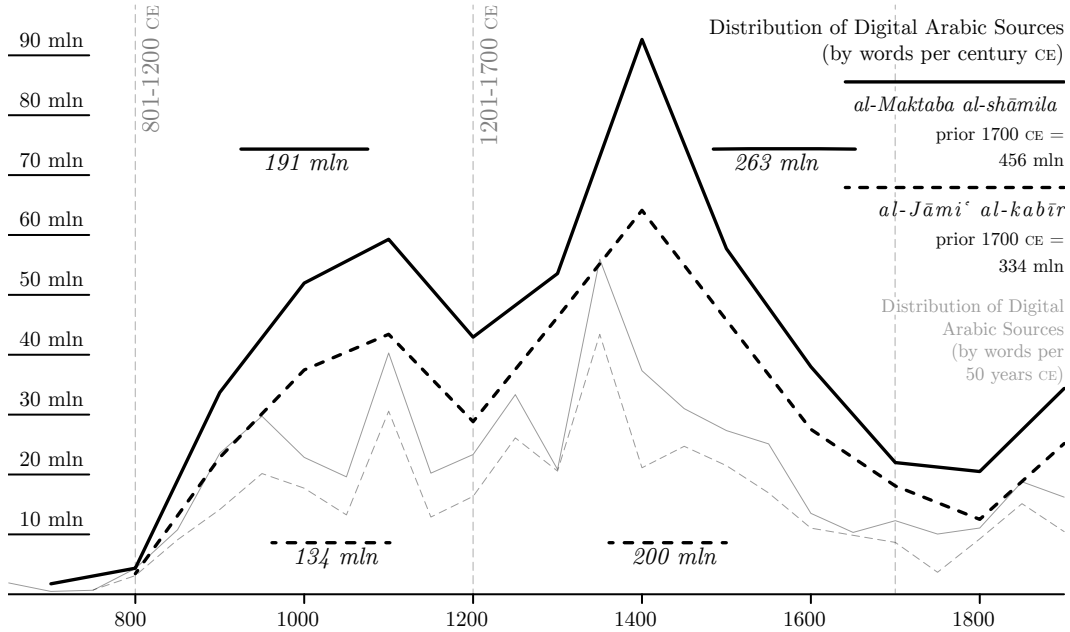


Figure 1.4: Distribution of Digitized Arabic Sources (by Cumulative Lengths in Words). While the number of titles is significantly larger for the earlier period (26% for AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA, and 21% for AL-JĀMI' AL-KABĪR, see Fig. 1.3), the cumulative lengths are significantly larger for the later period (27% for AL-MAKTABA AL-SHĀMILA, and 33% for AL-JĀMI' AL-KABĪR), which reflects the more original nature of the earlier period and the compilatory nature of the later one.

agenda and we are dealing with the same genres throughout the libraries. Looking at the distribution of titles (Figure 1.3) in combination with the distribution of the cumulative lengths of these titles (Figure 1.4), one can see that the number of titles is significantly larger for the earlier period, while the cumulative lengths are significantly larger for the second period, suggesting the more original nature of the earlier period and the compilatory nature of the later one.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>The cumulative lengths of the later period might also suffer from the *isnād* growth effect, i.e. the lengths of later books grow since the chains of transmitters become longer and longer. However, this affects only certain genres and only until the Sunnī canon is firmly established and the *isnāds* get replaced with simple references to the universally recognized collections of Prophetic reports.



Just to give an idea of how big these libraries are, one can compare them with other digital libraries of books in various historical languages. For example, the PERSEUS PROJECT at Tufts University, the largest digital library of classical texts in Greek and Latin, contains about 14 million words.<sup>9</sup> For comparison, the three largest books in AL-JĀMI‘ AL-KABĪR amount to 19 million words.<sup>10</sup> Of all other digital corpora of historical languages in general, it seems that only the corpus of classical Chinese is comparable to that of classical Arabic. Funded by the Hong Kong government, the CHANT library includes most of the pre-Qin and Han corpora amounting to about 60 million characters (the library, however, is technologically antiquated). A Taiwanese database at Academia Sinica has a selection of texts from all periods of Chinese history, totaling about 150 million characters. The largest digital library of Chinese texts is probably SIKU QUANSHU, the 18<sup>th</sup> century imperial library, which contains about 800 million characters.<sup>11</sup>

Most electronic texts of classical Arabic sources are based on specific paper editions and, by and large, the quality of electronic reproductions in them is very high, with formatting, pagination and even typographical errors of the

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<sup>9</sup>As of March 2011, the corpus contains 7.5 million words of Greek and 6.5 million words of Latin. In all other aspects, however, the PERSEUS PROJECT surpasses all digital resources available to the scholars of the Islamic world.

<sup>10</sup>These texts are: *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq* of Ibn ‘Asākir (d. 571/1176 CE), which is 8.1 million words; *‘Umdat al-qārī fi sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* of al-‘Aynī (d. 855/1452 CE), which is 4.6 million words; and *Tāj al-‘arūs* of al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791 CE), which is 3.9 million words.

<sup>11</sup>I am deeply grateful to Donald Sturgeon, a PhD student at the University of Hong Kong, for providing me with this information on Chinese digital libraries. Sturgeon develops his own digital library of classical Chinese texts—the CHINESE TEXT PROJECT ([www.ctext.org](http://www.ctext.org)). Although still relatively small in comparison to the above-listed giants, his web-library of about 17 million characters is equipped with a variety of digital research tools, which will make any Arabist green with envy.

originals carefully preserved. It should be noted here that most of the editions published in the Arab world are not critical (at least not in the rigorous sense of European medievalists and classicists); however, they are widely used by Western scholars of medieval Islam, if only because there are no other editions available and most of the manuscripts are difficult of access.

Concluding this brief introduction with the notion of millions of words, it is important to stress that in our digital age there is a desperate need for new methods of text analysis. Equipped with only the traditional methods of historical inquiry, we will not be able to make sense of this constantly growing digital corpus of primary sources in classical Arabic. In this chapter I propose a method that relies on a number of digital techniques of text analysis that have emerged at the intersection of statistics, corpus linguistics and computer science. In doing so, I will focus on the genre directly relevant to my research: traditional Islamic biographical collections. Although in its current stage of development this method is most effective for the analysis of sources that are composed of structurally similar blocks of information—collections of Prophetic reports (sing. *ḥadīth*), interpretations of the *Qurʾān* (sing. *tafsīr*), collections of legal decisions (sing. *fatwá*), chronicles (sing. *taʾrīkh*), etc.—and can be adapted to the study of any kind of texts in any oriental or occidental language.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>The method has been presented at different stages of its development: in April 2012—as “Digital History of the Muslim World: Computer-Aided Analysis of Biographical Dictionaries,” at “Methods and means for digital analysis of ancient and medieval texts and manuscripts,” at the Katholieke Universitet, Leuven & the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium (KVAB), Brussels (paper submitted for publication under title MAXIM ROMANOV, ‘Writing Digital History of the pre-Modern Muslim World’, in: *Methods and means for digital analysis of ancient and medieval texts and manuscripts, Proceedings of the Conference* (Leuven, 2012)); in August 2012—as “Mining pre-Modern Islamic Sources” at “Working

### 1.1.3 Biographical Collections

Biographical collections constitute one of the most prominent genres of pre-modern Islamic literature. Paul Auchterlonie’s referencework—now outdated and incomplete, but still extremely helpful—lists about 230 biographical collections, published completely or partially up to the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> The total number of titles in this genre is most likely somewhere between three and four hundred. In addition to their numbers, one must definitely stress their size: most biographical collections are multivolume, they usually cover rather long periods—in most cases measured in centuries—and include from hundreds to tens of thousands of biographical records. The text of the largest<sup>14</sup> biographical collection—“The History of Islam” (*Taʾrīkh al-islām*) of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 CE)—takes up 50 volumes, covers 700 years of Islamic history and includes over 30,000 biographies.<sup>15</sup> The overall number of biographies

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with Text in a Digital Age,” the summer institute at Tufts University, Medford, MA; in October 2012—as “Writing the Digital History of the Premodern Muslim World, 670-1300 CE: Exploratory Analysis of Primary Sources” at the Interdisciplinary Workshop under the rubric “Forum on Research in Medieval Studies” (FoRMS), at the University of Michigan; in November 2012—as “Social History of the Muslim World in the Digital Age: Making Sense of 29,000 Biographies from al-Dhahabī’s *History of Islam*” at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, Denver, CO (also, as a poster at Cyberinfrastructure Days, at the University of Michigan).

<sup>13</sup>See, PAUL AUCHTERLONIE, *Arabic biographical dictionaries: a summary guide and bibliography* (Durham [Durham]: Middle East Libraries Committee, 1987). In the late 70s, Ibrahim Hafsi’s series of articles covered 225 titles of the *ṭabaqāt* sub-genre of biographical literature. The first one of the series is: IBRAHIM HAFSI, ‘Recherches sur le genre ‘ṭabaqāt’ dans la littérature arabe, I’, *Arabica*, 23 (1976), for the other two, see Bibliography. Data from this study have been graphed in: R. KEVIN JAKES, *Authority, conflict, and the transmission of diversity in medieval Islamic law* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 18, 20, 21.

<sup>14</sup>It is the largest in terms of coverage. The palm for being the longest belongs to Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176 CE) and his 70-volume *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq* (“The History of the City of Damascus”), the longest book, with 8,100,000 words, in AL-JĀMIʿ AL-KABĪR.

<sup>15</sup>AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-aʿlām*, edited by ʿUMAR TADMURĪ, 2nd edition (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1990). The book is 50 volumes long according to al-Dhahabī’s own division; printed editions may vary.

in these sources reaches hundreds of thousands.<sup>16</sup> Some of these biographical collections include only members of particular occupational or religious groups (*tabaqāt*—prosopographical dictionaries, in the strict sense), others cover specific locations and/or time periods (biographical dictionaries), yet others are all-inclusive—at least they are imagined as such by their authors—and may also cover historical events (“obituary chronicles”).

A great number of biographical records in these sources are rather short notices—often just the name of a person with dates of his (seldom—her) life, whether precise or approximate. However, even onomastic data alone provide historians with a lot of valuable information, due mainly to the part of a Muslim name known as the *nisba*, “descriptive name.” In strict grammatical terms, a *nisba* is an adjective formed from a noun by means of adding suffix “ī” and thus denoting a relation to the noun from which it was formed, i.e. Baghdād + ī = Baghdādī, meaning something or someone related to the city of Baghdād. In historical terms, however, a *nisba* is not necessarily limited to this particular morphological pattern, but is rather used for any word that can meaningfully describe a person, including but not limited to such morphological patterns as *fāʿil*, *faʿīl*, *faʿāl[a]*, *dhū shay[ayn]*, *mufaʿīl*, *mufāʿil*, etc.<sup>17</sup>

This is particularly true in the case of al-Samʿānī who included them all into

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<sup>16</sup>Over ninety years ago the Italian scholars Leone Caetani and Giuseppe Gabrieli collected 250,000 biographical references, see FEDWA MALTI-DOUGLAS and GENEVIÈVE FOURCADE, *The treatment by computer of medieval Arabic biographical data: an introduction and guide to the Onomasticum [i.e., Onomasticon] Arabicum* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1976). My own biographical databank, which is still in the process of preparation already includes over 86,000 biographies and biographical records (with only 24 biographical dictionaries processed). The cumulative number of biographies—as well as of actual people described in these biographies—still remains a mystery.

<sup>17</sup>See, DU GRANDLAUNAY, R.-V.; DRUEL J.N., ‘Nisba,’ in **EALL**.

MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERNS	REGULAR EXPRESSIONS	DISTRIBUTION		
<i>nisba</i> proper	ا[ي-ء]	4,065	91.1%	
<i>fa‘āl[a]</i>	? ة[ي-ء][ا]{2}[ي-ء]	398	178	4.0%
<i>fā‘il</i>	{2}[ي-ء][ا][ي-ء]		52	1.2%
no pattern	NO PATTERN		45	1.0%
<i>mīm</i> -participles	+الم[ي-ء]		43	1.0%
<i>fa‘il</i>	[ي-ء][ي]{2}[ي-ء]		30	0.7%
<i>af‘al</i>	{3}[ي-ء][أ]		24	0.5%
“look-alikes”	ي+[ي-ء]		14	0.3%
<i>dhū shay’</i>	*.؟ ذو		12	0.3%
<b>SOURCE:</b> <i>Kitāb al-ansāb</i> of al-Sam‘ānī		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>4,463</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1.5: Patterns of “Descriptive Names” in al-Sam‘ānī’s *Kitāb al-ansāb*. Almost 10% of “descriptive names” (398 of 4,465) in *Kitāb al-ansāb* are not *nisba* adjectives proper. **Regular expressions** were used to collect these data from the list of al-Sam‘ānī’s *nisbas*. While **regular expressions** may look confusing at first, they are very similar to Arabic morphological patterns and the Arabists should find them enjoyable. For example, the **regular expression** for *nisba* proper denotes that a word must begin with the *alif-lām* of the definite article followed by any number of any letters, but the last one must be *yā nisbiyya*; the **regular expression** for the *fa‘āl[a]* pattern denotes that a word must begin with the *alif-lām* of the definite article followed by four letters where the third of them is *alif* and this word may end with *tā marbūta*; and so on. Based on these **regular expressions**, the script was designed to “flag” words which fit more than one patterns, such as *qāḍī*, that fits both *nisba* proper and the *fā‘il* pattern. This is where one must manually finalize tagging (10-15% of 4,463). **NB:** **regular expressions** in this table are simplified for readability and do not take into account different forms of *alif* and other minor spelling variations. “Look-alikes” are words that “look like *nisbas*” (*lahā ṣūrat al-nisba*); usually these are personal names: Khalī, Māsī, Waḥshī, etc.

his *Kitāb al-ansāb* (see Figure 1.5).

Let’s take a close look at one such name: Abū l-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, the son of (ibn) ‘Alī, the son of (ibn) Muḥammad, . . . , the son of (ibn) [so-and-so], . . . , the son of (ibn) Muḥammad, the son of (ibn) Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, al-Jawzī, al-Qurashī, al-Taymī, al-Bakrī, al-Baghdādī, al-Ḥāfiẓ, al-Mufassir, al-Ḥanbalī, al-Wā‘iz, al-Ṣaffār. This name includes nine meaningful “descriptive names,” which tell us that this particular person belonged to the clan of Taym (al-Taymī) of the tribe of Quraysh (al-Qurashī) and was a descendant

of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (al-Bakrī), the first of the four Rightly-guided caliphs of the Islamic community; a native of Baghdād (al-Baghdādī) and a jurist of the Ḥanbalī school of law (al-Ḥanbalī); he distinguished himself as a knowledgeable transmitter of Islamic tradition (al-Ḥāfiẓ), an exegete of the *Qurʾān* (al-Mufasssir) and a public preacher (al-Wāʿiẓ); the last *nisba* (al-Ṣaffār) also tells us that he comes from a family that earned its living selling copper utensils (*nūḥās*).<sup>18</sup> Thus, the onomastic information alone is tantamount to the social profile of a person. Studied as a whole, such social profiles have a capacity of transforming themselves into a unique looking glass through which the historian can study different aspect of Islamic history which are otherwise indiscernible. Additionally, such profiles form a unique body of data, which is ideally suitable for different forms of sociological and spatial analyses.

People who became the subjects of these biographical records were not simple commoners. By and large, they were representatives of religious, administrative, military and literary élites. Nonetheless, the lives of these notables often present so many details that studying them as a whole will also shed light on the life of rank-and-file believers.

### 1.1.4 Building the Corpus

Although the digital corpus of classical Arabic has yet to be thoroughly studied, I will not be too far off the mark if I say that about 200 biographical collections are now available as eTexts at different digital repositories. This is

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<sup>18</sup>In addition, the number of ancestors mentioned in the name (each begins with “the son of . . .”), tends to be proportional to the fame of a person.

quite a corpus, considering that most of these are multi-volume titles. To be suitable for the digital method, which I am constantly developing, each and every title must be collated with its paper sources and reformatted according to certain rules. Although a valuable investment of time in the long run, it becomes a very costly procedure when dozens of multi-volume sources have to be reformatted.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, my study is largely experimental and methodologically relies on a great many things that have nothing to do with Arabic and Islamic studies in their classical form. I am learning the necessary digital skills practically on the go and since I have no formal training in programming my work tends to take rather unexpected detours,<sup>20</sup> even though—to my own surprise—I have succeeded in implementing a number of analytical tasks that I initially did not expect to realize until after finishing my thesis. Lastly, the constraints of time have pushed me to reduce my already prepared corpus of about two dozen titles to a dozen. However, I am planning to expand my corpus later on, incorporating all available titles.

Under these circumstances it was only logical to select sources that offer the widest coverage: two large works of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 CE)—*Taʾrīkh al-islām*<sup>21</sup> and *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*<sup>22</sup>—that comprise the lion’s share of the corpus, and eight biographical dictionaries of legal schools.

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<sup>19</sup>For example, it took me over a month to collate and reformat al-Dhahabī’s *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

<sup>20</sup>Computational study of large corpora of texts requires one to internalize a very different paradigm of thinking about texts and working with them, which is largely at odds with the traditional humanities; for thoughtful advice from an accomplished DH scholar, see: <http://www.matthewjockers.net/2013/01/03/advice-for-dh-newbies/>.

<sup>21</sup>The digital text is based on and collated with: AL-DHAHABĪ (1990), *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

<sup>22</sup>The digital text is based on and collated with: AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, edited by ḤUSAYN AL-ASAD and SHUʿAYB AL-ARNAʿŪṬ (Bayrūt: Muʿassasat al-Risāla, 1992).

al-Dhahabī’s collections seem to be the best fit for my criteria: both cover roughly 700 years of Islamic history and are not limited to any specific socio-religious group. Their biographical coverage is also the most impressive: over 30,000 in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* and almost 6,000 in *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*. Additionally, both are organized chronologically into “layers” (sing. *ṭabaqa*) of 10 and 20 years respectively. For studying the *longue durée* I rely particularly on *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, as the largest biographical collection. Although I have considered other extensive collections, I have had to put them on the back burner. For example, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt* of al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363 CE) and *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449 CE) are the next largest biographical collections with a rather similar chronological and geographical coverage, but their biography count is significantly lower—about 12,700 and 12,300 biographies respectively. The main issue, however, regards their organization, as both are arranged alphabetically. This makes computational analysis significantly more complicated, even though I consider this only a temporary setback.

The next largest collection, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* of Ibn ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1089/1678 CE) has similar geographical coverage. Although its chronological coverage is even more impressive—the entire first millennium of Islamic history—its biography count is significantly smaller with only about 8,500 entries. This collection is organized chronologically. Its structure—both in its paper and digital version—posed some difficulties: many biographies in the printed edition are “fused” together and neither discernible



in the text nor included in the table of contents.<sup>23</sup> This made reformatting this collection particularly difficult and I had to put it aside for now as well. Other collections are significantly smaller in either geographical or chronological scope, or in biography count. The ultimate goal, however, is to include all collections and analyze them together as one corpus.

The *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* was selected to supplement *Taʾrīkh al-islām* for two main reasons. To begin with, the first three volumes of *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, which cover the period up to the year 40/661 CE, differ structurally from the rest of the collection and cannot be studied with the same computational method; as for *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, it has the same structure through all its volumes. Second, the average length of biographies in *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* is significantly higher than in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, and thus providing more detailed accounts for close reading.

Other sources that were selected are the biographical collections of the four legal schools (sing. *madhhab*): Ḥanafīs (3 titles), Mālikīs (2 collections), Shāfiʿīs (3 collections) and Ḥanbalīs (2 collections). The Ḥanafī collections include *al-Jawāhir al-muḍīya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Abī-l-Wafāʾ (d. 775/1374 CE), *Tāj al-tarājim fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Qutlūbughā (d. 879/1475 CE) and *al-Ṭabaqāt al-sanīya fī tarājim al-ḥanafīya* of al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 1010/1602 CE).

The Mālikī collections include *al-Dībāj al-mudhahhab fī maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ*, *al-madhhab* of Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397 CE) and *Tartīb al-madārik*

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<sup>23</sup>With this in mind, the actual biography count must be higher than 8,500. The edition discussed here is: IBN AL-ʿIMĀD, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, Dhakhāʾir al-turāth al-ʿarabī. (Bayrūt: al-Maktab al-tijārī lil-ṭibāʿa wa-l-nashr wa-l-tawzīʿ, 1966).

*wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-maʿrifat aʿlām madhhab Mālik* of al-Yaḥṣūbī (d. 544/1150 CE).

The Shāfiʿī collections include *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-shāfiʿīya* of al-Shahrazūrī (d. 676/1278 CE), *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya al-kubrā* of al-Subkī (d. 771/1370 CE) and *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya* of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448 CE).

The Ḥanbalī collections include *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Yaʿlā (d. 526/1133 CE) and *al-Dhayl ʿalā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393 CE).

This list of ten dictionaries is hardly exhaustive and is determined mainly by what is currently available in digital format. Fortunately, these constitute the major specimens of legal biographical literature. The chronological coverage of these legal collections usually begins with the lifetime of their founding fathers—Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 148/766 CE), Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/796 CE), Muḥammad al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820 CE) and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/856 CE)—and only in some cases goes significantly past 700/1301 CE. With the rise of the *madhhabs* legal affiliations become perhaps the most prominent part of the identity of the Islamic noteworthy, whether they actually were jurists or not. Thus, if treated as a whole, biographical dictionaries of all four legal schools should also offer the widest chronological and geographical coverage with a significant cumulative biography count of over 9,000. In this regard they become somewhat similar to *Taʾrīkh al-islām* while counterbalancing it at the same time. Most importantly, they will allow us to explore how legal schools differed in terms of preaching institutions.

For different purposes of computational analysis I have also extensively

used two classical references: the *Muʿjam al-buldān*<sup>24</sup> of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1230 CE)<sup>25</sup> and the *Kitāb al-ansāb* of al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1167 CE).<sup>26</sup> The first of these is a toponymic reference work, while the second is the standard reference for *nisbas*, “descriptive names.” In addition, these two works also amount to biographical collections. Both dictionaries include thousands of entries on their subjects—almost 4,500 *nisbas*<sup>27</sup> in *Kitāb al-ansāb* and over 14,000 toponyms in *Muʿjam al-buldān*—but in practically every entry the brief explanation of the subject is followed by a list of individuals strongly associated with the descriptive name or place in question. Such a format makes biographical information unsuitable for my computational method (at least in its current form); yet, the data from these sources are indispensable for the computational identification of *nisbas* and toponyms in biographical entries of other collections.

#### 1.1.4.1 On the Notion of *Ṭabaqa*

The term *ṭabaqa* is often translated as “generation,” but every scholar familiar with the genre of *ṭabaqāt* is well aware that this notion is quite complicated. To begin with, *ṭabaqas* always overlap chronologically<sup>28</sup> and a person belonging

<sup>24</sup>The digital text is based on: YĀQŪT AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Bayrūt: Dār al-fikr); collated with: YĀQŪT AL-ḤAMAWĪ, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1977).

<sup>25</sup>On him, see: GILLIOT CL., ‘Yāqūt al-Rūmī,’ in **EI2**.

<sup>26</sup>On him, see: SELLHEIM R., ‘al-Samʿānī,’ in **EI2**.

<sup>27</sup>However, Sellheim in his article on al-Samʿānī writes that *Kitāb al-ansāb* contains 5,348 entries, see: SELLHEIM R., ‘al-Samʿānī,’ in **EI2**. I am not sure why there is such a discrepancy. I have collated my digital text of *Kitāb al-ansāb*—based on the 5-volume Beirut edition—with the 12-volume Cairo edition without discovering any discrepancies in *nisbas*. Editions: AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Ansāb* (Bayrūt: Dār al-fikr, 1998); AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Ansāb*, 1st edition (al-Qāhira: Maktabat Ibn Taymīya, 1984).

<sup>28</sup>Şentürk gives a nice visualization of overlapping *ṭabaqas* in: RECEP ŞENTÜRK, *Narrative social structure: anatomy of the Hadith transmission network, 610-1505* (Stanford,

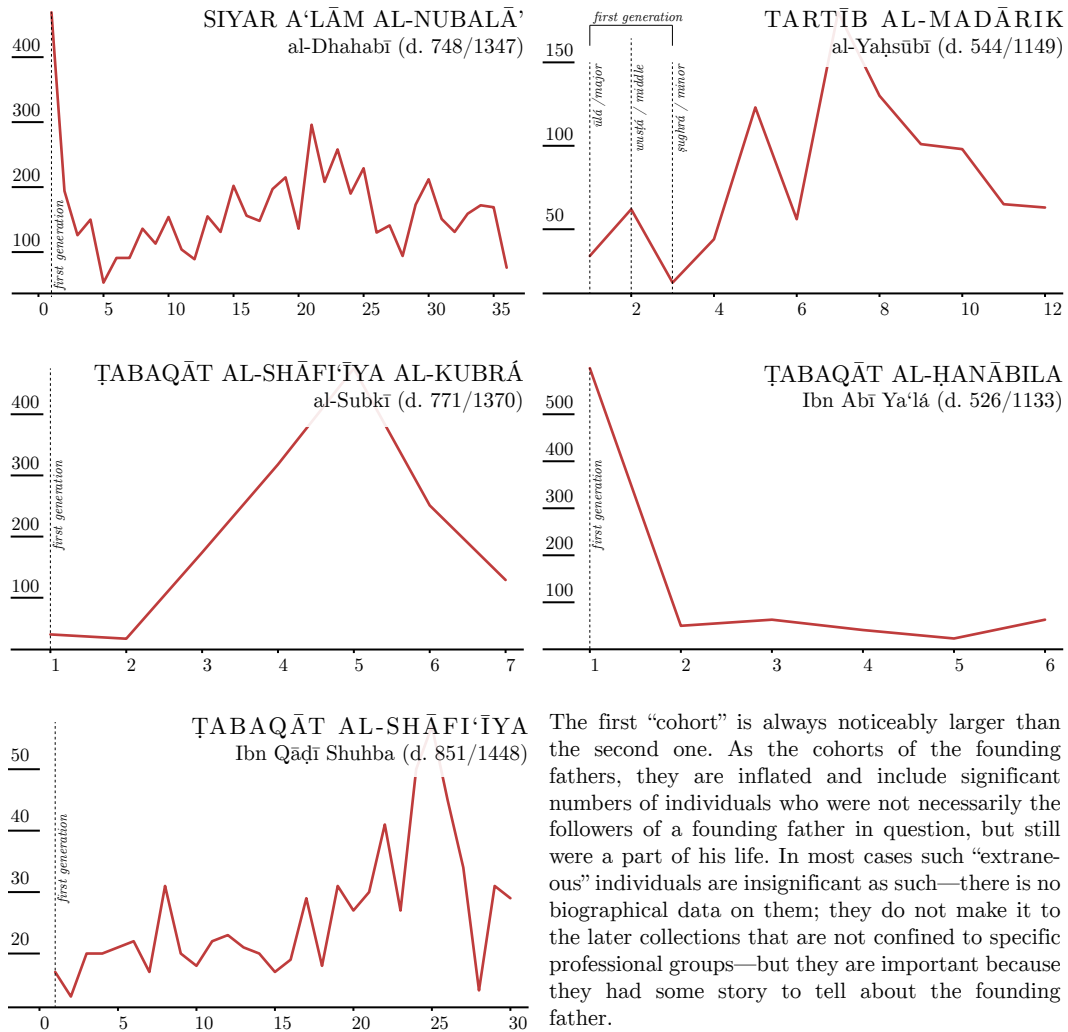
to an earlier “generation” can be significantly younger than someone from the next “generation.” The word “layer” conveys more precisely what the word *ṭabaqa* means, but while “generation” conveys the general idea, however remotely, the word “layer” would require too much additional explanation. The word “cohort” might be a better way to translate the term *ṭabaqa*—if it is understood as a group of people with shared characteristics or experience.<sup>29</sup> In the case of *ṭabaqa*, this shared experience is a personal connection to the key figure around whom the “layer” is organized.

*Ṭabaqas* seem to remain coherent and tangible as long as such key individuals are vividly present. The first such individual is, of course, the Prophet, and the *ṭabaqas* are his “companions” (*ṣaḥāba*), who are divided into sub-classes (sub-*ṭabaqas*) depending on the length and thoroughness of their companionship. The companions are replaced by the “followers” (*tābiʿūn*), who are also divided into sub-groups based on their superiority. After that *ṭabaqas* are numbered instead of named and tend to become more “chronological,” i.e. determined more by the length of a time period rather than anything else. A similar pattern can be seen in the biographical collections of the legal schools. For example, Mālik b. Anas is the key figure of the Mālikī school and the first three *ṭabaqas* are defined in terms of time spent with Mālik b. Anas: the “major” *ṭabaqa* (*al-ṭabaqa al-ūlā*) are his closest companions, the “intermediate” *ṭabaqa* (*al-ṭabaqa al-wustā*)—those who were in touch with Mālik b. Anas by virtue of being Medinans, and the “minor” *ṭabaqa* (*al-ṭabaqa al-ṣuḡhrā*) are

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Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), 41.

<sup>29</sup>As a sociological term, “cohort” is as confusing and controversial as the term “generation;” see, e.g., TURNER, BRYAN S., editor, *The Cambridge dictionary of sociology* (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 233–235.



The first “cohort” is always noticeably larger than the second one. As the cohorts of the founding fathers, they are inflated and include significant numbers of individuals who were not necessarily the followers of a founding father in question, but still were a part of his life. In most cases such “extraneous” individuals are insignificant as such—there is no biographical data on them; they do not make it to the later collections that are not confined to specific professional groups—but they are important because they had some story to tell about the founding father.

Figure 1.6: The Ṭabaqāt ‘Curve’

those who were of young age when Mālik b. Anas passed away. The *ṭabaqas* that follow these first three are simply numbered, beginning with “first” (*al-ṭabaqa al-ūlā*).<sup>30</sup> A similar pattern is discernible in the Ḥanbalī sources where the “layers” of the Ḥanbalīs in the collection of Ibn Abī Ya‘lā<sup>31</sup> are centered

<sup>30</sup>See: AL-YAḤṢUBĪ, AL-QĀḌĪ ‘IYĀḌ, *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-ma‘rifat a‘lām madhhab Mālik* (Bayrūt: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1998).

<sup>31</sup>ABŪ AL-ḤUSAYN MUḤAMMAD IBN MUḤAMMAD IBN ABĪ YA‘LĀ, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, edited by ‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN B. SULAYMĀN AL ‘UTHAYMĪN ([Riyadh]: al-Mamlaka al-

around Ibn Ḥanbal and the leaders of the Ḥanbalī community in Baghdad; Ibn Rajab’s continuation of this collection gives up on the notion of *ṭabaqa* altogether and arranges its biographies into periods of 50 and 100 years, yet in its name it remains a *ṭabaqāt* collection.<sup>32</sup>

All “true”<sup>33</sup> *ṭabaqāt* collections in my corpus have a feature in common: the first “cohort” is always noticeably larger than the second one (See, Figure 1.6). As cohorts of founding fathers, they are inflated and include a significant number of individuals who interacted with a founding father in question. (This is the precise meaning of *al-ṭabaqa al-wuṣṭá* in al-Yaḥsūbī’s collection.) There are prominent examples of such “extraneous” individuals—al-Bukhārī and al-Shāfi‘ī in Ibn Abī Ya‘lá’s *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, and Ibn Ḥanbal in al-Subkī’s *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘īya al-kubrā*—but in most cases these individuals are insignificant as such: later authors do not find them important and they do not make it into collections that are not confined to specific groups. Yet such individuals remain important for the formative period, since they had some story to tell about the founding father (Ibn Ḥanbal’s “layer” is particularly overinflated in Ibn Abī Ya‘lá’s collection).<sup>34</sup> As time passes and groups become more settled

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‘Arabiyya al-Sa‘ūdiyya, al-Amāna al-‘Āmma lil-Iḥtifāl bi-Murūr Mi‘āt ‘Ām ‘alá Ta’sīs al-Mamlaka, 1999).

<sup>32</sup>‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN IBN AḤMAD IBN RAJAB, *al-Dhayl ‘alā ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, edited by MUḤAMMAD ḤĀMID FĪQĪ ([Cairo]: Maṭba‘at al-sunna al-Muḥammadiya, 1952).

<sup>33</sup>Not those that simply have the word *ṭabaqa* in the title, but are actually organized by “layers.”

<sup>34</sup>In her study of women in biographical collections Ruth Roded encountered a similar phenomena: women figure most prominently in the “cohort” of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*). 1,700 women in Ibn Sa‘d’s *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* is an unparalleled number; afterward the numbers of women in biographical collections drop drastically, to the extent that they are totally excluded from what she refers to as “centenary dictionaries.” See: RUTH. RODED, *Women in Islamic biographical collections: from Ibn Sa‘d to Who’s who* (Boulder [Colo.]: L. Rienner, 1994).

in their ways, *ṭabaqas* turn into rather arbitrary periods of time. If one accepts *ṭabaqāt* collections as the major tool of group legitimization,<sup>35</sup> it may be tempting to think that the importance of the *ṭabaqāt* genre will diminish as groups become institutionalized and acquire other means of legitimization. However, while in general, there seems to be such a tendency, the issue has yet to be thoroughly studied.<sup>36</sup>

### 1.1.5 Working with the Corpus

Although relying on a small clearly defined corpus may strike most humanists as a deficient research strategy, it offers a number of significant advantages that outweigh all possible downsides, especially if the main goal is to trace long-term and large-scale patterns of historical change.

One of my major methodological premises is that each source must be studied in its *entirety*. Arabic biographical collections are so vast and so numerous that it is hardly a problem—especially now, with so many digital libraries of classical Arabic sources within just a few clicks away—to collect enough examples to “convincingly” argue practically any point. Thus, I am limiting myself to specific biographical collections, which allows me to ensure that all relevant information is extracted in its entirety and that the proportions of different

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<sup>35</sup>The point most convincingly argued in: MICHAEL COOPERSON, *Classical Arabic biography: the heirs of the prophets in the age of al-Maʿmūn* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Chapter 1.

<sup>36</sup>The data on the genre of *ṭabaqāt* from Hafsi’s study (although without the differentiation between “true” *ṭabaqāt* and other forms of biographical collections of professional groups) was graphed by Kevin Jaques (see: JAQUES (2006), *Authority*, 18, 20, 21). These graphs show that the rapid rise of the genre in the 9th-10th centuries CE is followed by a clearly visible decline; the genre skyrockets in the 14th-15th centuries (new territories under Islamic rule? New conditions?) only to return back to its falling curve in the following centuries.

manifestations of the same phenomena—as well as of their absence—reflect those of my primary sources, not something completely different. In order to avoid skewed reading, I neither quote nor rely on sources that are not included currently in my corpus: if I cannot analyze the source in its entirety, I do not use it at all, even if I have worked with it in a conventional manner. The use of complete texts allows me to create a fixed historical universe and to look at how different data correlate with each other, which should help me to determine the place of specific phenomena more precisely, without either overstating or understating their role in history.

## **1.2 Defining the Data**

### **1.2.1 Main Assumptions: al-Dhahabī's Cat**

Over the past year I have constantly run into two opposite opinions. The first is that al-Dhahabī's data are not reliable—specific reasons have varied—and therefore cannot be treated the way I propose; the second is that, in general, al-Dhahabī's data reflect historical reality—specific reservations have varied—and that quantitative analysis is a suitable tool to study it. Although the second was more common, both views are ultimately unprovable, so Schrödinger's cat paradox is as good a solution as any attempt to argue one way or the other. The Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger (1887–1961) offered a thought experiment in order to problematize the premises of quantum mechanics: a cat is locked in a box with a vial of poison that may be released with a 50:50 chance, but until the box is open the cat can be thought of as simultaneously



dead and alive. We are long way from having a thorough assessment of the entire Arabic biographical tradition, so “our box” will remain closed for quite a while, in which case I prefer to think of “our cat” as alive. Whatever happens in the end, we’ll end up with either a new understanding of Islamic history, or—فَإِذَا هُرَيْرَةُ آلِ ذَهَبِي قَدْ مَاتَتْ—a more thorough understanding of Islamic biographical tradition.

Any model rests on assumptions with regard to its data. As strategic simplifications, these assumptions allow models to work; moreover, they become particularly necessary when one is dealing with enormous data sets. The initial data set from any Arabic biographical source may consist of thousands or tens of thousands of data points, which, after various permutations, may grow into hundreds of thousands, if not millions. (For example, about 29,000 initial biographical data points from *Taʿrīkh al-islām* run into over 700,000 secondary data points after generating all possible pairs for collocation analysis.) On such a scale, nuanced discussions about the nature of each and every data point are neither possible nor practical. For this reason I propose a series of assumptions regarding primary sources and the types of data that I use in my computational analysis (dates, toponyms, “descriptive names,” linguistic patterns etc.). As my study of these sources continues and my corpus grows, I hope that these assumptions will evolve into more substantiated premises.

For the sake of time and space, I will dwell only on one source—al-Dhahabī’s *Taʿrīkh al-islām*. Partially, this is because it is the largest collection in my corpus; partially, because I am relying on it for my large-scale analysis; and partially, because I have studied it more thoroughly than any other collection.

The two biggest interrelated issues are the reliability and representativeness of biographical data in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (and pre-modern biographical collections in general).<sup>37</sup> Namely, to what extent al-Dhahabī's data are objective, correct and unbiased; and, to what degree of fairness these data represent the entire Islamic world during different periods of its development. The real answer to both of these questions is that *we really do not know*, but let's ponder some of these issues.

We can think about reliability and representativeness in terms of: *factual errors*—the facts given are wrong; *biased representation*—the authors deliberately polished, blemished or omitted certain data; *[under]representativeness*—the authors objectively had no access to specific sources. All three are most likely to be applicable to each and every biographical collection, but this is hardly a binary problem and each source should be evaluated with each of these criteria, and measured according to its relative weight.

The assessment of single sources is highly problematic. First, because with conventional methods it will be based on an arbitrary selection of data points; and second, because there is no proper frame of reference to put the assessment of a single source into a larger perspective. In other words, in order to properly assess any collection we need new computational methods that will allow us to assess each and every collection in its entirety, while evaluating it against the entire corpus of biographical literature, whose exact volume still remains unknown (digitized biographical collections that are heavily biased toward the

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<sup>37</sup>There is also, of course, the over-arching objection that data from pre-modern sources cannot be taken at face value at all. This premise, however, is based more on the methodological assumptions of the cultural approach to primary texts, where texts are treated as representing discursive practices rather than historical reality.

Salafī/Sunnī side make up about 500 volumes).

### 1.2.1.1 Factual Errors

Undeniably, data in the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* may suffer from factual errors (such and such a person lived in Spain instead of, say, Transoxania, or died in a year different from what al-Dhahabī offers us, etc.). To be fair to al-Dhahabī, he did a lot of checking and added several hundred cross-referenced biographical notes, often stating that according to so-and-so, such and such a man died in such and such a year, but he himself—i.e., al-Dhahabī—thinks differently for such-and-such reasons and therefore places him into the proper decade, to which he further refers his readers. It would be unreasonable to deny the possibility of factual errors—at least due to scribal or clerical errors—but it is hard to measure the extent to which these errors might affect all 50 volumes of his “History.” Ideally, al-Dhahabī’s data in all their entirety must be compared with other collections.<sup>38</sup> For now, however, my working assumption regarding this issue is as follows: factual errors do not amount to a critical mass that would skew the entire data set in any significant way.

### 1.2.1.2 Biased Representation

al-Dhahabī may have been biased towards specific socio-religious groups. In his extensive overview of the *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, Joseph de Somogyi stated that although biographies in this source are not limited to one specific group, “as a matter of course, preference is given to the *madhhab* of adh-Dhahabī, the

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<sup>38</sup>Because of the complexity and length of this source, I am skeptical about sampling as a method of assessment.

Shāfi‘ites.”<sup>39</sup> However, the Hungarian scholar did not offer any evidence to support this view, and his “matter of course” appears to be nothing but the assumption of a de facto affiliation—something that we all tend to do. My research shows that al-Dhahabī’s “History” indeed includes more biographies of the jurists of the Shāfi‘ī school than of any other legal school. Yet, whether this means that he favored the Shāfi‘īs, or that [t]his legal school was indeed most prominent during the period that he covered, remains a valid question. Moreover, there are only slightly over 2000 individuals with explicit legal affiliations in his “History”—i.e., less than 7% of his entire collection!—which problematizes the issue of his Shāfi‘ī bias. De Somogyi’s statement becomes even more problematic in the light of other scholars’ research. For example, Kevin Jaques presents al-Dhahabī as a staunch defender of Ibn Taymiyya, the famous representative of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, with a strong bias against the jurists in general, but especially the Shāfi‘īs. Thus, al-Dhahabī argued that the jurists “were too fixated on arguing about speculative legal method (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) to give adequate attention to the problems of the community (*umma*).”<sup>40</sup> Jaques’ evaluation is based on al-Dhahabī’s own words as well as the opinions of Tāqī al-dīn al-Subkī (d. 749/1349 CE) and al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497 CE)—both famous Shāfi‘ī scholars and biographers<sup>41</sup> (the former knew al-Dhahabī personally and was his friend).<sup>42</sup>

While this evaluation appears more convincing than that of de Somogyi, its

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<sup>39</sup>JOSEPH DE SOMOGYI, ‘The Ta’rīkh al-islām of adh-Dhahabī’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 4 (October 1932), 847.

<sup>40</sup>JAQUES (2006), *Authority*, 4.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.; also with reference to: FRANZ ROSENTHAL, *A history of Muslim historiography* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), 371-378; see footnotes for details.

<sup>42</sup>DE SOMOGYI (1932), ‘The Ta’rīkh al-islām of adh-Dhahabī’, 821.

implications are problematic. The extent to which al-Dhahabī’s bias, according to Tāqī al-dīn al-Subkī, “contaminated his historical analyses and limited the usefulness of his work”<sup>43</sup> remains an open issue. Did it affect only his interpretation of certain events and his opinions of certain individuals, or did it go as far as to deform basic facts in biographies (i.e., *factual errors*), such as when and where a person lived and died and what he was in social, economical and religious terms? If so, did his bias affect all his biographies or only biographies of the most prominent individuals (a very small percentage) whose ideas and legacy are most likely to be contested and claimed from different camps? And last but not least, to what extent can one be consistently biased while putting together over 30,000 biographies in a 50-volume biographical collection? Again, these questions are difficult to answer, although looking into the longest biographies in his collection—statistical “outliers”—may shed light on each author’s bias, assuming that authors put more time and effort in compiling biographies of individuals toward whom they had strong feelings—whether positive, or negative.

### 1.2.1.3 [Under]representativeness

al-Dhahabī’s data may be skewed due to his limited access to biographical data on scholars of particular regions and periods. In his brief introduction,<sup>44</sup> al-Dhahabī writes that he included biographies of “the noteworthy from among (*al-kibār min*) caliphs, military commanders, reciters of the *Qurʾān*, ascetics, jurists, transmitters of *ḥadīth*, men of learning, *sultāns*, *wazīrs*, grammarians

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<sup>43</sup>JAKUES (2006), *Authority*, 4.

<sup>44</sup>TI, 1:11–16

and poets.”<sup>45</sup> He then provides a list of over 45 titles (mostly the classics of Islamic historiography), only to conclude with the phrase “and many others.”<sup>46</sup> For the sake of brevity, if such a phrase can be applied to a 50-volume history, al-Dhahabī busied himself primarily with the biographies of “the men of fame” (*mashhūrūn*)—otherwise it would have been a 100-volume history (though I would be glad if it did!). Finally, al-Dhahabī admits that he did not have at his disposal histories of a number of lands—either because they have never been written, or because they never fell into his hands. Considering al-Dhahabī’s extensive bibliography, it seems reasonable to assume that if a certain province “disappears” for some period and then “comes back” represented in great detail, it reflects the fluctuating level of its integration into the core, which has been constantly shifting. Again, whether this was al-Dhahabī’s whim to ignore some province for a while, or his inability to find relevant sources, or whether it was due to actual historical change, is impossible to know for certain.

We do not know how thoroughly al-Dhahabī re-used his sources and how many biographies from these sources he included in the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (nor do we know how thorough his sources were). However, we will be able to get insights into this issue as soon as `text re-use tools` become more available. Designed to trace similarities between multiple texts, these tools compare overlapping `bi-grams`<sup>47</sup>—“pairs of words”—and thus allow getting a very thorough and clear idea of how much one author could have “borrowed” from another.

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<sup>45</sup>**TI**, 1, 12.

<sup>46</sup>**TI**, 1, 12–16.

<sup>47</sup>Also named `shingles` with a reference to thin pieces of wood or another material which are fixed in overlapping rows to cover a roof or wall.

Several such tools are being developed by the classicists and the term “text re-use” is of their coinage. At the recent conference organized by the DIGITAL CLASSICS ASSOCIATION (University at Buffalo, SUNY, April 5-6, 2013), Marco Büchler (U. Leipzig) presented one such tool that should be available shortly.<sup>48</sup>

On top of this, one can think of *[under]representativeness* issue in political, social, religious, geographical and many other terms, but in order to address this issue from any of these perspectives we, again, have to thoroughly study the entire corpus of Islamic biographical literature. For now, I can offer a glimpse into the geographical coverage of *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

#### 1.2.1.4 Geographical Coverage

Looking at the toponymic data (for now, only toponyms proper) we can get some insight into how thorough al-Dhahabī was in geographical terms. Figure 1.7 shows numbers of biographies that mention toponyms with frequencies five and higher ( $\approx 340$  toponyms). Urban centers are grouped into regions and scaled down by a factor of four to forefront regions.<sup>49</sup> Overall, geographical coverage appears to be quite significant, although in order to appreciate the scale we need to walk through several maps.

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<sup>48</sup>A team of graduate students led by Neil Coffee at U. at Buffalo is developing a tool—**Tesseract Project**—to explore inter-textual parallels in Greek and Latin poetry. **Tesseract Project** is available online, see: <http://tesseract.caset.buffalo.edu/>.

<sup>49</sup>On the maps of this Section groupings are purely mathematical; more historically precise maps will follow. Calculations are based on the Euclidean distance formula using latitude and longitude coordinates of **cities** and **regions** ( $(distance_{ci-re} = \sqrt{(long_{ci} - long_{re})^2 + (lat_{ci} - lat_{re})^2}$ ); coordinates for regions are, of course, approximate. In this manner, each urban center was grouped with the closest region, which led to some minor discrepancies (for example, Basra was grouped with Khuzistan, instead of Iraq, to which it historically belongs), but overall mathematical grouping is quite accurate.

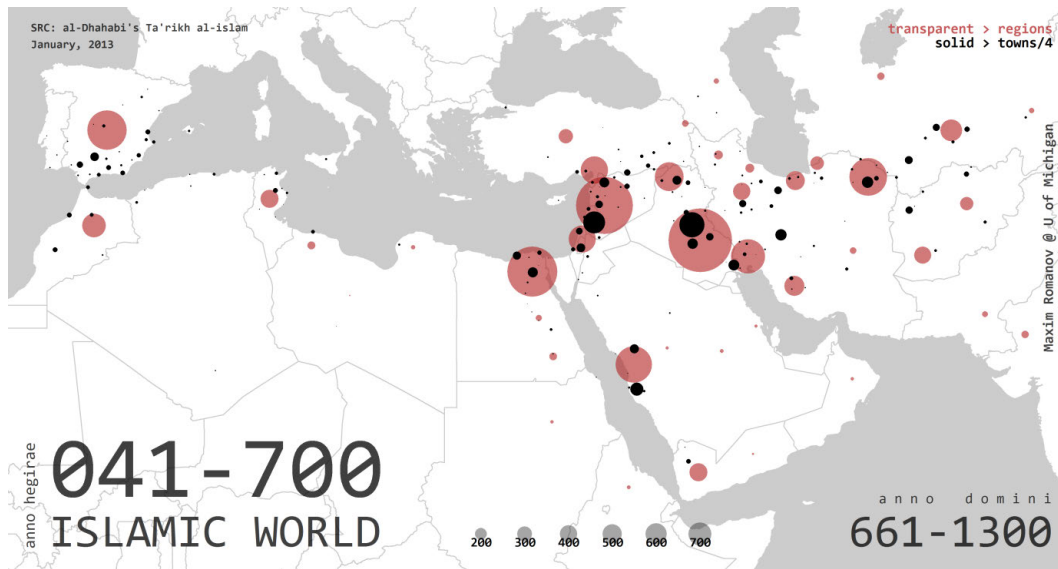


Figure 1.7: Geographical Coverage of *Ta'rikh al-islām*. Semi-transparent red circles show numbers of biographies that mention toponyms belonging to these regions; black circles show numbers of biographies that mention specific urban centers. Sizes of black circles were reduced by a factor of 4 in order to make regions more visible. Regions roughly correspond with major Islamic provinces, but grouping of urban centers into regions is purely mathematical; more historically accurate maps will follow in the next part.

If we take a look at any historical map of the Islamic world, the geographical coverage in *Ta'rikh al-islām* does not appear very impressive. However, most (all?) historical maps—including those from highly respected and very recent publications—are problematic. For example, a rather conventional map of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate on Figure 1.8 suggests the continuity of populated regions, which makes it confusing to those not familiar with the field and, frankly, not as helpful to specialists as it could be. Trying to make sense of the maps discussed above I was concerned to find a map that would show how the Middle East was—or could have been—populated. What follows is my attempt to produce something that at least in a suggestive manner could make such maps more





Figure 1.8: Conventional Map of the ʿAbbāsid Empire.

useful.<sup>50</sup>

Since we do not have sufficient data for the pre-modern period, we may experiment with contemporary geographical information. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGIA) offers a constantly updated database of geographical and geopolitical entities of all kinds—about 8.8 million as of November 5, 2012.<sup>51</sup> Their data on administrative units—settlements of all levels—are extremely detailed. Using these data one can generate a map of the modern inhabited world, which we can use as a starting point to think about the Islamicate oikoumenē.

Figure 1.9 should illustrate how these data can be helpful. Each adminis-

<sup>50</sup>The ongoing project, TÜBINGER ATLAS DES VORDEREN ORIENTS (TAVO) offers a number of valuable maps, but they are impossible to incorporate effectively in digital research. See: *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1977a); *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (Berlin: Kai-Henning Gerlach, 2005b).

<sup>51</sup>The size of their downloadable database (text file in Unicode) is over 1,5 Gb. Source: <http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/namefiles.htm>.

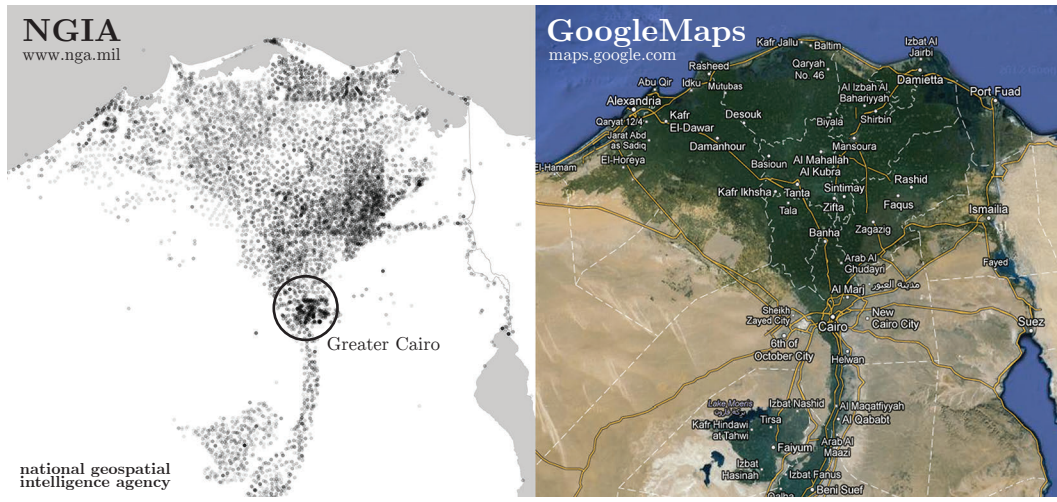


Figure 1.9: The Inhabited World: Using GIS data, one can build a map of the inhabited areas. The map on the left shows how settlements shape the Nile Delta, the valley of the Nile river, the Fayyūm Oasis, and, to a certain extent, the Suez canal; the darkest cluster represents the Cairo metropolitan area.

trative unit—a settlement—is a point on the map: villages are simple objects presented with single dots, while cities are complex objects composed of multiple dots forming dense clusters. The higher the density of settlements, the darker the area on the map. On the left part of the sample map one can clearly see how settlements shape the Nile Delta, the valley of the Nile river, the Fayyūm Oasis, and, to a certain extent, the Suez canal; the darkest cluster represents the Cairo metropolitan area. Overall, maps based on data from NGIA show us areas of Earth that are currently inhabited, strongly implying the boundaries of arable regions (with white areas corresponding to regions unsuitable for agriculture). Projecting such maps back in time, we can think of them as showing “inhabitable Earth”—the utmost limits of what people could populate in the past. Keeping in mind that a number of modern areas have been settled due to modern technological advancements, the extent of

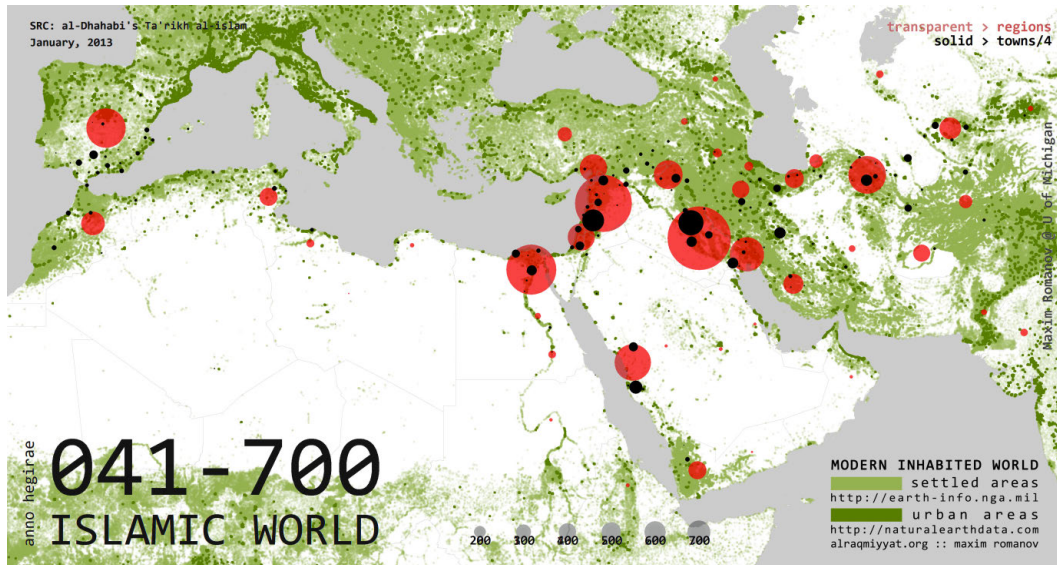


Figure 1.10: The Modern Inhabited World and Geographical Coverage of *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

the inhabited pre-modern world can only have been smaller. Exactly how, however, is a different question and historical projections for any area must be informed by relevant historical data.

Figure 1.10 shows the map of the entire region that includes three layers of data. The first layer (green) shows the data on settlements from NGIA. The second one (dark green) shows modern highly populated urban areas.<sup>52</sup> Thus, with these two layers we get a more precise map of the modern inhabited world, with major cities quite easy to spot. The third layer shows data from the *Taʾrīkh al-islām*—regions (semi-transparent red) and urban centers (black).

<sup>52</sup>The density of modern population is also vividly represented by the satellite images of Earth at night, see the NASA project “Earth’s City Lights” at <http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/>; also see John Weiber’s “Bright Lights, Big Cities” at <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/Lights/>. These satellite images vividly represent densely populated areas that consume enormous amounts of energy. Such visualizations work well for the representation of urban areas, but not for their rural counterparts. However, they complement each other very well. NASA satellite images served me as a source of inspiration for creating the maps included into this section.

With these three layers combined, Figure 1.10 shows that the geographical coverage in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* corresponds to major populated regions with a rather clear emphasis on regions with intensive agriculture—Lower and Upper Mesopotamia (al-ʿIrāq and al-Jazīra), north-eastern Iran (Khurāsān), Syria (al-Shām), Egypt (Miṣr), Spain (al-Andalus) and north-western Africa (al-Maghrib al-aqṣá).<sup>53</sup>

## 1.2.2 Data Types for Computational Analysis

### 1.2.2.1 Dates

The dates constitute perhaps the least problematic category of data. Undeniably, there are errors here and there, but by and large scholars consider them to be acceptably correct. Although again, we do not really know the scale of factual errors for this kind of data. The main type of dates is death dates, mainly since this is the most consistent kind of chronological data that biographical collections offer in general. Death dates require some adjustment, since “the years of *floruit*” would correlate more closely with historical devel-

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<sup>53</sup>The map of settlements corresponds very closely with the most recent maps of land suitability for agriculture, see: STELIOS MICHALOPOULOS, ALIREZA NAGHAVI and GIOVANNI PRAROLO, ‘Trade and Geography in the Origins and Spread of Islam’, Working Paper 18438 (National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2012), 13, STELIOS MICHALOPOULOS, ‘The Origins of Ethnolinguistic Diversity’, *American Economic Review*, 102:4 (June 2012), 1513; the map is based on data assembles at the Center of Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE) University of Wisconsin, see: NAVIN RAMANKUTTY et al., ‘The Global Distribution of Cultivable Lands: Current Patterns and Sensitivity to Possible Climate Change’, *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, 11:5 (September 2002); interactive visualizations based on the SAGE data sets can also be found online at <http://www.earthstat.org/>. Also see: ANDREW M. WATSON, *Agricultural innovation in the early Islamic world: the diffusion of crops and farming techniques, 700-1100* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); although Watson does not have a unified map of agricultural lands, his maps of specific crops strongly suggest the same picture. Also, see the ongoing edition of (1977a) *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*.

opments. In his model, Bulliet used the “twenty-five-year setback. . . to change known death dates into approximate ‘prime of life’ dates.”<sup>54</sup> Biographical data in the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* are already pre-grouped into ten-lunar-year periods. I further regroup these data into 20 lunar year periods and then adjust death dates by the period of 30 lunar years (back in time) to get to “the years of *floruit*.”<sup>55</sup>

### 1.2.2.2 Toponymic Data

My main assumption regarding toponyms<sup>56</sup> is that if they are mentioned in a biography, this implies a connection of a protagonist to those places. At the moment I cannot determine computationally the nature of connections to specific places, i.e. whether a protagonist of a given biography was born there, lived there for a prolonged time, visited it shortly or simply maintained correspondence with someone who lived there. For now I consider the very fact of connection more important than its exact nature. I act on the premise that even if a protagonist simply exchanged letters with someone from place X, it is a stronger connection to place X than no connection at all. Random connections—i.e. those that would not form discernible patterns—are rendered almost invisible by the analytical methods that I employ.

Identifying toponyms and toponymic *nisbas* is a complicated task, although the problem is not so much in the identification of toponyms and toponymic

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<sup>54</sup>See, BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*, 11.

<sup>55</sup>For some specific purposes I group biographical data into periods of different lengths, particularly in cases where data points become scarce, or when presenting data by 50-year periods seems more convenient. Such groups are also adjusted by a 30 lunar year setback.

<sup>56</sup>On toponymic *nisbas*, see Section 1.2.2.3 below.

*nisbas*,<sup>57</sup> as in the disambiguation of instances when the same toponym or *nisba* may refer to more than one entity.<sup>58</sup> Luckily for us, this was as much of a problem for the Arab historians then as it is for us now. Often they would clarify the point to make sure that their readers knew exactly what they meant. We can use this additional information to resolve ambiguity with the algorithmic analysis of collocations.

For example, Ṭarābulus may refer to Tripoli in North Africa or to Tripoli in Greater Syria. Occasionally Arab historians would refer to them as Ṭarābulus al-gharb, i.e. Western Tripoli, and Ṭarābulus al-sharq, i.e. Eastern Tripoli. Unfortunately, this is not always the case; yet the authors always leave us a few crumbs to help us. We can look into what other toponyms and/or toponymic *nisbas* co-occur in the same biography and use these data for disambiguation. For example, if in a biography where Tripoli is mentioned we come across Ifriqiya, but not al-Shām (Greater Syria), there is a high probability that the reference is to Western Tripoli.

A temporary shortcut solution—a simpler, less robust one—may be to exclude ambiguous *nisbas* and toponyms, until the above described algorithm can be applied, and to rely only on the disambiguating data, especially since at the moment I am going to talk mostly on the level of provinces. Accordingly, here the reference to Ifriqiya or al-Shām would be more than enough.

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<sup>57</sup>This can be done heuristically with toponymic **n-grams** (see, Figure 1.18) and regular expression for *nisba* adjectives (see, Figure 1.5).

<sup>58</sup>In literary analysis one of the most common problems is disambiguating names of characters and common words, such as, for example, Hope which can be the name of a character and a notion.

### 1.2.2.3 *Nisbas*, or Descriptive Names

One of the most serious methodological questions is how to interpret *nisbas*: How can we be sure that someone named, say, al-Ṣaffār was indeed a coppersmith? The answer to this question—or more precisely, the very question itself—depends entirely on the primary research questions. As was stated in the beginning, the main focus of this study is the *institution* of Islamic preaching, and, more broadly, social institutions and social groups in general. In Braudelian terms, we must look into “a social time,” not “an individual time.” Dealing with “a history of gentle rhythms, of groups and groupings,”<sup>59</sup> one shifts the focus from unique and rare characteristics to those that are frequent enough to form patterns. So, if we expand on our al-Ṣaffār example, the question relevant to the goals of this study should be as follows: Is the person named al-Ṣaffār the only coppersmith in a specific region during a specific period? If the answer is “yes,” this particular part of his identity becomes irrelevant, since a lonely coppersmith is hardly going to represent a significant social pattern. If the answer is “no,” and we indeed discover a significant group of coppersmiths who might also share other “descriptive names,” then this becomes both relevant and interesting. At the same time, whether a specific person within a group of individuals identified as coppersmiths was actually a coppersmith, or, in fact, a son—or even a grandson—of a coppersmith, becomes less relevant. What is important is that we have discovered a group of individuals who considered their affiliation with “cop-

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<sup>59</sup>FERNAND BRAUDEL, *On history*, *Écrits sur l'histoire*. English (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 4.

persmithing” significant enough to preserve it in their names. Whether they used this name self-consciously, or if this is how they were seen by others—for whatever reason—is a different question, but ultimately irrelevant.

My rationale regarding geographical affiliations is quite similar. As long as, say, Naysābūrīs—even though some of them are born and raised in a city other than Nishapur—are seen by the people of that different city as Naysābūrīs, they effectively remain Naysābūrīs. Most likely, such an association will not last long, unless there remains some tangible cohesion within this group, whether it is self-conscious or imposed from outside. Again, the most important fact that the social historian can infer from the existence of such a group of migrants is that during a specific period the city of Nishapur provided conditions—economic, religious, political etc.—that gave rise to a group that became strongly identified with this city. Of course, when we discover such groups we need to make sure that we understand the nature of their affiliation.

One potential problem, however, is that some *nisbas* have multiple meanings (al-Ḥanafī as a “tribal” *nisba*, and as a legal one) or may have changed their meaning over time (e.g., al-Suhrawardī as a toponymic *nisba*, and as a religious one).<sup>60</sup> At the moment I do not have a satisfactory algorithm to deal with such *nisbas*, although it seems that a new meaning replaces the old one when the latter loses its relevance; fortunately, such complexities do not seem

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<sup>60</sup>al-Suhrawardī that may refer to the town of Suhraward, or to the Suhrawardiyya, a Ṣūfī brotherhood that takes its origin from Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1235 CE), a Baghdādī *shaykh* whose family came from the town of Suhraward. The *nisba* al-Suhrawardī is quite rare in general. There are only 24 individuals in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*—with 19 after 575/1180 CE, most likely describing the affiliation with the Suhrawardiyya. It seems that insignificance of Suhraward as a geographical entity allowed for such transformation of meaning: this town is mentioned 5 times in the entire *Taʾrīkh al-islām*; it no longer exists and its exact location is unknown. See, PLESSNER M., ‘Suhraward,’ in **EI2**.



to be frequent.

Individuals with complex geographical affiliations constitute a special case and they should be treated differently. It is not uncommon to run into a description of a person such as, for example, *al-Naysābūrī l-mawlid al-Baghdādī l-manzil*, i.e. “al-Naysābūrī by birth and al-Baghdādī by residence;” in most cases, however, one does not find any clarifying details, facing only the list of toponymic *nisbas*.<sup>61</sup> Such individuals—like those among us who hold multiple citizenship—could be treated as belonging to all the localities denoted in their descriptive names; again, on the social level the very fact of affiliation is significantly more important than the exact nature of each affiliation. At the same time, on the maps such individuals must be visualized differently.

How we can distinguish the meaning of *nisbas* in specific cases is yet another issue. For example, how can we know whether *khatīb* is an honorific nickname or a religious profession? This is yet another question difficult to answer decisively, so my general principle is as follows: when periods feature only single individuals with such *nisbas*, they are most likely used as honorific titles; when, on the other hand, one sees a clearly discernible growth in the numbers of such *nisbas*, they are most likely used as professional markers. This does not mean that there would not be any honorific titles in the second case; what is important, however, is that their numbers should remain too insignificant to have any visible effect on the “professional” curve (on curves see, Section 1.2.4). It should be noted that honorific titles are meant to single

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<sup>61</sup>The order in which *nisbas* are given might have some implications of their meaning, but at the moment I am not sure if the word order may be used as an abstract principle equally applicable to all biographical collections.

out individuals from the masses and applying the same honorific to dozens if not hundreds of individuals does not seem an effective way of doing this, especially if we keep in mind that Muslims never lacked inventiveness when it came to giving out each other [dis]honorific nicknames.<sup>62</sup>

#### 1.2.2.4 Linguistic Formulae, Wording Patterns

Whether we read sources closely or distantly, we identify a thing as something specific only if it is named, described or referred to as such. Allusions that do not occur elsewhere pointing to the same object—and thus not forming a recognizable wording pattern—cannot be considered as identifiers. In other words, no matter how we read our sources, we use specific words or phrases as identifiers of specific objects.

From changes in wording patterns we can infer long-term patterns of a different kind. The issue with such an approach is how we can know that authors did not introduce anachronistic wording into biographical accounts that they included into their collections. This is another question that is difficult to answer decisively and at the moment I do not have an answer to this question based on any quantifiable data. But since nobody else has this kind of data, I can introduce yet another methodological assumption that will have to be verified later through a massive comparison of all available biographical collections.

All sources in the corpus are massive compilations. In Bulliet’s classifica-

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<sup>62</sup>The most well-known examples are the names of famous poets and litterateurs, such as Taʿabbata Sharrā, al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Mutanabbi; the *Kitāb al-ansāb* of al-Samʿānī is also full of examples of idiosyncratic, often “politically incorrect” *nisbas*.

tion they belong to the category of “tertiary collections”—large-scale compilation projects that are based on earlier collections of various kinds.<sup>63</sup> When compiling such massive collections, authors tend to “stitch” things together from texts that they have at their disposal. They often copy sections of biographies verbatim, rather than paraphrasing them, in most cases using a specific title as their main source and supplementing it with information from other ones that either corroborate the data from the main source or provide some clarifying or contradicting details. Any scholar who has worked with biographical collections had the experience of discovering biographies of the same person in later sources that re-use sections from earlier sources with no—or almost no—changes; even when changes are made, they can often be characterized as omissions or inclusions, but not paraphrasing. “Copying” instead of “paraphrasing” can also be considered plausible for two other reasons.

First, Islamic society is traditional in the sense that even an original thought

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<sup>63</sup>In his comments to the earlier version of this chapter Professor Bulliet offered the following classification of biographical collections (based on personal correspondence with Richard Bulliet): *Primary collections* are the individual notes on teachers taken by *ḥadīth* scholars during the course of their studies. *Secondary collections*—when scholars died their *ḥadīth* manuscripts and their teacher notices became useless, as do our own college lecture notes which we tend to lug around uselessly throughout our careers. These materials ended up with the decedent’s family and were often deposited in mosque or *madrassa* libraries. At some point, an ambitious local scholar would decide to go through such collections, collate them, and list all of the *shuyūkh* found therein in alphabetical order. *Tertiary collections*—these draw selectively on the secondary collections and filter them in some way, such as by *madhhab* or death date. This also would include the chronicles that are heavily weighted with obituaries. While some obituaries are doubtless written from first-hand knowledge, it is clear that many are drawn from other collections and selected because of the date of death. When no date of death is mentioned, as is often the case in primary and secondary collections, those biographies do not make it into the annalistic collections. *Quaternary collections*—Ibn Khallikān’s *Wafayāt al-a’yān* is a good example here, but also included are many of the *tadhkira* collections of Ṣūfīs and poets. These have strong authorial input, consistent style, and fairly clear literary purpose. Unlike the first three categories, these fit well into the category of *adab*.

is often stitched from the words of earlier authorities, ideally universally accepted ones. Second, from the standpoint of sheer economy of labor, “copying” would be more preferable as the less labor-intensive process; keeping in mind the amount of work that the authors of these collections had to put in, copying with omissions and inclusions, and occasionally supplemented by the author’s own comments<sup>64</sup> seems the most effective writing strategy. Hence my other methodological assumption: the prevailing majority of biographies in “tertiary” collections preserve the wording of original collections, thus retaining linguistic formulae characteristic of specific time periods and regions. At the moment this proposition is based on a small number of linguistic formulae, and the fact that they are not haphazardly scattered over the entire *Taʿrīkh al-islām* suggests consistent text re-use.

### 1.2.3 WordNets and Synsets

Closely related to the linguistic formulae and wording patterns is the concept of **WordNet**. Originally, **WordNet** was a large lexical database of English—a project that George A. Miller began at Princeton University in the mid-1980s.<sup>65</sup> In this lexical database, words—nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs—are grouped into sets of cognitive synonyms that express distinct concepts. Interlinked by means of conceptual-semantic and lexical relations, these **synsets** are a useful tool for computational linguistics and natural language processing (NLP). Most importantly, these **synsets** allow for conducting complex inquiries

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<sup>64</sup>Such comments are also often stitched together. For example, *wa-qāla al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī thiqa*, “al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī said: trustworthy.”

<sup>65</sup>For more details, see: <http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>.

into vast corpora. For example, if one is interested in finding all the relevant data on, say, Iraq, it will be more efficient to use a toponymic **synset** that includes all major places in Iraq and takes into account their nicknames and alternative spellings.

The **WordNet** has become an indispensable tool for linguists and a number of **WordNets** have been created for different languages over the years. Unfortunately, although quite unsurprisingly, there is no **WordNet** for classical Arabic.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, I do employ the main **WordNet** principle to inquire into specific issues. For example, I rely on hierarchical lists of toponyms, where satellite villages and city quarters are linked with their urban centers, while urban centers are further connected with the provinces that they belong to. In a similar manner, *nisbas* are organized into categories—e.g., tribal, toponymic, occupational etc.—that branch into sub-categories (e.g., textile “industry” occupations, food “industry” occupations, etc.); toponymic *nisbas* are integrated into the main toponymic hierarchy. My **WordNet** is still in its draft state, but it does allow for designing of complex inquiries, which are inconceivable otherwise: with these hierarchical **synsets** one can zoom out to the provincial level of spatial analysis; or, trace not just specific *nisbas*, but the entire categories. Additionally, I create and use **synsets** for specific purposes: for example, I use a **synset** of terms related to preaching to ensure that the data on preaching are carefully collected from my corpus;<sup>67</sup> or a **synset** of family terms that

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<sup>66</sup>A **WordNet** for modern standard Arabic is available: <http://www.globalwordnet.org/AWN/>.

<sup>67</sup>Each source has been thoroughly searched with a script for all possible derivatives of roots *kh-t-b*, *w-c-z*, *dh-k-r*, *d-c-w* and *q-s-s* and also for the forms of the word *minbar*. In the process, the script has been continuously adjusted to ignore “false positives,” phrases that

allows us to trace how the role of family ties, or households, changed over time.

### 1.2.4 Curves, not Numbers

In conclusion, I must make explicit one more methodological premise. Data from Arabic biographical collections cannot be treated as statistical in modern terms. After all, each collection is the result of the efforts of one individual, even if he relied on a number of authors before him. Absolute numbers are hardly reliable, particularly when one has to deal with collections that are similar in chronological, geographical and socio-religious coverage, but differ significantly in biography count. For example, the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* and *Shadharāt al-dhahab* are quite similar. Both cover the same major regions. Neither is limited to specific social and religious groups. They do differ in chronological coverage (*Shadharāt al-dhahab* covers the entire first millennium), but they are comparable if one considers only the data for the first 700 lunar years. Yet, when it comes to biography count, the difference is most significant: over 30,000 biographies in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* versus about 8,500 in *Shadharāt al-dhahab* (i.e., even fewer for the period of 700 lunar years).

Although data from these primary sources are hardly comparable in terms of absolute numbers, it is tempting to expect comparable changes in the distribution of data points of the same kind. Using statistical methods, one

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include no relevant information (for example, وَثَّقَهُ الْخَطِيبُ, “al-Khaṭīb [al-Baghdādī] considered him a trustworthy transmitter”). For example, from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* the “untrained” script extracted over 7,000 biographies that might contain data relevant to preaching, while with the adjusted script this number dropped to slightly over 3,000. Such adjustability allows to considerably improve the quality of text-mining queries, gradually developing complex searches that can be later applied to new sources.

can generate curves (such as a LOESS curve) based on the density of the distribution—such curves will most efficiently display significant changes in data, thus making important patterns of historical change discernible. Ideally, curves generated from the same kinds of data from different collections should have similar shapes, although it is hard to say whether this is going to happen consistently in the real world. Additionally, these curves can serve as a measure for the comparison of the content of various biographical collections. Last but not least, such statistical curves smooth out “the noise of data,” helping to exclude infrequent instances that are most likely to be external to the major patterns of data distribution.

## 1.3 Defining the Method

### 1.3.1 Prior Studies: Relational Databases

The first studies of biographical collections relied on quantitative methods that came into use in the 70s of the last century. On the wave of popularity of quantitative methods in history in general,<sup>68</sup> scholars from different countries conducted methodologically similar studies. Independently from each other, they dived into the depth of biographical collections in search of historical truths. In

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<sup>68</sup>On the fate of quantitative methods in history, see: JOHN F. REYNOLDS, ‘Do historians count anymore? The status of quantitative methods in history, 1975-1995’, *Historical methods*, 31 (1998); interestingly, GoogleBooks nGram Viewer shows a tendency very similar to the one described in Reynold’s article: <http://books.google.com/ngrams>, search for “quantitative history.” GoogleBooks nGram Viewer traces the usage of different phrases over time in millions of books; in 2012 GoogleBooks includes about 20 million books (according to Google estimates there were about 130 million books published by 2010, see: <http://booksearch.blogspot.com/2010/08/books-of-world-stand-up-and-be-counted.html>).

Israel, Hayyim Cohen studied the economic backgrounds of the early religious scholars.<sup>69</sup> In the USA, Richard Bulliet studied the social and religious élite of Nishapur, and later the process of conversion to Islam;<sup>70</sup> Richard Bulliet also clearly conceptualized this approach in a separate study, demonstrating its potential.<sup>71</sup> Carl Petry studied the civilian élites of Mamlūk Cairo.<sup>72</sup> In the USSR, a group of Soviet scholars inspired by Piotr A. Giaznevich studied the development of early Arabic historical and religious writings in different areas of the Caliphate.<sup>73</sup> The scholars of the ONOMASTICON ARABICUM PROJECT

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<sup>69</sup>HAYYIM J. COHEN, ‘The Economic Background and the Secular Occupations of Muslim Jurisprudents and Traditionists in the Classical Period of Islam: (Until the Middle of the Eleventh Century)’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 13 (1970).

<sup>70</sup>RICHARD W. BULLIET, *The patricians of Nishapur: a study in medieval Islamic social history* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972); BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*.

<sup>71</sup>See, RICHARD W. BULLIET, ‘A Quantitative Approach to Medieval Muslim Biographical Dictionaries’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 13:2 (April 1970). A somewhat similar approach, although from the camp of literary studies, was offered in HARTMUT E. FÄHNDRICH, ‘The Wafayāt al-A‘yān of Ibn Khallikān: A New Approach’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 93 (1973). Unfortunately, Fähdrič’s work never fruited into a suggested study.

<sup>72</sup>CARL F. PETRY, *The civilian elite of Cairo in the later Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>73</sup>All from the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (currently, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, [www.orientalstudies.ru](http://www.orientalstudies.ru)). Of four planned books, three were published: all under the title of “Arabic Historiographical Literature in [ locations ] in the period from [ century ] until [ century ].” Konstantin A. Boyko wrote a book on Spain, and later, another one on Egypt; Stanislav M. Prozorov—on the Shī‘ī literature in Iraq, Iran and Central Asia. Unfortunately, written in Russian, they remained unknown to Western scholars (all books have summaries in English). See, KONSTANTIN A. BOYKO, *Arabskaia istoricheskaia literatura v Ispanii: VIII-pervaia tret’ XI v.*, edited by PIOTR A. GRIAZNEVICH (Moskva: Nauka, Glavnaia red. vostochnoi literatury, 1977); STANISLAV M. PROZOROV, *Arabskaia istoricheskaia literatura v Irake, Irane i Srednei Azii v VII-seredine X v.: shiitskaia istoriografiia*, edited by PIOTR A. GRIAZNEVICH (Moskva: Nauka, Glavnaia red. vostochnoi literatury, 1980); KONSTANTIN A. BOYKO, *Arabskaia istoricheskaia literatura v Egipte, IX-X vv.*, edited by PIOTR A. GRIAZNEVICH (Moskva: Nauka, Glav. red. vostochnoi lit-ry, 1991). The last book was supposed to be written by Sergei B. Pevzner, but his index-card database was lost in an accident and the project was reassigned to Konstantin A. Boyko. Piotr A. Giaznevich worked on the forth book of the series—the Sunnī historical and religious writings in Arabia, Syria and Iraq—but burdened with administrative duties and



produced a series of publications on several biographical dictionaries.<sup>74</sup>

Of all these scholars, only Bulliet and Petry remained faithful to this approach and came up with more than just one study. The main reason for this was that such studies were extremely laborious and time-consuming, even with the help of early computers, which were anything but user-friendly. The abundance of information was—and still remains—unfathomable, so it was imperative to set strict boundaries to projects, which inadvertently limited the promises of the approach itself. Even with strict boundaries carefully determined, research was extremely time consuming and even the brave soon opted out from this kind of study. From the middle of the 1980s until the end of the 1990s there were almost no studies that relied on this approach. In the late 1990s, advances in computer technologies and the availability of personal computers stimulated a few more attempts (most notably the JERUSALEM PROSOPOGRAPHICAL PROJECT founded and directed by Michael Lecker;<sup>75</sup> the [NETHERLANDS] ULAMA PROJECT of John Nawas and Monique

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other projects, never finished it.

<sup>74</sup>GRAFF and PIERRE BICHARD-BRÉAUD, *Documents sur la mise en ordinateur des données biographiques* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1971); JEAN PAUL PASCUAL, *Index schématique du Taʿrīh Baǧdād* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1971); PIERRE BICHARD-BRÉAUD, *Traitement automatique des données biographiques; analyse et programmation* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1973b); PIERRE BICHARD-BRÉAUD, *Nouveaux documents sur la mise en ordinateur des données biographiques* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1973a); MALTI-DOUGLAS and FOURCADE (1976), *The treatment by computer of medieval Arabic biographical data*; EVERETT K. ROWSON and SEEGER ADRIANUS BONEBAKKER, *A computerized listing of biographical data from the Yatūmat al-dahr by al-Thaʿālibī*, *Onomasticon Arabicum*. Série listing; 3 (Paris: Los Angeles, Calif.: Centre national de la recherche scientifique ; University of California, 1980); the current condition of the project is reflected in: CHRISTIAN MÜLLER and JACQUELINE SUBLET, *Onomasticon arabicum. Prosopographie de l'islam médiéval*, *Aedilis - Bases de données et logiciels* (Paris-Orléans: IRHT - Aedilis, 2006); however, the traditional American expression “It’s alive!” is hardly applicable.

<sup>75</sup>On Michael Lecker’s work and his JPP, see his webpage: <http://micro5.mscc.huji>.

Bernards,<sup>76</sup> and, most recently, the MAMLUK POLITICAL PROSOPOGRAPHY PROJECT of Jo Van Steenbergen)<sup>77</sup> but the potential of the approach is still far from being realized.

The main problem with this approach was posed by the very advantage it was supposed to exploit: the limitless quantifiable data available for analysis. Anyone attempting to implement this approach had to set very strict limits in order to accomplish his/her research project. This problem related to the number of sources, historical periods, geographical areas and clearly formulated research goals. Again, this was at a time when computers were not easily available, and even when they were they posed new kinds of problems (no support for Arabic, coding issues etc.).<sup>78</sup> One had to clearly define research

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ac.il:81/JPP/homepage/. Overall, the JPP seems to be a rather conventional prosopographical database project, in many aspects similar to those on Ancient Rome, Byzantium and Medieval Europe. It deals with early Islamic administration (ca. 622–800) and includes 1,650 persons. For a study based on this database (the only one?), see: MICHAEL EBSTEIN, ‘Shurṭa chiefs in Baṣra in the Umayyad period: a prosopographical study’, *Al-Qantara (Madrid)*, 31 (2010).

<sup>76</sup>According to the creators, the NUP database includes about 1,000 biographical profiles. For the technical description of the project, see: JOHN NAWAS and MONIQUE BERNARDS, ‘A preliminary report of the Netherlands Ulama Project (NUP): the evolution of the class of ‘ulamā’ in Islam with special emphasis on the non-Arab converts (mawālī) from the first through fourth century A.H.’, in: *Law, Christianity and modernism in Islamic society. Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants ... Leuven ... 1996. Ed. U. Vermeulen & J.M.F. Van Reeth*, volume 86 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998); for studies based on the NUP database, see: MONIQUE BERNARDS and JOHN NAWAS, ‘The Geographic Distribution of Muslim Jurists during the First Four Centuries AH’, *Islamic Law and Society*, 10:2 (January 2003); JOHN NAWAS, ‘A profile of the mawālī ‘ulamā’’, in: *Patronate and patronage in early and classical Islam. Ed. Monique Bernards and John Nawas* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2005); JOHN NAWAS, ‘The birth of an elite: mawālī and Arab ‘ulamā’’, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 31 (2006).

<sup>77</sup>Abbreviated as MP3, this project is hosted at the University of Ghent, Belgium; for more details on the current state of the Project, see: <http://www.mamluk.ugent.be/node/4>.

<sup>78</sup>Essentially, everyone had to develop a new coding system, but in the case of computerized databases it was particularly important and complex task, especially if a group of scholars was expected to be involved. To appreciate the scale of such an enterprise, see: MALTI-DOUGLAS and FOURCADE (1976), *The treatment by computer of medieval Arabic*

goals, select a limited amount of sources, and carefully consider the kinds of data required for the research. After careful planning one had to peruse the selected sources, manually extract required information, and then record it either in a paper medium, or code it for transfer to “the memory bank of a computer,” to use an antiquated phrase. These technologically imposed limitations also affected the usability of the extracted information: in most cases, the potential of created databanks was exhausted by the end of the research projects for which they were created.

Needless to say, these technical limitations got in the way of realizing the promises that the approach offered. Later, when computers became personal and more user-friendly, several more attempts were made to study large bodies of biographical records. The change in computer standards, however, also played a nasty trick, since previously digitized information now had to be converted to a format readable by new machines. This did not always work out well and some computerized databanks remained trapped on obsolete media.<sup>79</sup>

Relational databases were thought to be the ideal tool for studies of biographical collections. In very modern computational terms, the tremendous amount of biographical information collected by Muslim authors over cen-

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*biographical data*, which is a 100 page manual for the OAP. For an updated version of this manual and modern application of the OAP with the use of **MS Access**, see: MÜLLER and SUBLET (2006), *Onomasticon arabicum*.

<sup>79</sup>For example, this happened to Carl Petry’s databank, which still remains on magnetic tapes and requires special equipment and expertise in order to be transferred to a modern type of media (from personal conversations with Carl Petry); interestingly enough, old-fashioned analog databases remained immune to these advancements in technology—Richard Bulliet’s collection on **McBee Keysort** cards still serves him almost fifty years after his project began (from personal conversations with Richard Bulliet). For an example of usage of **McBee Keysort** cards in humanities, see, e.g., G. L. ANDERSON, ‘The McBee Keysort System for Mechanically Sorting Folklore Data’, *The Journal of American Folklore*, 66:262 (October 1953).

turies could be imagined as a huge analog biographical database, where every biographical collection was a specific **query**.<sup>80</sup> For example, al-Dhahabī’s *Taʾrīkh al-islām* can be viewed as a **query** that selects all available biographical records from all available regions of the Muslim world for the period from the Prophet’s lifetime until 700/1301 CE, and arranges them chronologically by decades; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, as a **query** that selects only biographies of those affiliated with Baghdād (what kind of affiliation is not important), considers the period from the foundation of Baghdād (or, actually, including the entire lifetime of Caliph al-Manṣūr, the founder of Baghdād) until the author’s death, and arranges them alphabetically by first name (sing. *ism*), the least user-friendly type of arrangement; Ibn Abī Yaʿlā’s *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, as a **query** that limits biographical records to people affiliated with the Ḥanbalī community, considers the period from Ibn Ḥanbal’s lifetime until the author’s death, applies no geographical limitations, and arranges records by “cohorts” (For the tabular presentation of this point, see Figure 1.11).

It was expected that computerized databases would open up a new range of questions that could be asked and that would hitherto have been unthinkable “without 500 monks at hand.”<sup>81</sup> In real life, however, they offered only marginal advantages over the old-fashioned pen-and-paper systems. They did

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<sup>80</sup>**Query** is the primary mechanism for retrieving information from databases that uses questions presented in a predefined format.

<sup>81</sup>The quote is from: RALPH W. MATHISEN, ‘Where are all the PDBs?: The Creation of Prosopographical Databases for the Ancient and Medieval Worlds’, in: *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook* (University of Oxford, Linacre College Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007), 95. The article is an interesting overview of the use of databases—both analog and digital—in history (prosopography, to be more precise); it is also an excellent representation of the conventional relational database approach with all its advantages and disadvantages. The main issue with them is eloquently expressed in the very title of Mathisen’s article.

Variable/Source	<i>Ta'riḫh al-islām</i>	<i>Ta'riḫh Baghdād</i>	<i>Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila</i>
<i>period from</i>	−52 AH	145 AH	164 AH
<i>period until</i>	700 AH	473 AH	527 AH
<i>personalia</i>	all	all	Ḥanbalī jurists
<i>territories</i>	all	Baghdād	all
<i>arrangement</i>	chronological	alphabetical	generational

Figure 1.11: Sources as **Queries**: Each biographical collection can be represented as a query from the imagined all-Islamic biographical database. Having all biographical data converted into a suitable digital format, it will be possible to generate such biographical collections on the fly, which in itself might be an interesting experiment.

increase the speed and complexity of data retrieval, but offered no significant improvements for the tedious process of entering data.<sup>82</sup>

Accordingly, the newcomers continued to suffer from the same limitations as their analog predecessors. Their creation remained equally time consuming, and for this reason a number of projects were never finished.<sup>83</sup> This seems to be true regarding the above-mentioned JPP and NUP, which have been created over rather long periods of time, and which include a relatively small number of biographic profiles (1,650 individuals in the JPP and 1,049 in the NUP). Their “coefficient of efficiency”—in terms of numbers of studies based on them and their impact on the field—is insignificant and plays into the hands of the

<sup>82</sup>In fact, in cases when a group of researchers was involved, it became even more complicated. The OAP is a striking example of this: a new participant had to study a 100-page Manual which thoroughly describes the process of extraction of information from biographical collections and coding it for further analysis. Following this Manual, one then must meticulously collect information from each biography, sort it into up to 30 rubrics, code it according to the developed system, then convert it to digital format. This procedure was to be repeated as many times as there are biographies in a given biographical collection.

<sup>83</sup>On this issue see: MATHISEN (2007), ‘Where are all the PDBs?’, where a number of examples are mentioned, including Mathisen’s own database; despite this screaming fact, the author remains a believer in the conventional relational database approach.

critics of prosopographical and quantitative studies. Another problem with large scale database projects is that they often tend to take on a life of their own, gradually transforming themselves from the means into the end itself.<sup>84</sup>

### 1.3.2 A Novel Alternative: Text-mining

The text-mining approach is cardinally different. Not a method with clearly defines boundaries, it is rather an open-ended set of computational techniques that allow for extracting meaningful information from unstructured texts. This approach capitalizes on a number of developments of our digital age. The wide support of the `Unicode` standard made it possible to apply text-mining methods to oriental languages. Scripting languages commonly used in text-mining—such as `Python`, `Pearl`, or `R`—allow one to work with an unlimited number of texts and design complex analytical tasks. Combined with statistical and linguistic methods, these tools offer limitless ways for studying voluminous historical texts. Unlike traditional database approach, text-mining allows to expand the databank of primary texts and incorporate new digital methods and techniques as they became available. This is particularly impor-

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<sup>84</sup>I myself had first-hand experience of dealing with conventional relational databases when I suggested a computerization of the method used by Boyko, Griaznevich and Prozorov, the above-mentioned group of Soviet/Russian Arabists. Working with my mentor Stanislav M. Prozorov, I developed a database for the study of Arabic historical sources; however, its earthly manifestation turned out to be quite different from what we both envisioned and hoped for: as always, the bottleneck of the database was the process of entering data and “without 500 monks at hand” it was incredibly inefficient and time-consuming task for a lone graduate student (The project is described in details in: STANISLAV M. PROZOROV and MAXIM G. ROMANOV, ‘Principles and procedures of extracting and processing the data from Arabic sources (based on materials of historic-and-biographical literature) / Original title: Metodika izvlecheniya i obrabotki informatsii iz arabskih istochnikov (na materiale istoriko-biograficheskoi literaturi)’, *Oriens/Vostok*, 4 (2003)).

tant, since these methods are being developed and updated practically by the minute. As some DH scholar recently pointed out: “The digital methods that you need now are not the methods that you need *now*.”

Because of its nature, text-mining encourages—even demands—a seamless connection between the primary texts and extracted research data, allowing one to switch easily between quantitative and qualitative tasks. While the structure of relational databases imposes strict limitations on what research questions can be asked of data, the limitations of the text-mining approach seem to lurk only in the ability of researchers to transform complex research questions into working algorithms and then translate them into the scripting language of their choice. In addition, this approach is universal and can be applied to texts of any genre in any language. At the hands-on level, the text-mining approach offers a more efficient work flow and allows one to begin the analysis of data almost instantaneously, gradually increasing the complexity of the research task that one undertakes. This opportunity to get valuable glimpses has a strong empowering effect that encourages one to experiment with data using new techniques and methods.

Text-mining relies on patterns, which, as repetitive, quantifiable and morphologically similar structures, permeate the entire approach. In designing any text-mining task, one first samples data to collect textual patterns that encapsulate required information;<sup>85</sup> then one translates these textual patterns

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<sup>85</sup>Scholars of Islamic history discussed some of these patterns although in a quite different context. See, for example, Albrecht Noth’s discussion of “transitional formulae” in ALBRECHT NOTH and LAWRENCE I. CONRAD, *The early Arabic historical tradition: a source-critical study* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1994), particularly Chapter 4; his analysis of topoi and schemata is based on: ECKART STETTER, ‘Topoi und Schemata im Ḥadīṭ’, Inaugural dissertation, Universität Tübingen (Tübingen, 1965).

into the language of **regular expressions**—another kind of pattern—which the machine can interpret and use to locate and extract all instances of data that fit the initial textual patterns (see, Figure 1.5 above). The extracted data are then repeatedly reorganized, segmented and analyzed in order to discover patterns of historical significance.

Every text-mining task is an algorithm translated into a specific formal language. Somewhat similarly to the above mentioned 100-page Manual of the OAP, algorithms present complex tasks as series of simple steps. Algorithms are a crucial methodological part of this approach, since even small mistakes may lead to wrong results. For this reason they should be explicitly described whenever applicable. Algorithms also make this approach efficient: with algorithms corrected or adjusted, the entire set of research data can be regenerated anew—something unthinkable within the conventional database approach.

Although the text-mining approach is quantitative in nature, its main advantage is that it allows one to improve qualitative analysis. Text-mining techniques allow one to explore vast corpora of primary sources and discover all thematically relevant sources, chapters and passages. Such exhaustive coverage will make any close reading thoroughly contextualized and reliable.

In the preliminary quantitative study of extracted data, I rely on the principles and techniques of **exploratory data analysis**. Pioneered in the 70s by John Tukey,<sup>86</sup> this statistical approach is based on the underlying assump-

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<sup>86</sup>JOHN W. TUKEY, *Exploratory data analysis*, Addison-Wesley series in behavioral science (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1977). Even though written in the pre-digital age, this book is considered foundational for anyone seriously interested in data analysis. For a quick fix, one can opt for a more concise representation of this approach



tion that “the more one knows about the data, the more effectively data can be used to develop, test and refine theory.”<sup>87</sup> **Exploratory data analysis** is based on the principles of *openness* and *skepticism*, calling for the analysis of data without preformed expectations or theoretical assumptions, while remaining open to new ways of looking at the same data. Sociologists are well aware of the questionnaire problem, whereby questions may frame responders’ answers. Questioning their sources, historians are not immune from this problem either. For this reason it is important to explore our sources to make sure that research questions are relevant. This is particularly important in the case of multivolume biographical collections, which, as the inside joke goes, are easier to write than to read.

**Exploratory data analysis** is an iterative process of splitting data into *smooth* and *rough*: the former represents some kind of regularity or pattern in the data, while the latter is their irregular residue. However, since the boundary between the *smooth* and the *rough* depends on a number of parameters, often a priori unknown, it must be discovered experimentally. **Exploratory data analysis** emphasizes visual representation of data, specifically over summary statistics. Arguably, carefully designed visualizations can convey the complexity of data without fracturing the subtlety of intricate connections into a linear narrative, which readers may never be able to reassemble fully. Moreover, in many cases visual display of data is the only way to bring together complex combinations of variables. Thus, visualizations are used here

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for the social sciences: FREDERICK HARTWIG and BRIAN E. DEARING, *Exploratory data analysis*, A Sage university paper (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1979).

<sup>87</sup>HARTWIG and DEARING (1979), *Exploratory data analysis*, 9.

for “visual evidence, visual reasoning, and visual understanding.”<sup>88</sup>

Conceptually, text-mining approach fits nicely into the Fibonacci spiral which graphically reflects the growth of complexity of research tasks (Figure 1.12). Unlike the conventional approach whereby one extracts all kinds of information processing one biography at a time, repeating this process until a specific source is exhausted, in the text-mining approach one extracts one kind of information while processing all biographies of a specific source at once.

Such a change of perspective has two advantages. First, dealing with only one type of information streamlines the entire process which is particularly important since **regular expressions** and text-mining scripts must be continuously readjusted for better performance. Second, one can begin analysis right after a specific kind of data has been extracted. Such a step-by-step exploratory evaluation of data is helpful for guiding further research. Moreover, it encourages one to continue with the study, whereas with conventional relational databases one usually gets a depressing feeling that this will never end.

The sections that follow are meant to provide an overview of the method and to demonstrate the general work flow. Some visualizations are the very early versions and the following chapters will offer both updated and more detailed representations of data. In the examples that will follow I use *Taʾrīkh al-islām* of al-Dhahabī, volumes 4–52, covering the period of 41–700 AH/662–

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<sup>88</sup>This area of **exploratory data analysis** was largely developed by Edward Tufte in his triptych about *pictures of numbers, pictures of nouns & pictures of words*: EDWARD R. TUFTE, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (Graphics Press, February 1992), EDWARD R. TUFTE, *Envisioning Information* (Graphics Press, May 1990), EDWARD R. TUFTE, *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative* (Graphics Press, February 1997) The quote is from: TUFTE (1992), *The Visual Display*, 8.



Figure 1.12: Visual Conceptualization of Text-Mining Approach: the Fibonacci spiral graphically represents the growth of the complexity of research tasks, reflecting the fact that this complexity can grow *ad infinitum*. Abbreviations Pr, EA and TA refer different stages of text-mining research: preparing texts, exploratory analysis and textual analysis.

1301 CE.

### 1.3.3 Walkthrough

#### 1.3.3.1 Step I: eTexts

First of all, eTexts must be prepared for text-mining scripts. The whole process can be described as “normalization,” which in this context refers to two different tasks. In terms of computational linguistics and natural language processing (NLP), “normalization” refers to the disambiguation of spelling, formatting and encoding irregularities of Arabic text.<sup>89</sup> Since most NLP techniques in their current state are inapplicable for our research purposes, the most important task is to fix encoding irregularities, which arise when a typist uses Persian or Urdu keyboard layout to enter Arabic text: for example, while *kāf* in most cases looks exactly the same in all three languages, in the Unicode table they occupy different locations, and therefore, computationally, are different symbols. The issue of spelling and formatting irregularities is more efficiently solved with deNormalization algorithms.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>The standard procedure of “normalization” includes cleaning out “noise” characters—*kasra*, *ḍamma*, *fatha*, *tashdīd*, *kashīda* etc.—which interfere with the computational analysis of texts. Additionally, spelling irregularities are “normalized.” Mainly, this includes inconsistencies in the usage of *yā* and *alif maqsūra* (replaced with *yā*); different forms of *alif* (replaced with bare *alif*), and the spellings of medial and final *ḥamza* (replaced with standalone *ḥamza*): with all its possible variants *ḥamza* is responsible for 85–90% of all spelling mistakes in Arabic. Encoding irregularities refer to the problem when non-Arabic characters are used in the text. For more details on “normalization,” see: NIZAR Y. HABASH, *Introduction to Arabic natural language processing* ([San Rafael, Calif.]: Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2010), 21–23.

<sup>90</sup>I discovered that it is easier—and faster which is more important—to read texts with orthographic mistakes/irregularities than texts which were “normalized.” Orthographic mistake/irregularity seems to give one a starting point to quickly shuffle through all the possible variants, while dealing with the “normalized” text one’s mind get confused with where to start and it takes several crucial seconds more to get to the right answer. It may

In terms of text-mining “normalization” refers to providing meta-data—i.e. data that describe data—for every unit of text. In this case, “normalization” informs us about the context from which specific information was extracted, thus making **queries** meaningful. Consider the following example: if one searches for the word “preacher” (*wāʿiz*) in any biographical dictionary, it will result in hundreds or even thousands of hits; browsing through all the hits will not necessarily lead to anything meaningful, provided one can actually accomplish this. However, if the very same dictionary has been split into biographies, the search will tell the number of people who were either preachers themselves or had some connections with preachers. Furthermore, if the same search is applied specifically to the onomastic section of each biography—a section that occurs in the beginning of each biography and ends right before the details on religious education—it will actually give us the number of preachers in the dictionary. This will narrow down the number of biographies for close reading, which is particularly important when dealing with four digit figures.

In practical terms, the task of “normalization” refers to tagging the structure of each **eText**. For example, in the case of a biographical dictionary, one needs to mark titles of chapters (preserving hierarchy) and starting points of biographical records. Tagging the structure is a rather tiresome task; however, it allows preserving the entire **eText** of the source and has to be done only

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not sound like a serious issue, but shaving off a few seconds from each operation that has to be repeated hundreds or thousands of times saves a lot of time. “DeNormalization” algorithms are applied only for search purposes: first, texts are stripped of formatting; namely, punctuation marks are deleted—in the editions of pre-modern Arabic texts they are often unreliable anyway—and the entire text block is transformed into a long string of text; second, search strings are deNormalized with **regular expressions**, namely, if there is any form of *alif*, it is replaced with all probable forms of this letter; with similar operations applied to all problematic letters, searches will consider all probable spellings.

# ||| حرف الصاد .  
 # \$ صدقة ابن الوزير أبي الرضا محمد بن أحمد بن صدقة .  
 # \*284\*42\* ظهير الدين أبو الفتح ولي نيابة الوزارة  
 ببغداد وكان صدرا معظما وأبوه الوزير جلال الدين قد وزر  
 للراشد بالله توفي الظهير في حادي عشر رجب .  
 # ||| حرف الظاء .  
 # \$ ظافر بن الحسين .  
 # أبو المنصور الأزدي الإسكندراني ثم المصري الفقيه  
 المالكي تفقه بالثغر على العلامة أبي طالب صالح بن  
 إسماعيل ابن بنت معافى .

Figure 1.13: A snapshot from a tagged eText (*Taʿrīkh al-islām*). Thanks to customizable highlighting schemes in EditPad Pro, different structural elements are automatically highlighted: 3<sup>rd</sup> level headings—with fuchsia, headings of biographical records—with dark green, volume and page numbers—with red. Customizable highlighting schemes in EditPad Pro can be easily adapted to highlight required information, which is an effective way to ensure consistency of tagging as well as to save a lot of time on this tedious procedure.

once. The processed eText becomes machine-readable and can be used until its research value is completely exhausted. This process can also be streamlined, first, by using short tags<sup>91</sup> for the markup of all structural elements and, second, by using highlighting schemes, which help to avoid typos and which make structural elements easily visible (if tagged correctly, headings are highlighted according to the user-defined conditions, see Figure 1.13).

After a certain eText is tagged, it can be parsed into separate blocks (i.e., individual biographies, obituaries, events). Each of the newly generated blocks will have two parts: the first one is a cubaron,<sup>92</sup> the paragraph that

<sup>91</sup>E.g., “|” for chapters of the 1<sup>st</sup> level, “||” for chapters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> level, etc; “\$” for a biography of a man; “\$\$” for a biography of a woman. These tags can later be easily transformed into TEI tags. In the case with Arabic texts, this is actually the best way to follow, since angle brackets as well as other technical symbols behave erratically when combined with Arabic letters; editing a TEI-style tagged Arabic text is particularly difficult and incredibly frustrating.

<sup>92</sup>I borrowed this term from the ONOMASTICON ARABICUM PROJECT, where it is used for a paragraph, which “gathers the totality of biographical and bibliographical information concerning one sole person” (MALTI-DOUGLAS and FOURCADE (1976), *The treatment by*

contains tagged metadata extracted from the source; and the second one is an `eNaṣṣ`,<sup>93</sup> the actual text of a biography or an historical event. Initially, the `cubaron` contains only basic information: 1) the name of a source; 2) “path” to an `eNaṣṣ` within the source (names of chapters and sub-chapters, in which a specific `eNaṣṣ` was originally nested); 3) volume and page numbers of the `eNaṣṣ` for easy reference (only if they were preserved in the original `eText`); 4) the type of information that `eNaṣṣ` contains (i.e., biography, event, etc.). As different text-mining scripts are applied, extracted data are collected in the `cubaron` of every information block.

Consider the following example. Figure 1.14 shows a sample block from al-Sam‘ānī’s *Kitāb al-ansāb* with a `cubaron` that was updated with text-mining scripts designed to extract vocalizations and definitions of *nisbas*. Highlighted with light blue is the vocalization of this *nisba*, i.e., how it should be pronounced properly; words highlighted with fuchsia show the beginning of the definition of this *nisba*, while words in purple show where this definition ends. The definition of this *nisba* also contains keywords that can be later used for semi-automatic classification of this *nisba* as occupational—*‘amal*, “production”, and *bay‘*, “selling”—and as toponymic—*darb*, “road.”

After the tagging is complete, one can take a closer look at first statistics from the source in question. To begin with, one now knows the number of meaningful blocks of information: volumes 4–52, covering the period 41–700 AH/662–1301 CE, include biographical records on about 29,000 individuals

*computer of medieval Arabic biographical data*).

<sup>93</sup>From an Arabic word for “text,” *naṣṣ*, by analogy with `eText`. The choice of both `cubaron` and `eNaṣṣ` is arbitrary, but necessary, since the usage of more common words makes communication very confusing.

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. BEGINNING OF CUBARON #####
. كتاب الأنساب للسمعاني # TITLE # KitabAnsab #####
. باب الألف # CHAPTER L1 # Chapter N02 #####
. باب الألفين وما يثلثهما # CHAPTER L2 # Chapter N01 #####
. TYPE # NISBA #####
. PAGES Vol.1 p.59 - Vol.1 p.60 #####
. الأجرى # NISBA # ARABIC #####
. بفتح الألف وضم الجيم وتشديد الراء المهملة # VOCALIZATION #####
. هذه النسبة إلى عمل الأجر وبيعه ونسبة إلى درب # DEFINITION #####
. الأجر أيضا .
. هذه النسبة # DEFINITION INITIAL FORMULA #####
. والمشهور بهذا الانتساب # DEFINITION TERMINAL FORMULA #####
. END OF CUBARON #####
. BEGINNING OF eNass #####
. الأجرى #NIS#
# بفتح الألف وضم الجيم وتشديد الراء المهملة هذه النسبة
إلى عمل الأجر وبيعه ونسبة إلى درب الأجر أيضا والمشهور
بهذا الانتساب من القدماء أبو بكر محمد بن خالد بن يزيد
الأجرى حدث عن أبي نعيم الفضل
. END OF eNass #####

```

Figure 1.14: The sample block with an updated cubaron (*Kitāb al-ansāb*). Highlighted with light blue, fuchsia and purple are the elements of textual patterns, which are used to extract required information. Based on complex regular expressions, custom highlighting schemes allow spotting sought-for information easily; the same regular expressions are used in text-mining scripts. The rubrics VOCALIZATION and DEFINITION in the cubaron contain the vocalization of the *nisba* al-Ajurī and its definition respectively. For statistical purposes, *transitional formulae* are also extracted.

and descriptions of about 5,300 events.<sup>94</sup>

Another statistic that is worth looking at is the lengths of these biographies. It would be logical to assume that the length of a biography reflects the importance of that person for the author, and, arguably, the significance of the person for Islamic history in general. If we accept that the length of a biography is proportional to protagonist's status, then, using basic methods from exploratory data analysis, we can split all the biographical records

<sup>94</sup>The actual number is most likely higher. Since my main goal was to tag biographies, I was not as rigorous tagging events as I was with biographies. Tagging can be corrected at any moment without disrupting the research process.



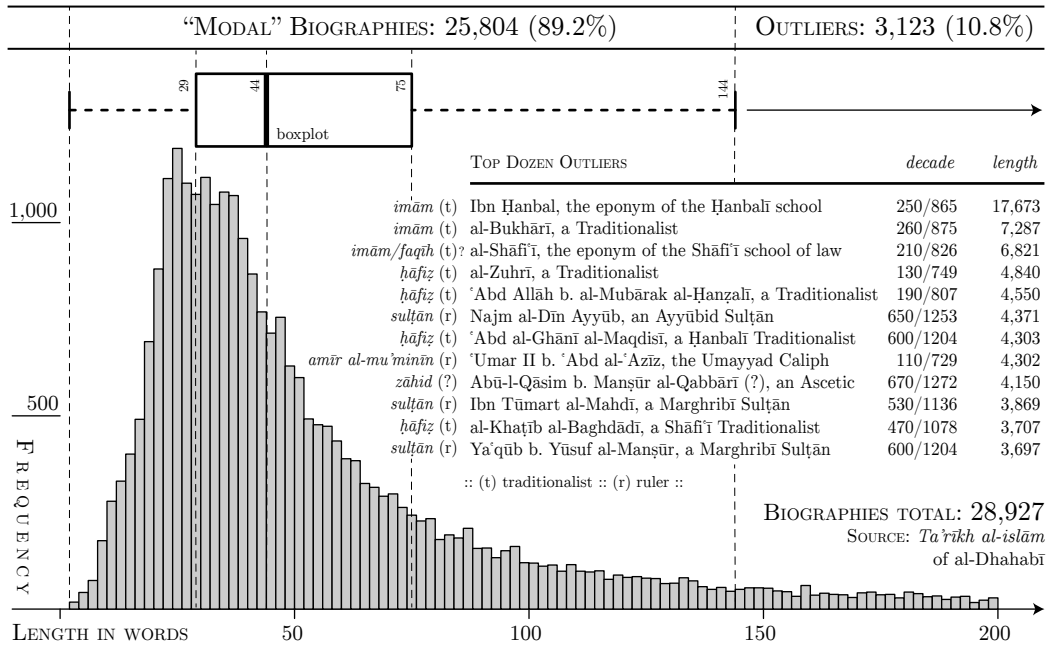


Figure 1.15: “Modal” Biographies and Biographies-Outliers in *Ta’rikh al-islām*.

from *Ta’rikh al-islām* into “modal” biographies and biographies-outliers.

The boxplot in Figure 1.15 presents the basic statistics about the distribution of lengths, while the histogram displays the shape of the distribution. Most importantly, 89% of the biographies—“modal” biographies—have fewer than 144 words (with 50% in the range from 29 to 75 words, with the median at 44), while the remaining 11% are statistical outliers. A derivative from the statistical term “mode” that refers to the most frequent value in the population, the word “modal” is used here to qualify biographies of the most typical, “average” members of élites. Biographies that belong to the remaining 11%, on the other hand, should represent cultural outliers—the most extraordinary members of élites.<sup>95</sup> Thus, “modal” biographies are most likely to contain rep-

<sup>95</sup>On cultural outliers, see MALCOLM GLADWELL, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Reprint edition (Back Bay Books, June 2011).

representative information on larger social processes in the Islamic world. At the same time, patterns discovered in the biographies of outliers—the remaining 11%—are least likely to represent élites in general and therefore should not be used for broad extrapolations.

Additionally, a close look at the biographies of outliers may help us get a better idea of al-Dhahabī's biases in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. Arguably, the longest are the biographies of individuals toward whom the author had strong emotional feelings—either positive or negative—which drove him to spend more time and effort to write long, detailed accounts. The “top dozen”<sup>96</sup> from al-Dhahabī's *Taʾrīkh al-islām* looks quite interesting (Figure 1.15). A dozen is by no means a statistically significant sample, but it should suffice to make my point.

Everybody in this dozen is a famous person, with an exception of Abū-l-Qāsim b. Maṣṣūr al-Qabbārī, an ascetic from Alexandria who is kind of a “dark horse” in this list. In terms of socio-religious roles, the list is clearly dominated by the Traditionists (7 out of 12). At the very top we have Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, followed by al-Bukhārī, and only then by Muḥammad al-Shāfiʿī, which might seem unexpected for a Shāfiʿī author who is expected to favor his own kind.<sup>97</sup> (All three are qualified primarily as *imāms*; Muḥammad al-Shāfiʿī is also qualified as *faqīh*, “jurist”). The only other Shāfiʿī on this list is al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, however, al-Dhahabī goes on for about three pages writing about him as an outstanding Traditionist before even mentioning that he was one of the most prominent Shāfiʿī jurists. Thus, if al-Dhahabī

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<sup>96</sup>Dozen has no particular meaning here. I simply tried to find a round number that could be reviewed quickly. It so happened that there are 12 biographies that are longer than 3,500 words.

<sup>97</sup>See, DE SOMOGYI (1932), ‘The *Taʾrīkh al-islām* of adh-Dhahabī’, 847.

avored any socio-religious group—however feeble this provisional conclusion may be—he favored the preservers of Prophetic traditions, not jurists. Even more interesting—in the light of al-Dhahabī’s criticism of the jurists and their inability to serve the *umma*<sup>98</sup>—is the presence of two Ḥanbalīs in this list—Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal himself and ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī, who were prominent community leaders.<sup>99</sup>

### 1.3.3.2 Step II: Dates

With the eText converted into a machine-readable format, one can start the extraction of data that can be used for more meaningful **exploratory data analysis**. The complexity of algorithms for the extraction of dates will differ depending on how dates are recorded in a given eTexts and what level of details one wants to preserve. As to the first issue, the dates can be recorded as text or as numbers; extracting numbers is much easier than extracting complex phrases and converting them into numeric values. As to the second one, in biographical dictionaries one comes across decades, years, months, days of the month, days of the week and even the time of day. Developing text-mining scripts for the extraction of such complex data is a tricky task, but not impossible, and with a lot of detailed data of this kind very unconventional research questions can be asked.

The easiest way to begin is to use the chronological division of a source in question, if it is available. Luckily, al-Dhahabī divided his “History” into

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<sup>98</sup>JAQUES (2006), *Authority*, 4.

<sup>99</sup>On the communal role of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, see: NIMROD HURVITZ, *The formation of Hanbalism: piety into power* (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

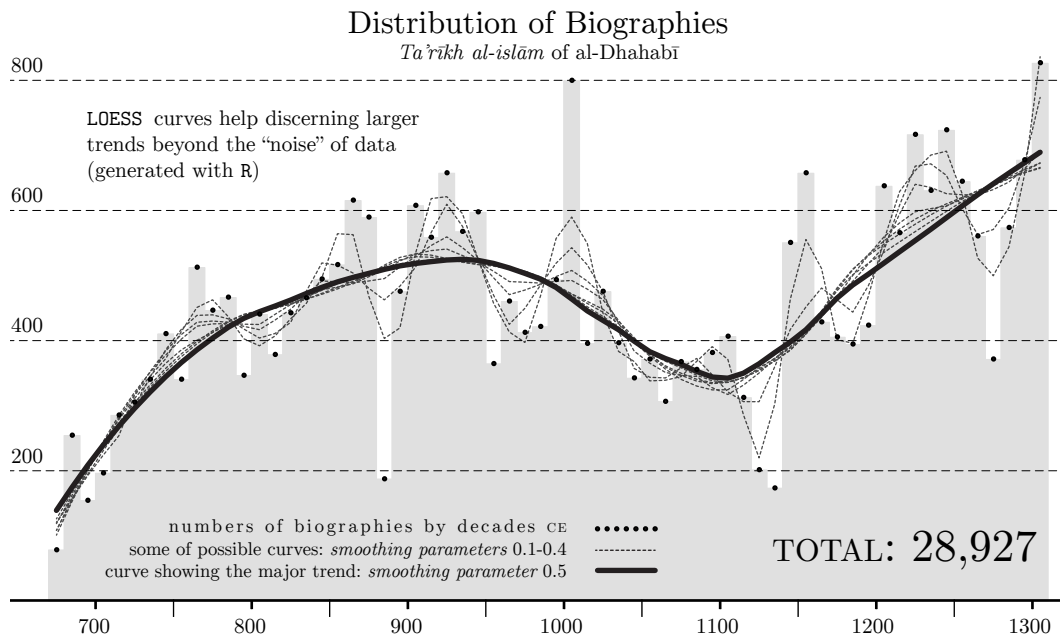


Figure 1.16: Distribution of Biographies by Decades CE.

decades, which is more than satisfactory for our current purposes. Figure 1.16 shows the histogram of this distribution of biographies and several LOESS curves that smooth out the “noise” of data allowing us to see larger trends. This curve may reflect either actual historical changes that took place in the Islamic world, or al-Dhahabī’s inability to consult other sources on earlier periods, or his bias towards certain groups which he decided to ignore for some reason, or some combination of the three.

The major curve reflects the death dates of individuals. For this reason, it makes sense to adjust the curve to the left—30 years back in time, so to speak. Thus adjusted, it will reflect the early years of those individuals who—young and daring—would have been on the lookout to seize opportunities offered by the political, religious, economic, cultural and social circumstances of their

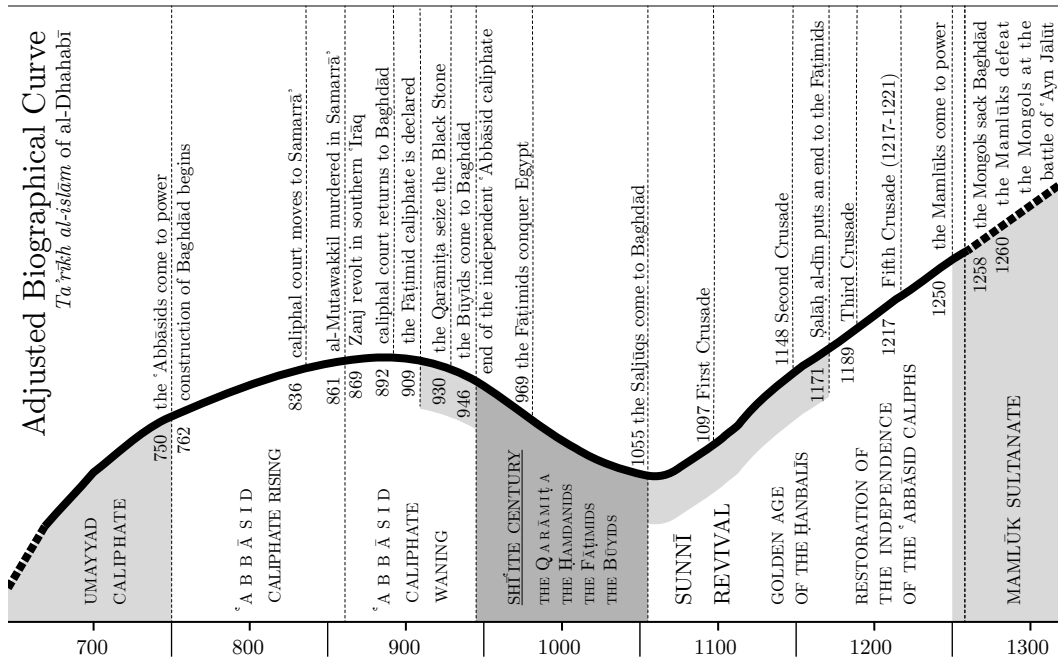


Figure 1.17: Adjusted Biographical Curve.

time. The adjusted biographical curve then should also reflect the number of these opportunities: the higher the number of opportunities, the higher the number of the individuals who could take advantage of them.

Figure 1.17 shows that the adjusted curve follows major political developments in the Muslim world: the flourishing of the 'Abbāsid caliphate, its crisis and the end of the independence of the 'Abbāsid caliphs; the Shī'ite century—the Qarāmiṭa who caused great unrest and even dared to seize the Black Stone from the Ka'ba; the Būyids who took power from the 'Abbāsids; the Fāṭimids who remained the main ideological rival of the 'Abbāsids—both real and rhetorical—until Ṣalāḥ al-dīn ended their caliphate in Cairo; the Sunnī revival—the Saljūqs, the saviors of Sunnism, who took the 'Abbāsids under their wing; the golden age of Ḥanbalism; the brief independence of the

‘Abbāsīd caliphs, followed by their final fall and the rise of the Mamlūks. Interestingly, the Shī‘īte century occupies almost the entire declining segment of the curve, while the end of the Fāṭimid dynasty marks the point where the curve returns to its highest point before the decline.<sup>100</sup> Ideally, of course, one needs to split this cumulative curve further into regional ones and to look into how they correlate with historical developments in their respective regions as well as in the Caliphate in general. I will return to regional analysis in the next part.

### 1.3.3.3 Step III: Locations

With each biography contextualized chronologically, one is ready for the next step, which is to contextualize them geographically. This task is much more complicated than the preceding ones and the most complicated issue is how one can computationally extract all meaningful toponyms from an unstructured text. This issue can be solved with methods and techniques from computational linguistics, mainly **frequency lists** and **n-grams**. While the concept of **frequency list** is quite self-explanatory, that of **n-gram** requires some clarification. In general, **n-gram** refers to a contiguous sequence of items extracted from a specific text, where **n** stands for the number of these items: **bigram** for two items, **trigram** for three, etc. **N-grams** can be used for a variety of purposes: tracing word usage, language identification, machine translation, speech recognition, spelling correction, entity detection, information

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<sup>100</sup>Anticipating things, the Shī‘īte curve—generated and adjusted in the same manner—spikes where the cumulative biographical curve drops.

extraction, etc.<sup>101</sup> Entity detection is of particular importance for current research purposes. The main idea behind such usage of **n-grams** is that the preceding words narrow down the possibilities of what the following words can be. For example, if Arabic/Persian *y-z-d* is preceded by *s-k-n*, it is a geographical entity—“he lived in [the city of] Yazd” (سَكَنَ يَزْدَ); while preceded by *l-m*, it is a verbal form—“he/it did not increase” (لَمْ يَزِدْ). This basic principle can be used to identify toponyms in classical Arabic sources heuristically (for examples of toponymic **n-grams**, see Figure 1.18).

With the toponymic data extracted one can trace how the importance of a specific place changed over time. Reviewing locations one by one, however, is not very efficient since even the top hundred will take a lot of time and will not necessarily help to see a bigger picture. The most efficient—and logical—way to study this kind of information is to put it on a series of geographical maps. This major task is composed of two smaller ones: first, one needs to collect geographical coordinates for locations on the list; second, using some kind of **geographic information system** (GIS), one needs to plot the extracted data on geographical maps. There is no ideal reference work for the first task and one has to make use of all available resources, especially when it comes to places whose location is known only approximately.<sup>102</sup> Overall, one has to use both old-fashioned references, such as Brill’s *Encyclopaedia of*

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<sup>101</sup>**N-grams** are also actively used in protein and DNA sequencing. With the appearance of **Google Ngram Viewer** humanists also began to use **n-grams** for research and teaching purposes.

<sup>102</sup>**GoogleMaps** features satellite photographs whose resolution is high enough to see rather detailed images of monuments of Islamic architecture, both those that survived and those that are in ruins (for example, one can clearly see the ruins of al-Maʾmūn’s palace about 2 miles north-east from the center of modern Bayramaly, Turkmenistan).

<i>Tarīkh al-islām</i>	<i>Kitāb al-ansāb</i>	<i>Muʿjam al-buldān</i>	<i>Hadīyat al-ʿarīfīn</i>
نزِيل	من أهل	من قرى	نزِيل
سمع بـ	سكن ~	من نواحي	توفي بـ
توفي بـ	سمع بـ	من أعمال	المتوفى بـ
حدّث بـ	من قرى	بينها وبين	ولد بـ
قدم ~	قدم ~	موضع بـ	سافر إلى
نزل ~	مات بـ	من أهل	قدم ~
من أهل	توفي بـ	بلاد ~	سكن ~
دخل ~	رحل إلى	مدينة بـ	تولّى قضاء
ولد بـ	حدّث بـ	من أرض	من قرى
رحل إلى	بنواحي	قرية بـ	القاضي بـ

Figure 1.18: Examples of Toponymic N-grams. Toponymic n-grams are phrases that immediately precede toponyms, thus serving as indicators that what follows them is most likely a toponym. N-grams can be used to identify toponymic entities heuristically, which is particularly important, since different sources will have different sets of toponyms and toponymic n-grams, as the data in the table indicate; some n-grams are not suitable for a heuristic search, since they can also be followed by the subject of the sentence (indicated by the “~” symbol).



*Islam* and *An Historical Atlas of Islam*,<sup>103</sup> and new digital resources, such as [iTouchMap.com](http://iTouchMap.com) and [GeoNames.org](http://GeoNames.org).<sup>104</sup> For the second task several GIS solutions are available.<sup>105</sup>

If a biography mentions a certain place, it implies that the subject of the biography is somehow affiliated with that place; some, in fact many, biographies mention more than one place. The maps that will follow consider all of such locations. It is logical to assume that prominent places are mentioned more often, since they offered more opportunities of an economic, political or religious nature.

Evenly spaced across the entire period 41–700 AH/662–1301 CE, the following series of four maps visualizes the frequencies of the top hundred toponyms mentioned in biographies of al-Dhahabī’s *Taʾrīkh al-islām*: almost 13,000 biographies (44.4%); altogether these locations are mentioned in slightly over 25,000 biographies.<sup>106</sup>

Figure 1.19 shows the period 41–70 AH/662–690 CE, the earliest three

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<sup>103</sup>WILLIAM C. BRICE, ‘An Historical atlas of Islam’ (1981); and its later, digital manifestation edited by Hugh Kennedy, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu>; also: ḤUSAYN MUʿNIS, *Atlas taʾrīkh al-islām* (al-Qāhira: al-Zahrāʾ lil-islām al-ʿarabī, 1987).

<sup>104</sup>I prepared a detailed manual on how to search for coordinates for a Timemap assignment within the course on “The First Millennium of the Islamic Near East (600–1600 CE)” taught by Professor Michael Bonner at the University of Michigan, Fall 2012. Available at <http://alraqmiyyat.org>.

<sup>105</sup>I relied on R, a free and open-source statistical software with GIS capabilities. I could not have done the coding for this part without Benjamin Schmidt’s post “Wide World of Physics” at his blog “Sapping Attention” (<http://sappingattention.blogspot.com>) and the help of Missy Plegue at the Center for Statistical Consultation and Research (CSCAR), University of Michigan, who helped me to make sense of the code written by Benjamin Schmidt.

<sup>106</sup>Only biographies that mention these places are been counted, i.e. if a certain place is mentioned several times in a specific biography it is counted only once. This is an important detail, since otherwise the picture might be quite different.

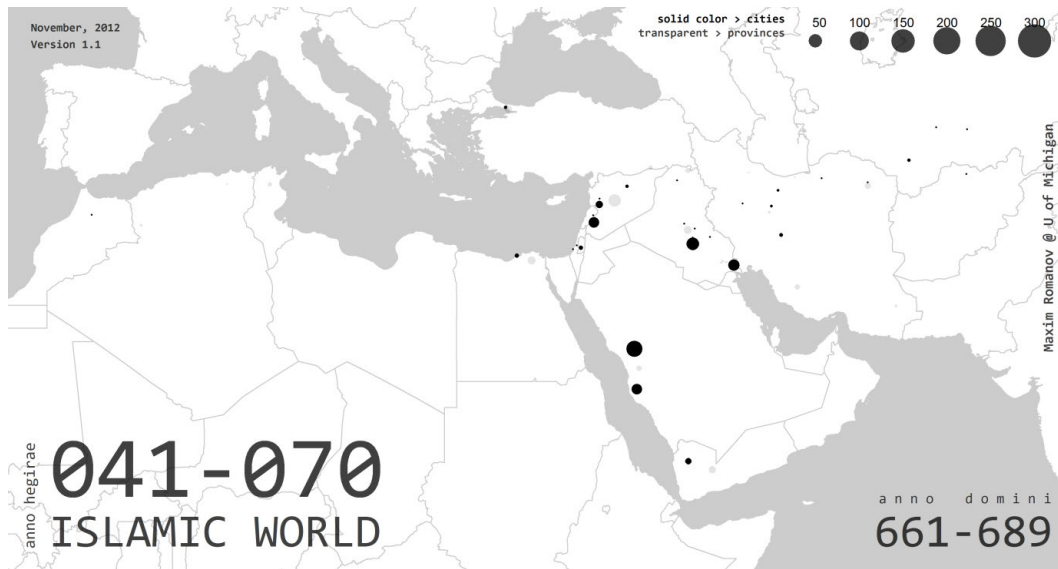


Figure 1.19: Top 100 Toponyms: 41–70 AH/662–690 CE.

decades from the section of *Taʿrīkh al-islām* under consideration. One can clearly see the major centers: Mecca, Medina, Basra, Kufa and, to a lesser extent, Damascus. The empire grows eastward toward northern Iran and Central Asia, but the cities in those regions are not prominent yet. This will change soon.

Two centuries later, 241–270 AH/856–884 CE (Figure 1.20), both northern Iran and Central Asia gain prominence. Greater Syria, al-Shām, is now more visible on the map of the Islamic world. Nothing significant seems to be going on in the Iberian Peninsula, the Maghrib and Egypt (Miṣr). Former centers—Medina, Basra and Kufa—begin to lose their prominence; Mecca will suffer least because of its sacred status for the entire Islamic community. Yet, all these cities are dwarfed in comparison to Baghdad, the capital of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate which is about to plunge into the turmoil of disintegration. This dis-

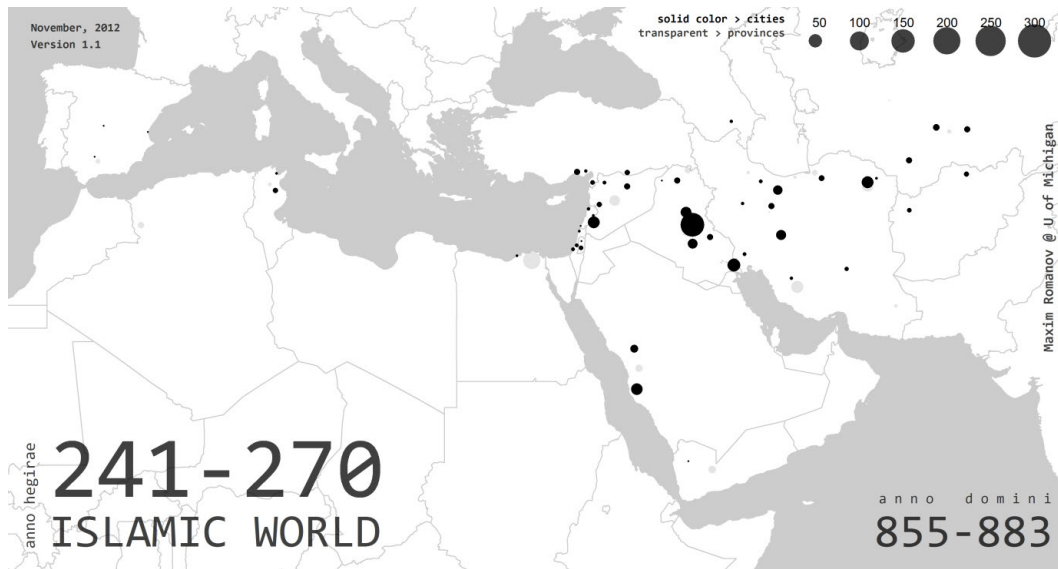


Figure 1.20: Top 100 Toponyms: 241–270 AH/856–884 CE.

integration seems to have significantly affected the numbers of notable people in al-Dhahabī’s “History,” for a few decades later the number of biographies drops significantly and returns to its previous highest point only about two centuries later (See, Figure 1.17 above).

Another two centuries later, 441–470 AH/1050–1078 CE (Figure 1.21), Islamic Spain (al-Andalus) is clearly visible on the map. The western and northern parts of al-ʿAwāšim<sup>107</sup> are reconquered by the Byzantine Empire in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. The temporary capital of the ʿAbbāsīd empire, Sāmarrāʾ, practically disappears after the court is moved back to Baghdād. The rule of the Būyids negatively affects Iraq, while most part of Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan continue to flourish during this period of the rise of the Saljūqs.

<sup>107</sup>A region at the western part of the modern border between Turkey and Syria.

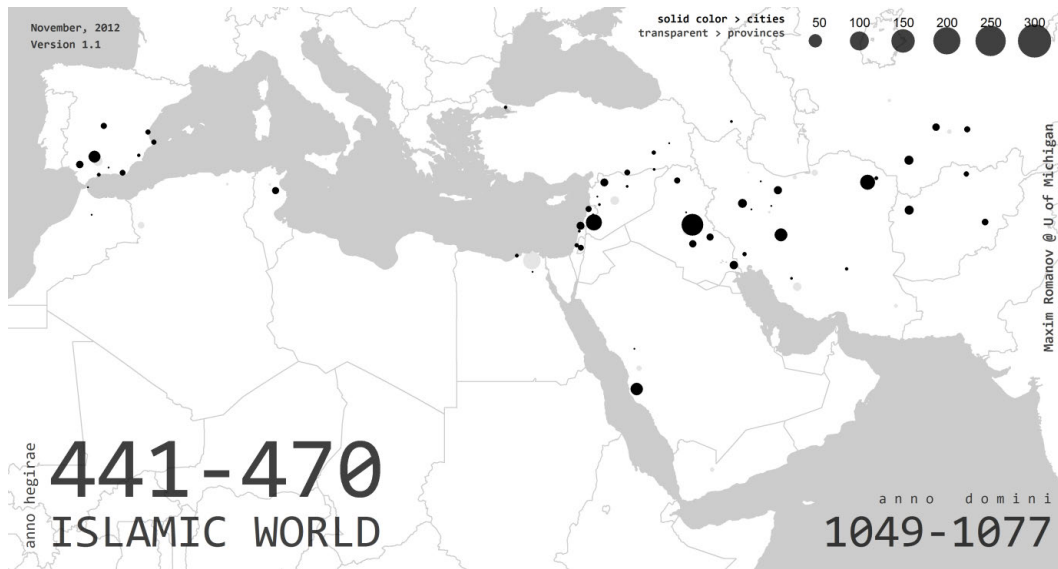


Figure 1.21: Top 100 Toponyms: 441–470 AH/1050–1078 CE.

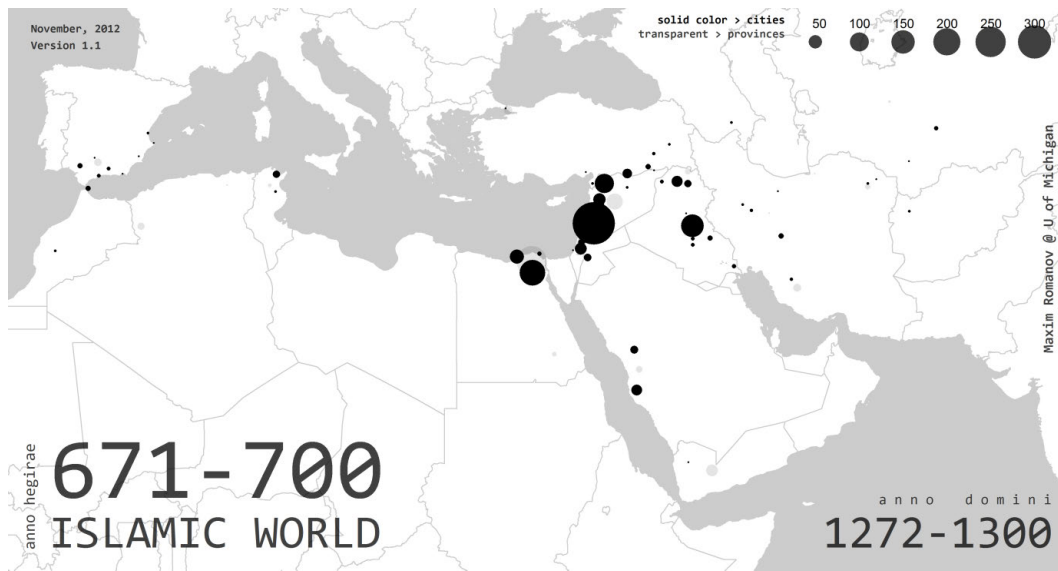


Figure 1.22: Top 100 Toponyms: 671–700 AH/1273–1301 CE.

The end of the period, 671–700 AH/1273–1301 CE (Figure 1.22), is drastically different. Spain is being erased from the map of the Islamic world by the ongoing Reconquista. Having flourished in the earlier periods, the eastern

lands of the Muslim world—Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan—fade away in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions. Still a prominent spot on the map, Baghdād will never recover from the Mongol sack of 1258 CE and by the last decade covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* it will shrink into a tiny dot. Consolidated under the Ayyūbids, Syria is now the seat of a new power—the Mamlūks, the saviors of the Islamic world from the Mongol menace. Under Mamlūk rule, Egypt appears prominently on the map—with Cairo ready to become the next major center of the Islamic world.

These are just four maps and they hardly do justice to the toponymic data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. The best way to visualize these maps is to animate them, which will allow to bring out the dynamics of change. The animated map of these data—50 SECONDS OF ISLAMIC HISTORY—can be found online at <http://alraqmiyyat.org> (see, “Dissertation Appendices”).<sup>108</sup>

Interpretation of these toponymic data is tricky and this explanation is just a preliminary attempt at weaving them into a bigger picture. It is worth noting, however, that the toponymic data from the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* are quite similar to the representation of the Islamic world in *Shadharāt al-dhahab* of Ibn ʿImad (d. 1089/1678 CE).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Like static maps, each frame shows three decades AH with each following map overlapping with the previous two, i.e. frame 1 shows 41–70 AH; frame 2: 51–80 AH; frame 3: 61–90 AH, etc. It is worth watching this visualization more than once, each time concentrating on a specific region.

<sup>109</sup>See, Graph I in: BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*, 8. Ibn ʿImad’s biographical collection covers the entire first millennium of Islamic history, but includes only ≈8,500 biographies, of which only ≈6,100 provide information on the places of origin of their subjects. Ibn ʿImad was also a Damascene, but he spent a lot of time in Cairo; unlike al-Dhahabī, he belonged to the Ḥanbalī school of law.

#### 1.3.3.4 Step IV: Descriptive Names

In combination with the already available variables, heuristically extracted “descriptive names” will help us obtain insights into different tribal, religious, occupational and other groups that flourished in the Islamic world. Just as geographical maps were helpful for the visualization of top hundred toponyms over time, word clouds will help us to deal with large numbers of “descriptive names.” The principle of the word cloud is quite simple: the more frequent the word, the larger it is in the cloud. One of the most efficient tools for generating word clouds, **Wordle**<sup>110</sup> is a very effective exploratory tool that allows the user to get quick insights into large quantities of text. With temporal, toponymic and onomastic data already extracted, one can zoom in to any group of individuals that can be described with these kinds of data: specific legal school, specific “secular” occupation, specific region, specific period or some combination of the above. By looking into the co-occurrences of “descriptive names” one can get a good idea of the composition of the entire group.

For now, however, let’s take a broad look at the identities of notable Muslims and how they changed over time. Figure 1.23 shows that the majority of Muslims during the period of 41–140 AH/662–758 CE were strongly affiliated with the cities of Kufa (al-Kūfī), Medina (al-Madanī) and Basra (al-Baṣrī); to a lesser extent with Mecca (al-Makkī) and the Syrian cities of Damascus (al-Dimashqī) and Homs (al-Ḥimṣī), and also with Egypt in general (al-Miṣrī).

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<sup>110</sup>This free online tool, <http://www.wordle.net/>, has already become the subject of over a dozen academic articles that explore how it can benefit both teaching and research. **Wordle** creates aesthetically pleasing visualizations of quantitative data without the use of numbers; the latter must have been the selling point for the humanists, who usually do not have “a head for numbers.”



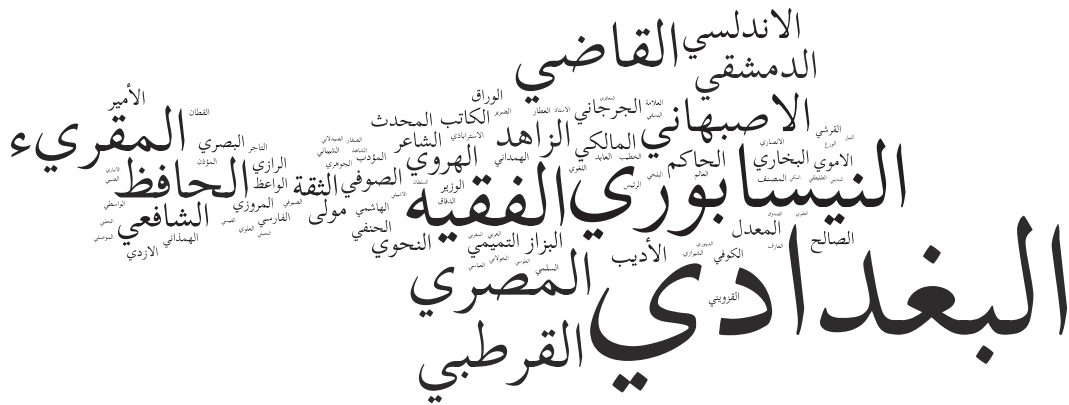


Figure 1.24: The Wordle of Islamic Names (321–420 AH/934–1030 CE).

edge is marginally reflected in Muslim names (al-Qāḍī, al-Faqīh); a word such as *amīr*, “commander,” seems to emphasize the military nature of the early Islamic community.

The overall situation in the middle of our period, 321–420 AH/934–1030 CE (Figure 1.24), is quite different. First of all, the geography of names has changed: while a significant number of Muslims are now strongly affiliated with Baghdād (al-Baghdādī), one can also see a significant presence of other regions: Iran with its cities of Nishapur (al-Naysābūrī), Isfahan (al-Isbāhanī), Herat (al-Harawī), Rayy (al-Rāzī), Merw (al-Marwazī) and many others; Spain (al-Andalusī) with Cordoba (al-Qurṭubī); Syria with Damascus (al-Dimashqī), and Egypt—still without any specific cities (al-Miṣrī).

While tribal identities fade away, religious knowledge becomes an essential part of Islamic identity. In addition to jurists (al-Faqīh) and judges (al-Qāḍī), who became much more prominent in this period, one can clearly see reciters of the Qurʾān (al-Muqrīʿ), “preservers” and transmitters of the Prophetic tradition (al-Ḥāfiẓ, al-Muḥaddith, al-Thiqa), pietists of all kinds (al-Zāhid, al-Ṣāliḥ,





again: Damascus and Baghdad are the main cities of this period. Greater Syria with its numerous cities is now the most prominent region. The importance of Egypt (al-Miṣrī) is growing together with its city of Alexandria (al-Iskandarānī). Muslim Spain continues to fade away, while the eastern provinces practically disappear.

Religious identities are now expressed primarily through affiliation with legal schools—al-Shāfiʿī, al-Ḥanbalī, al-Ḥanafī, al-Mālikī. Piety becomes an even more important part of Islamic identity (al-Ṣāliḥ, al-Zāhid, al-ʿĀbid); one can also see that mysticism (al-Ṣūfī) gains momentum. The importance of religious knowledge is still expressed through jurisprudence (al-Qāḍī, al-Faqīh), recitation of the *Qurʾān* (al-Muqrīʿ) and transmission of the Prophetic tradition (al-Muḥaddith, al-Ḥāfiz), but the priorities seem to have shifted. The lineage of the Prophet and his close companions—al-Anṣārī, al-Qurashī and al-Sharīf—becomes a significant part of social capital. In the previous period, “public preachers” (al-Wāʿiz) were quite prominent, but now they disappear, passing the baton to Friday-preachers (al-Khaṭīb). Such names as al-Amīr, “commander,” and al-Sulṭān, “sultan,” seem to reflect the contribution of the military élites—the Zangids, Ayyūbids and Mamlūks—to the religious and social life of the Islamic community.

# Chapter 2

## Modeling Geography & Society

### 2.1 Geography

#### 2.1.1 Modeling Geography

The *Taʾrīkh al-islām* covers a rather long period and a rather large territory. In order to make analysis effective it is necessary to split this information into manageable subsets. Newly available computational techniques allow [re-]grouping spatial data in a flexible and efficient manner. The division of the Islamic world that I propose here is tentative, since both pre-modern Islamic men of learning and modern Western scholars often have different opinions (or none at all) regarding each and every location; additionally, some places could have belonged to different provinces during different periods. In modeling toponymic hierarchy I have relied primarily on *Muʿjam al-buldān*, *Kitāb al-ansāb*, and relevant articles from Brill's *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. This is hardly sufficient and, ideally, there should be another model in place, that

should be built on data from the wide range of Arabic geographical<sup>1</sup> and historical sources and that should account for a number of different parameters, including time and cost of travel between different places through all probable routes. With such a model of the Islamic world in place it will be possible to establish heuristically the natural boundaries among different regions, which should lead in turn to a better understanding of the historical dynamics of the Islamic world in general.<sup>2</sup> What follows is a first step in this direction.

The color-coded map on Figure 2.1 shows that places belonging to different provinces<sup>3</sup> form clusters with colored bubbles shaping the extent of each province more effectively than most conventional maps. This division, however, is too complex; besides, not every province in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* is represented with the same level of details, so it makes sense to further re-group these provinces into analytical regions. This should allow us to see patterns where data are scarce, and to get a more nuanced picture where data are overly abundant.

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<sup>1</sup>Such as, for example, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʾrifat al-aqālīm* of al-Muqaddasī (4/10<sup>th</sup> century)—as well as other specimens of the “the routes and the realms” genre (*al-mamālik wa-l-masālik*), which contain detailed descriptions of provinces and often estimate “time costs” of travels between different locations.

<sup>2</sup>Implemented in ORBIS, these features allowed Walter Scheidel to demonstrate that “the formation and eventual partitioning and disintegration of the Roman Empire were broadly consistent with cost constraints.” See: WALTER SCHEIDEL, ‘The shape of the Roman world’, *Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics*, 041306.

<sup>3</sup>Some locations do not clearly belong to any specific province. These are situated in “empty regions” between provinces and serve as connecting hubs on the way from one to another. For example, ‘Aydhāb on the African side of the Red sea shore that connects Egypt with al-Ḥijāz; Ayla and Tābūq that connect Syria and al-Ḥijāz; Fayd on the way between Iraq and al-Ḥijāz; and Ṭabas—between Khurāsān and Fārs; Zawīla (or Zuwayla, which actually belongs to Fazzān) and Tāhart on the way to Sub-Saharan Africa. I have provisionally clustered such locations with what seemed to be the closest province. Some closely located provinces are grouped and only one name is displayed on the map: Jīlān is grouped with al-Daylam, Ṭabaristān with Qūmis, Jurjān with Dihistān (all in northern Iran); al-Urdunn is grouped with Filasṭīn (modern Jordan, Israel and Palestine).

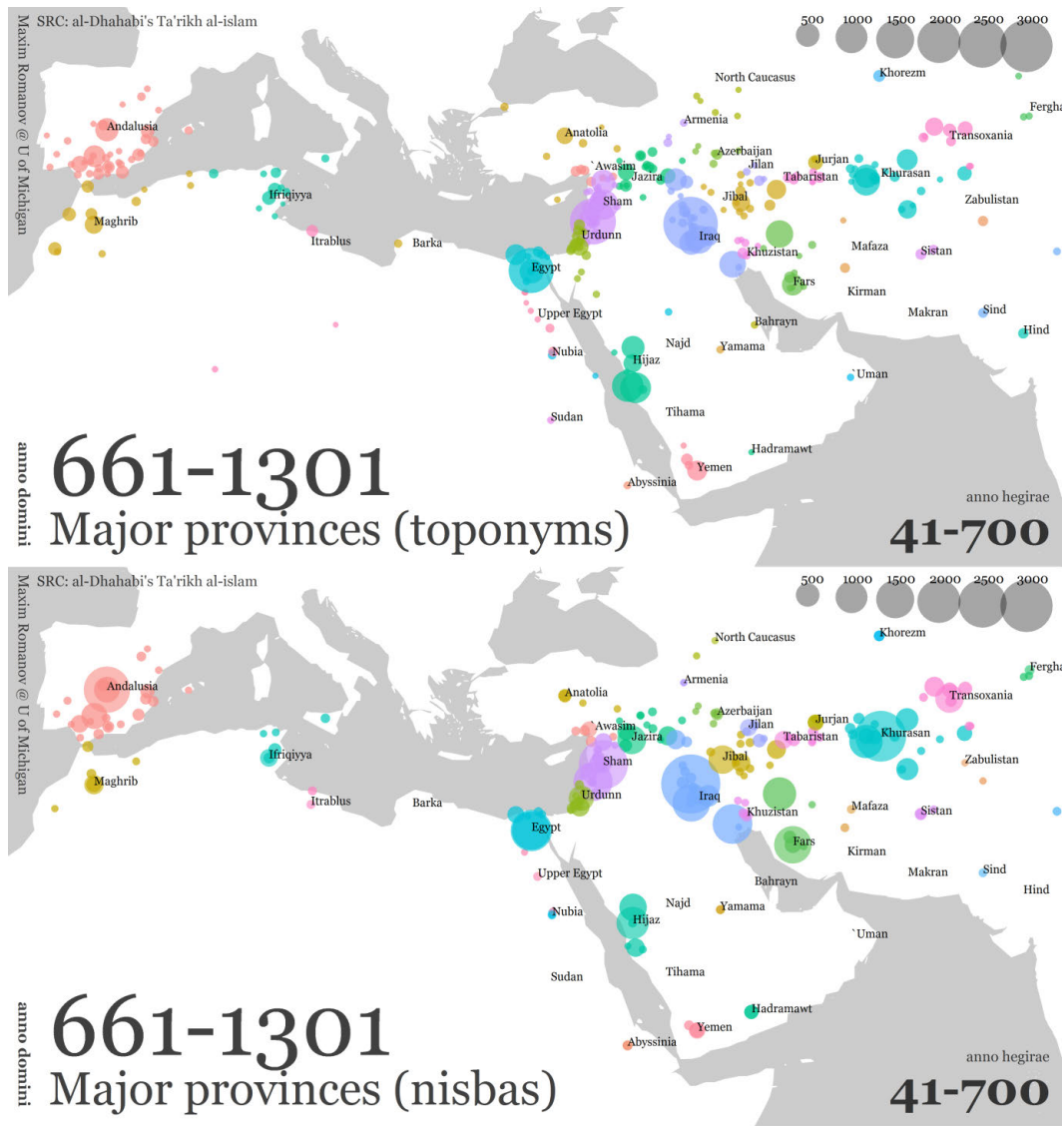


Figure 2.1: Major Provinces in *Ta'rikh al-islām*. The upper map is based on the frequencies of toponyms mentioned in biographies (all toponyms that are mentioned in at least 5 biographies are considered). The lower map is based on the frequencies of toponymic *nisbas* (all *nisbas* that are mentioned in the onomastic sections of at least 10 biographies are considered). The size of each bubble is proportional to the number of biographies that mention specific locations or *nisbas*.

Figure 2.2 shows the division into clusters that will be used in further analysis. Some clusters correspond to single provinces, while others combine

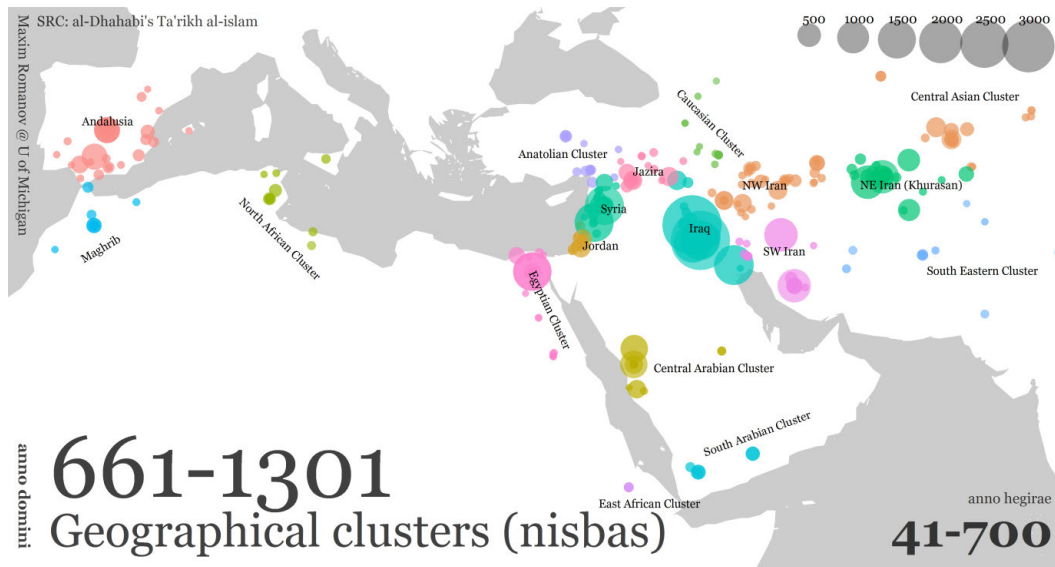


Figure 2.2: Regional Clusters in *Ta'rikh al-Islām*. Compound clusters that include multiple provinces are explained in the Table 2.3.

multiple regions. These clusters are described in Table 2.3.

Figure 2.4 visualizes the proportional representation of regional clusters on a chronological graph. Although the graph makes clear that with the data stretched over the entire period some regions become barely visible, it is well worth keeping distant regions separate from each other. For example, the East African Cluster appears as something of an overstatement, considering how few data on this region are available in *Ta'rikh al-Islām*. However, if one takes a closer look<sup>4</sup> one can notice that there is a minor presence of that cluster in the early period—most likely due to connections with Abyssinia (al-Ḥabasha) in the pre-Medinan period of Muḥammad's mission—and a more noticeable presence due to the influx of African slaves (and eunuchs, in particular) into the military and administrative élites of the period of 500–700 AH/1107–1301 CE.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>If you are reading a PDF, you need to zoom in to notice this particular cluster.

<sup>5</sup>Most frequent *nisbas* that co-occur with al-Ḥabashī, “Abyssinian,” for this period are

<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Provinces</b>
North African Cluster	Şiqilliya (Sicily), Ifriqiya, Iṭrabulūs, Barqa (Barka)
Egyptian Cluster	Miṣr (Lower Egypt), al-Saʿid (Upper Egypt), al-Nūba (Nubia)
East African Cluster	al-Sūdān (Sudan), al-Ḥabasha (Abyssinia)
South Arabian Cluster	Tihāma, al-Yaman, Ḥaḍramawt, ʿUmān
Central Arabian Cluster	al-Ḥijāz, al-Yamāma, Najd, al-Baḥrayn
Anatolian Cluster	al-Rūm (Anatolia), al-ʿAwāṣim
Caucasian Cluster	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Arrān, the North Caucasus
SW Iran[ian Cluster]	Khuzistān/al-Ahwāz, Fārs
NW Iran[ian Cluster]	al-Jibāl (Media), Jīlān, al-Daylam, Ṭabaristān, Jurjān, Quhistān, Dihistān, Qūmis
NE Iran[ian Cluster]	Khurāsān
Central Asian Cluster	Mā warāʾ al-nahr (Transoxania), Khwārizm (Khorezm), Farghāna (the Ferghana valley)
South Eastern Cluster	al-Mafāza (SE Iran), Kirmān (SE Iran), Makrān (SE Iran), Sī[jī]stān (SE Iran), Zābulistān (Afghanistan), al-Sind (Pakistan), Hind (India)

Figure 2.3: Compound Clusters in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. Ideally, there should be a flexible algorithm allowing to re-regroup geographical data into clusters that represent different periods more precisely.

Undeniably, this is a minor detail within the big picture, but keeping such clusters separate<sup>6</sup> will help us in tracing geographical connections within the Islamic world.

*khādīm* and *ṭawāshī* (both are euphemisms for “eunuch”), and *amīr*, “commander.”

<sup>6</sup>And, perhaps, “orphan” locations as well.

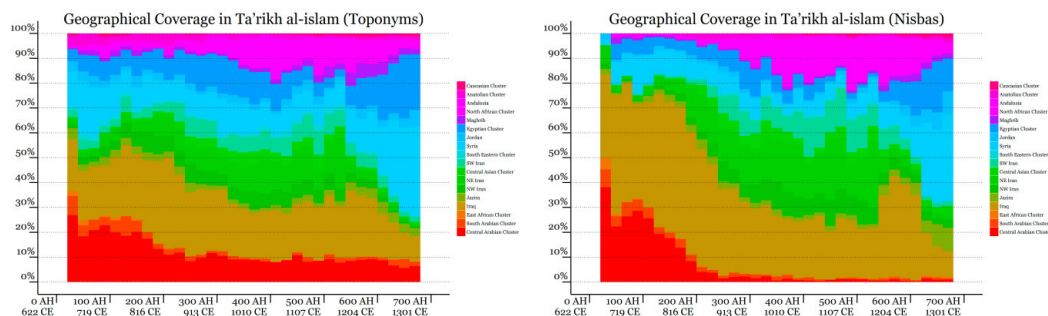


Figure 2.4: Proportional representation of regional clusters in *Ta'rikh al-Islām*. The graphs show the proportional representation of regional clusters based on toponyms (left) and toponymic *nisbas* (right).

Differences in proportions between toponyms and toponymic *nisbas* that represent the same region reflect the volume of traffic to/from that region: the traffic is inbound if more biographies mention toponyms than toponymic *nisbas*, and outbound if otherwise. Although this graph is not an efficient way to analyze migration traffic (graphs and maps based on absolute numbers will be more efficient), the Central Arabian Cluster will help to illustrate the point. The numbers of individuals coming from this region—mainly from the two sacred cities of Mecca and Medina—drops very significantly from almost 40% in the beginning of our period to about 2-3% around 250/865 CE and remains at this level till the end of the period; yet the number of individuals visiting these places—for pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) and pious sojourn (*mujāwara*)—remains within 8-9%, dropping only slightly at the very end of the period.

## 2.1.2 Regional Representation

Figure 2.5 shows the chronological representation of each geographical cluster in absolute numbers (top) and in density of distribution of data points (bot-



tom), which are useful for determining peaks of data. The representation of several clusters is rather insignificant. These are mostly regions on the margins of the Islamic world of our period—the further they are from the core the less visible they are on the graph. The only exceptions are Andalusia and Central Asia. The former is well represented due to its thriving and largely independent scholarly culture, while the second is mainly due to its integration into the core through northeastern Iran (Khurāsān). The well-represented clusters can be divided into three major categories of early, middle and late bloomers.

Quite understandably, central Arabia, the cradle of Islam, is most prominent in the early period. However, its rapid decline begins around 100/719 CE and by 250/865 CE this region is diminished to a marginal province. Major urban centers<sup>7</sup> of this region are, quite predictably, Mecca/Makka and Medina/al-Madīna—homes to 268 and 794<sup>8</sup> individuals respectively. Medina’s status as capital is clearly visible.

The center moves to Iraq early on and stays there for the most of the period covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. Iraq is rivaled in prominence only by Iran, with all its clusters combined. The rapid growth of Iraq comes to the end around 250/865 CE. During this period its prominent urban centers are Basra/al-Baṣra (1665 individuals) and Kufa/al-Kufa (1515 individuals); however, they are soon dwarfed by Baghdad—the new caliphal capital—and practically disappear from the social map of the Islamic world by around 300/913 CE.

Baghdad (3895 individuals—the highest number!) remains the dominant

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<sup>7</sup>In this section, major urban centers are homes to at least one hundred individuals.

<sup>8</sup>This number includes some false positives, since *nisba* al-Madani may occasionally refer to cities other than Medina; this, however, does not affect the curve.

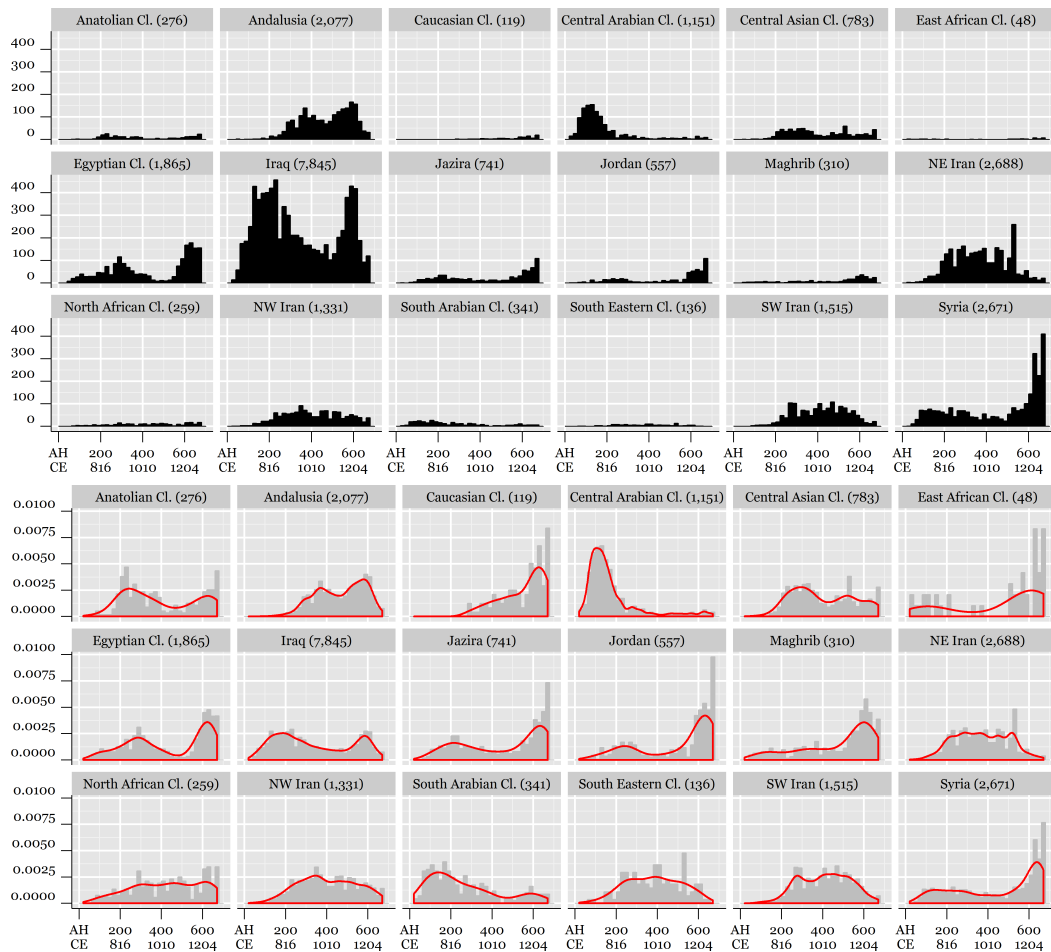


Figure 2.5: Chronological representation of geographical clusters in *Ta'riḫ al-Islām*: absolute numbers (top) and density plots (bottom).

urban center not only for Iraq, but for the entire Islamic world even after the ‘Abbāsids lose their grip on power. Even more so, Baghdad’s peak as an urban center actually occurs around 585/1190 CE. Starting around 200/816 CE the province of Iraq goes into clearly visible decline, although the number of scholars there still remains quite significant if compared to other regions. Roughly 480/1088 CE is the beginning of recovery for Iraq, which goes

again into decline about 100 lunar years later. By the end of the period, Iraqi élites drastically decrease in numbers, practically disappearing from the social map of the Islamic world. Conventionally, the Mongol invasion is considered the main cause, but, in fact, the ranks of the Iraqi élites start thinning before that.<sup>9</sup> Other major urban centers are Wāsiṭ (401) and Mosul/al-Mawṣil (313).

With Khurāsān in the lead, Iranian clusters begin to gain prominence between 100/719 CE and 200/816 CE. Northeastern Iran does not have a clear peaking point; instead, its curve reaches its highest point quite quickly around 200/816 CE and remains there, fluctuating slightly, for over three centuries, and then, after 520/1127 CE, it goes into rapid decline. It takes longer for northwestern Iran to reach its peak—around 350/962 CE—and then it slowly goes down. Unlike northeastern Iran, it is still visible on the maps of the Islamic world by the end of our period. The curve of southwestern Iran is somewhat similar to that of northeastern Iran, although its curve reaches its highest point around 280/894 CE, then goes into a temporary decline during the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, recovers by 400/1010 CE and begins to go down slowly, increasing its pace of decline around 520/1127 CE. The major urban centers are: Nishapur/Naysābūr (1,105), Merv/Marw [al-shāhijān] (452), Herat/Harāt (424), Balkh (171) and Ṭūs (136) in northeastern Iran (Khurāsān); Rey/al-Rayy (280), Hamadhān (254) and Qazwīn (118) in northwestern Iran; and Isfahan/Iṣḥāḥān (1,124) and Shīrāz (100) in southwestern Iran. All the Ira-

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<sup>9</sup>For example, the number of Baghdadis drops very significantly before the Mongol sack of the capital city. Number of death reported for the 20 lunar year periods after 600/1204 CE: 244 for 600–620 AH/1204–1224 CE; 256 for 621–640 AH/1225–1243 CE; 98 for 641–660 AH/1244–1262 CE (the Mongols sack Baghdad in 656/1259 CE); 27 for 661–680 AH/1263–1282 CE; 51 for 681–700 AH/1283–1301 CE. See, APPENDICES: TOPONYMIC *Nisbas*, *nisba* al-Baghdādī.

nian clusters practically come to naught by the end of the period covered in *Taʿrīkh al-islām*.

The two-peaked curve of the last “middle bloomer,” al-Andalus, seems to correspond to the zenith of the Umayyad caliphate around 380/991 CE followed by its disintegration and the recovery under the Almoravids and the Almohads, beginning around 470/1078 CE and peaking around 590/1195 CE; after that Andalusia is erased from the map of the Islamic world by the Christian Reconquista. The major Andalusian urban centers are Cordova/Qurṭuba (633), Seville/Ishbīliya (248) and Valencia/Balansiyya (141).

The “late bloomers” form what can be considered as one continuous macro-region stretching from the Jazīra (Upper Mesopotamia) in the north, through Syria (al-Shām) and Jordan (al-Urdunn), to Egypt (Miṣr) in the south. The presence of these regions rises noticeably after 500/1107 CE. All these regions also have their peaks of prominence—around 100/719 CE for Syria, around 200/816 CE for the Jazīra and Jordan, and around 300/913 CE for Egypt, followed by equally noticeable decline until around 500/1107 CE. The major urban centers are as follows: Ḥarrān (224) in the Jazīra; Damascus/Dimashq (1,769), Homs/Ḥimṣ (268), Aleppo/Ḥalab (231) and Hamah/Ḥamā (103) in Syria; Jerusalem/al-Quds (315) in Jordan; and Alexandria/al-Iskandariyya (211) in Egypt. By the end of the main period covered in the *Taʿrīkh al-islām*, Syria is the new center of the Islamic world.

### 2.1.3 *Taʾrīkh al-islām* vs. *Shadharāt al-dhahab*

Concluding this chapter, I would like to offer a look at al-Dhahabī’s data from a different perspective. In his study of conversion, Bulliet prepared a chart of regional representation in Ibn ʿImad’s *Shadharāt al-dhahab*. Using computational methods, al-Dhahabī’s data can be regrouped in a similar manner for comparison. Figure 2.6 shows both graphs.<sup>10</sup>

The similarities between these two sources are striking, to say the least, especially if we consider that the biography count in these sources differs most significantly: over 30,000 biographies in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* for the period of 700 lunar years (about 74% individuals with toponymic *nisbas*) versus about 8500 biographies in *Shadharāt al-dhahab* for the period of 1000 lunar years (about 72% individuals with identifiable places of origin for the period of 100–1000 AH/719–1592 CE).<sup>11</sup>

The comparative chart shows that these two vast biographical collections, which were composed by individuals who lived over three centuries apart and belonged to different ideological camps, tell us the same story about the regional development of the Islamic world—the story that “does appear to correspond rather closely to the generally accepted course of Islamic history.”<sup>12</sup> These findings should tip the scales in favor of the idea that medieval Arabic

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<sup>10</sup>Bulliet’s chart is slightly modified: regions are colored to match those on the chart for *Taʾrīkh al-islām*; additionally, periods not covered in both source are faded out. The original graph can be found in: BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*, 8.

<sup>11</sup>Bulliet noted the same kind of similarity between *Shadharāt al-dhahab* and *Kitāb al-ibar fī khabar man ghabar*, another al-Dhahabī’s book. See, *Ibid.*, 13. Unfortunately, I do not have any quantitative data for this source to further comparison.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

biographical collections represent historical reality.

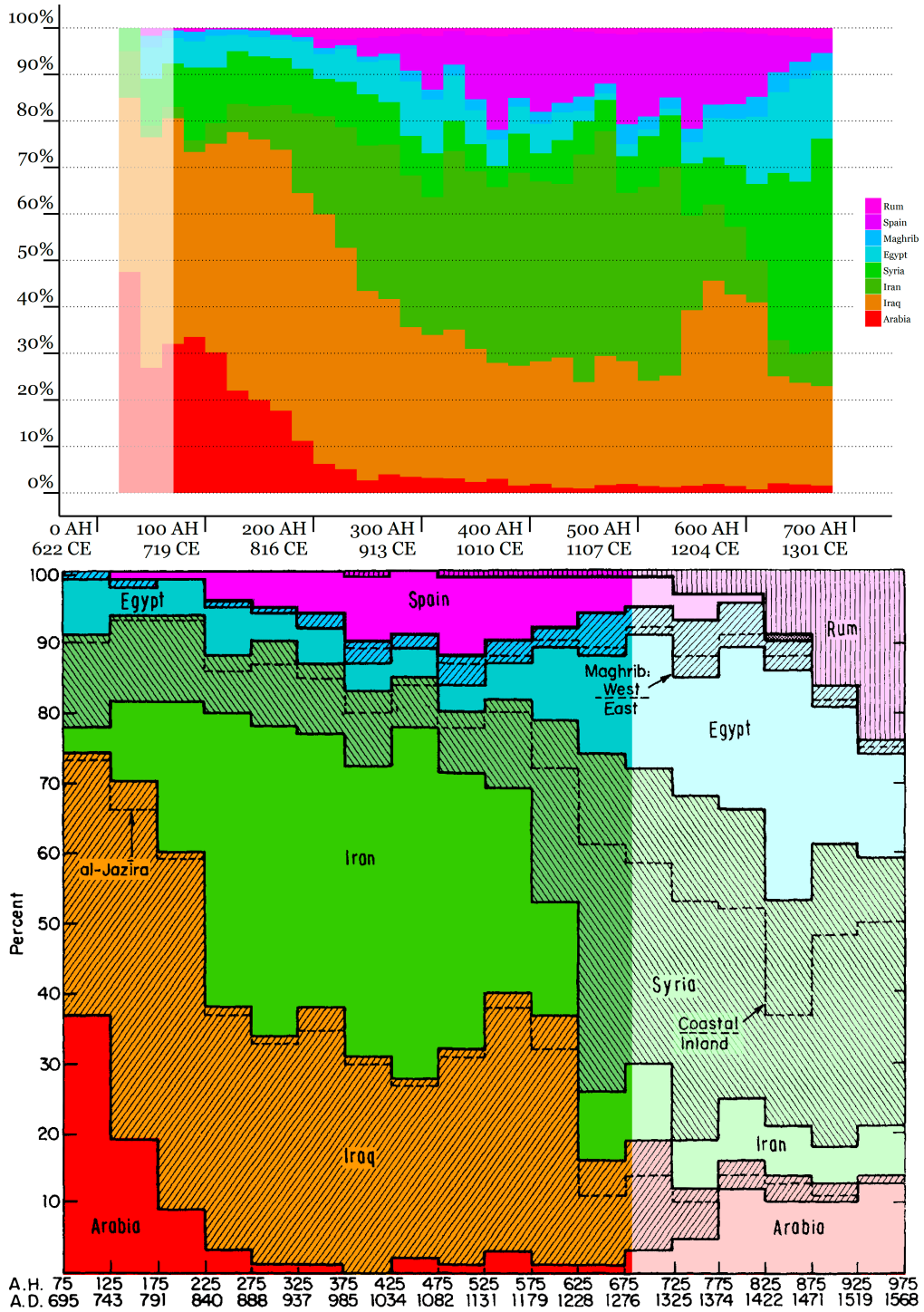


Figure 2.6: Proportional Representation of Regions in *Tārīkh al-islām* and *Shadharāt al-dhahab*. Bulliet's graph (bottom) is slightly modified.

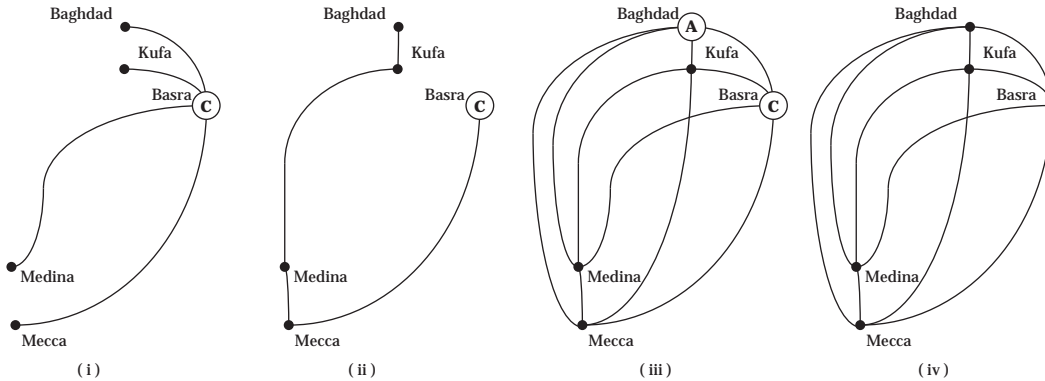


Figure 2.7: Models for geographical connections: dots are locations;  $\textcircled{C}$  stands for the central geographical location;  $\textcircled{A}$ —for an additional central geographical point.

## 2.2 Connections

### 2.2.1 Modeling Connections

Places mentioned in the biography of a particular individual can be connected in a graph that represents this individual’s geographical network. Placing such a graph on a geographical map will give us a clear idea of that network.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2.7 shows possible ways of modeling the geographical connections of an individual. Subfigure (i) displays a model where the “central geographical point” ( $\textcircled{C}$ ) is connected to all other locations mentioned in a biography. the central geographical point here is a location referred to in a given individual’s toponymic *nisba*: in a given example, the biography of certain individual from Basra also mentions Kufa, Baghdad, Medina and Mecca. Subfigure (ii) is another possibility: these connections take into account a given individual’s itinerary. The obvious problem with these models is that toponymic *nisbas* are

<sup>13</sup>Again, if an individual simply maintained correspondence with some person from a particular place, it is a stronger connection than no connection at all.



not given for each and every individual, which makes determining the central point problematic. The first toponym mentioned in a biography can be used as the central point when toponymic *nisbas* are lacking, but this is likely to negatively affect the precision of a model. Besides, establishing an itinerary computationally is problematic: one can use the order in which toponyms are mentioned in a biography, but there is hardly any guarantee that this order actually reflects how a given individual visited these places (especially when they are simply listed and no other details are provided). Subfigures **(iii)** & **(iv)** offer a more balanced alternative. Arguably, by maintaining connections with different locations, an individual brings them all together and Subfigure **(iii)** shows that all locations can be treated as interconnected. In a case where a certain individual's toponymic *nisba* is known, it can be added to the graph as a central point ((c)) and additional toponymic *nisbas* can be accommodated as well ((a)). In cases where no toponymic *nisba* is given, one can still graph the connections as shown on Subfigure **(iv)**.<sup>14</sup>

Modeled in such a manner, the geographical networks of individuals can then be aggregated into a cumulative network that will shed light on how the entire Islamic world stayed connected and how connections between regions changed over time.<sup>15</sup> The compound geographical network can be further divided into subsets representing specific combinations of periods, regions and social groups.

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<sup>14</sup>The obvious shortcoming of these schemes is that they represent individuals as if they were traveling by air, without the consideration of actual trade routes that connected different regions of the Islamic world. Unfortunately, at the moment it is impossible to add this layer of data into analysis, if only because it is still unavailable in any formalized format that can be incorporated into computational algorithms.

<sup>15</sup>There are 25,875 biographies (89.9%) that have at least one toponymic reference.

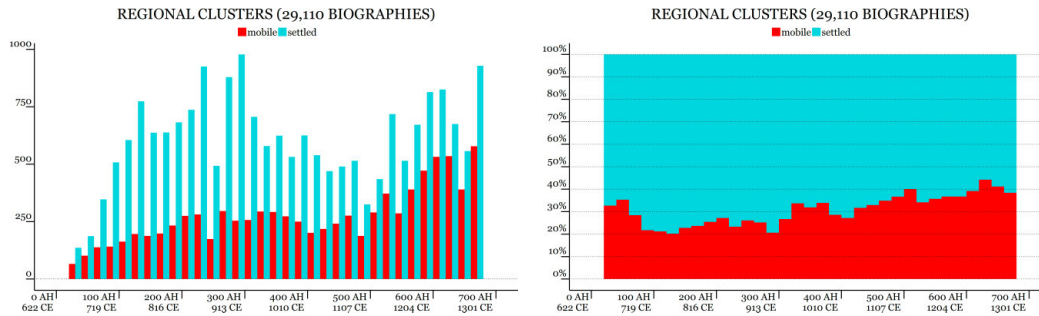


Figure 2.8: Transregional Mobility in *Ta'rikh al-Islam*. Individuals whose biographies mention at least two different regional clusters are considered transregionally mobile.

### 2.2.1.1 A Note on Transregional Mobility

The graphs on Figure 2.8 represent the issue of transregional mobility of Islamic élites, showing how numbers of transregionally mobile and settled individuals were changing over time. Individuals whose biographies mention at least two different regional clusters<sup>16</sup> are considered transregionally mobile. More detailed differentiation is difficult, since the mention of even two clusters may imply a very impressive itinerary, especially if these clusters are as distant as, for example, al-Andalus and Iraq. Overall, individuals with transregional connections in *Ta'rikh al-Islam* constitute 33% (9,697) of the entire population of *Ta'rikh al-Islam*. The proportion of transregionally mobile individuals fluctuates within the range of 22–46%, growing toward the end of the period. Absolute numbers demonstrate a similar trend of growth toward the end of the period.

<sup>16</sup>Regional clusters are shown on Figure 2.2 above.

## 2.2.2 The Core of the Islamic World

Figures 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13 show a chronological series of maps of connections based on the data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. Each mini-map shows data for a 50 lunar year period (and adjusted 30 lunar years back in time).<sup>17</sup> Each circle represents a regional cluster: the yellow core visualizes the number of individuals strongly associated with a regional cluster through their *nisbas*, i.e. who were either born or spent a significant amount of time there. The red “husk” shows the number of individuals who most likely visited a region: one or more locations belonging to a regional cluster in question are mentioned in biographies. Arcs visualize connections between regional clusters; depending on the number of individuals with connections between two particular clusters, arcs vary in their properties, namely, transparency, thickness and color. Bleak thin arcs of green color stand for smaller numbers of individuals with particular connections, while bright thick arcs of red color stand for larger numbers of individuals with particular connections during a given 50 lunar year period. Together, these properties allow for making single connections practically invisible, thus excluding irregularities that do not form patterns.

The presence of green arcs connecting together most clusters on most maps shows that, in general, the Islamic world remained interconnected through the members of its religious, military, administrative and civilian élites over almost the entire period covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. We, of course, need to keep in mind that the number of individuals who maintained this interconnectedness

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<sup>17</sup>Animated maps can be found in the “Dissertation Appendices” online: <http://alraqmiyyat.org/research/>.

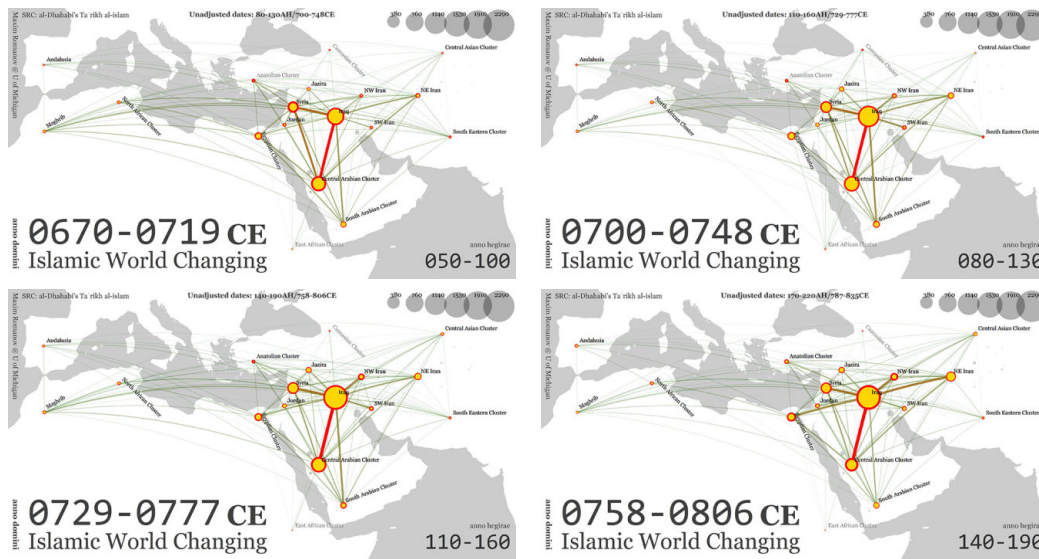


Figure 2.9: Transregional Connections (50–190 AH/671–807 CE).

fluctuated between 22% and 46%. At the same time, red[ish] arcs strongly suggest that the core of the Islamic world—by which we may understand the most closely connected regional clusters—was constantly changing and shifting.

For the earliest period, 20–70 AH/642–690 CE, the core is the triangle of Central Arabia, Syria and Iraq, where the latter is quickly outgrowing the others in importance. Unfortunately, for the early period—roughly up to 100/719 CE—toponymic *nisbas* are not as frequent as they are in later periods, and most individuals are identified primarily through tribal affiliations. This issue complicates any geospatial visualization of biographical data; georeferencing tribes and tribal *nisbas* might help, but at the moment it is not implemented.

By 80–130 AH/700–749 CE, Iraq (Lower Mesopotamia) clearly becomes the center, while its strongest connections are still with Central Arabia and Syria.

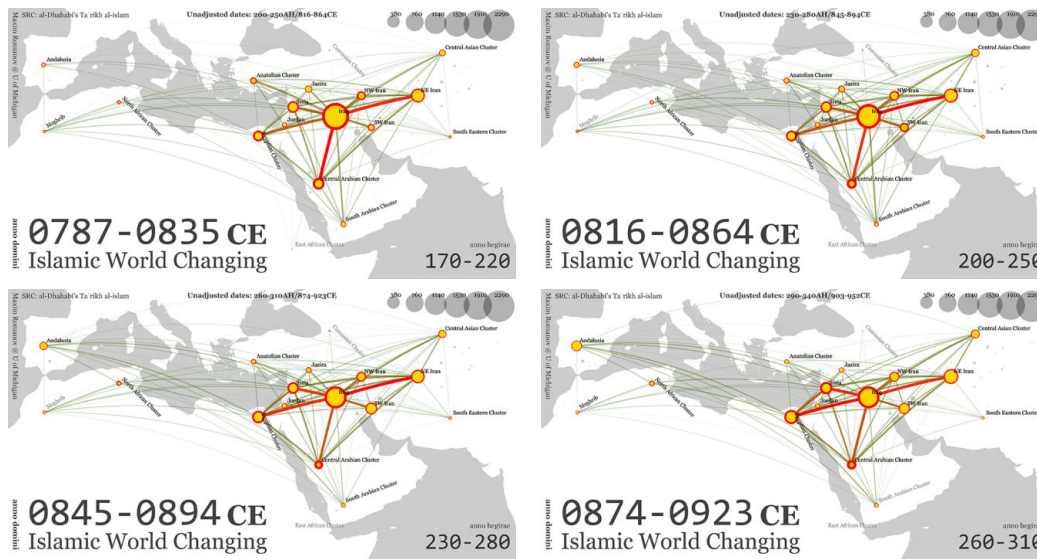


Figure 2.10: Transregional Connections (170–310 AH/787–923 CE).

Meanwhile, other regions begin to converge on it as well: the Jazīra (Upper Mesopotamia), northwestern Iran, northeastern Iran, southwestern Iran and South Arabia. By 140–190 AH/758–807 CE, connections between Iraq and Egypt become noticeably stronger, while those between Iraq, southwestern Iran and South Arabia in particular weaken. During the period 170–340 AH/787–952 CE the core remains roughly the same: with Iraq in the center, Central Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and the three main Iranian clusters strongly interconnected.

320–430 AH/933–1039 CE is the period when the largest number of regional clusters are brought together through transregional connections: now Andalusia and Central Asia are strongly connected to the core—the former mostly through Egypt, the latter through northeastern Iran.

By 470–520 AH/1078–1127 CE, Egypt splits from the core. Andalusia ap-

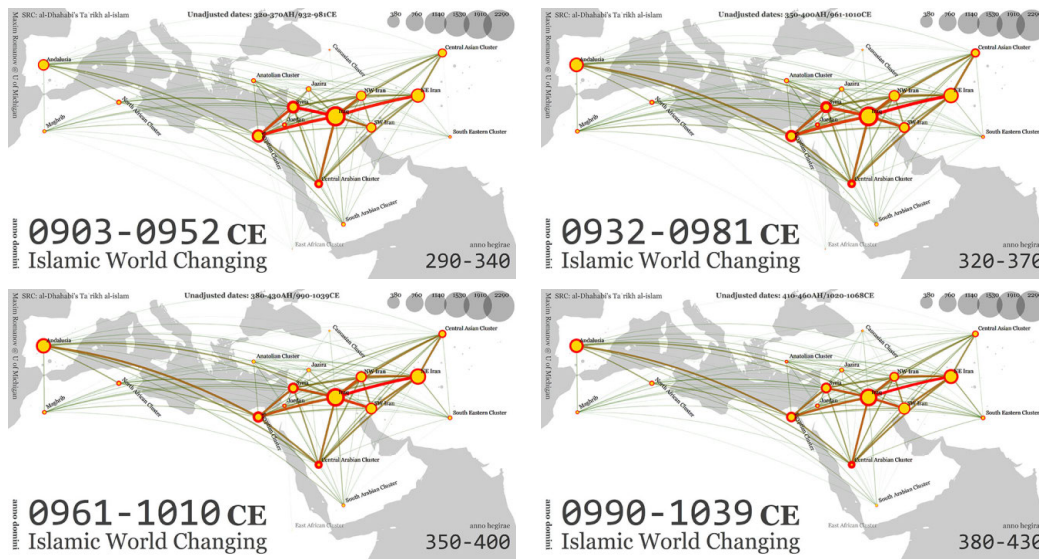


Figure 2.11: Transregional Connections (290–430 AH/904–1039 CE).

appears to begin forming its own core with Maghrib and North Africa, particularly for the period of 500–610 AH/1107–1214 CE. These changes make the main core take a temporary shift eastward—440–550 AH/1049–1156 CE—toward Iran. Yet another shift—this time to the Mediterranean shore of Syria and Egypt—seems to begin as early as 530/1136 CE and the triangle of Syria, Egypt and Iraq become the core by the end of the period covered *Taʾrīkh al-islām*; Iraq, however, is in continuous decline. Thick red “husks” of Syria and Egypt strongly imply the migrations of scholars from other regions, whose yellow cores are dwindling.

The shifts of the core resonate with the overall political/dynastic history of the Islamic world during the period covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. There are no exact chronological correspondences, of course. There hardly can be any, since new dynasties do not change the social space of their new subjects overnight,

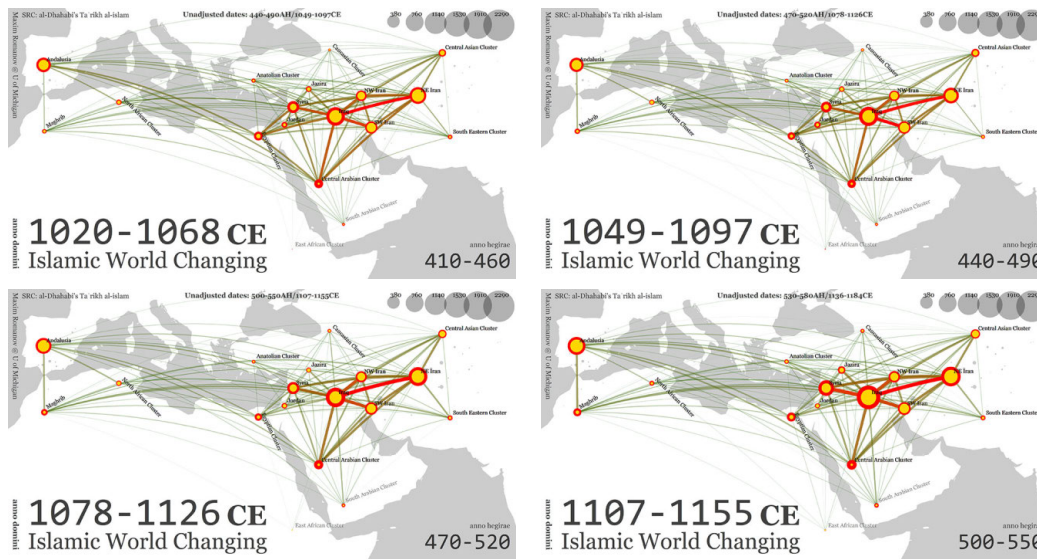


Figure 2.12: Transregional Connections (410–550 AH/1020–1156 CE).

but their policies may, can and often do have an effect on the social space in the long run. At the same time, new dynasties also come to power as a result of some significant social, economic or environmental change.

### 2.2.3 Patterns of Transregional Connections

Togther with the basic statistics and density graphs, the maps of connections of individual clusters show<sup>18</sup> that transregional connections are distributed in accordance with what can be tentatively called “the proximity principle”: each cluster is most densely connected with its closest neighbors, while the density of connections with the most remote clusters is usually the lowest. At the same time, adjustments for the core should always be taken into consideration: each

<sup>18</sup>Detailed description of regional clusters are provided in Appendix A and should be consulted when necessary.

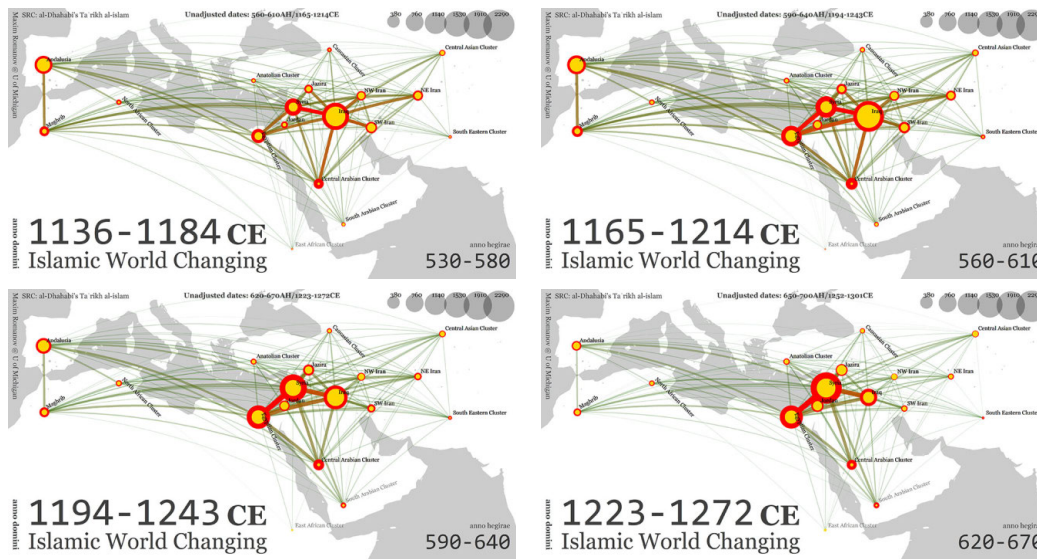


Figure 2.13: Transregional Connections (530–670 AH/1136–1272 CE).

“mini-period”—a 50 lunar year period displayed on mini-maps<sup>19</sup>—has its own constellations of connections, but they always seem to gravitate toward what constitutes the core during this period (see Section 2.2.2 above).

An analysis of these connections shows that instead of being a pan-Islamic commonwealth, the Islamic world was a commonwealth of commonwealths, where the most remote regions were connected with each other through the proxy of other commonwealths. If we treat any region as the center of a commonwealth, its boundaries extend into the neighboring regions. Never crisp and clear, these boundaries are more like a drop of India ink on wet rice paper—their intensity fades as they bleed further and further into neighboring regions. These boundaries were not constant either—the red arcs on mini-maps show how the extent of each commonwealth shifted over time. For example,

<sup>19</sup>Chronological maps for each region are included in the APPENDICES.



the commonwealth of northeastern Iran first extended to Arabia (20–130 AH/ 642–749 CE), then it started shifting toward Iraq (as early as 110/729 CE), gradually extending toward northwestern Iran, the Central Asian cluster and Syria; around 500/1107 CE, when its own center started dwindling, it began shifting more and more toward Syria. The commonwealth of northeastern Iran barely touched Egypt at the end of the period and never extended as far as the North African cluster, the Maghrib and Andalusia, although their fading boundaries brushed against each other for short periods.

If we were to map these commonwealths, they would look like irregular overlapping shapes with their boundaries fading into other regions. Until the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, Iraq was the place where the boundaries of most Islamic commonwealths overlapped. However, Iraq was too remote for the western regions, as the boundaries of their commonwealths reached Egypt and Syria, and only marginally Iraq. It seems that with the decline of the Iranian provinces, “gravitational pull” naturally shifted toward Syria and Egypt.

There is no doubt that significant volumes of migration contributed to creating and maintaining the sense of one shared space—geographically, culturally, religiously, and, occasionally, politically. However, the proximity principle is not always at play when it comes to transregional migrants. Although the patterns of transregional migrations often mirror those of transregional connections—especially in cases of well-represented regions, we can often see significant numbers of transregional migrations between rather distant regions, in terms of the ratio between regional connections and regional migrants (the South Arabian Cluster is the most interesting example of this). In some cases

these distant migrations may have resulted from the mere inability of an individual to return home, since travels in this period would cost a fortune and last for years. Such migrations, however, would most likely be sporadic and not form distinctive patterns. When, on the other hand, migrations form uninterrupted blocks with discernible spikes, this must point to some significant changes—be they of social, religious, economic or political nature. We should keep in mind that some migrations could have been based on connections which are not reflected in biographical sources (or, not extractable yet).

Although this “proximity principle” seems rather simple and intuitive, the ability to actually demonstrate it on a large data set may have significant implications for our understanding of how ideas (disembodied practices) and practices (embodied ideas) could have been spreading within the Islamic world. The “shingles” of commonwealths definitely offered plenty of opportunities for ideas to travel between the farthest reaches of the East and West of the Islamic world. For the spread of practices, however, these shingles would impose rather strict limitations. Each practice needs its practitioners and for this reason is least likely to make its way into a region with which it lacks strong connections. Connections through the proxies may serve as conduits, but they are also very likely to have a transformational effect—and the more proxies are involved in the transmission, the more different a practice will be from its original form.

As I hope to show in later chapters, the practice of public preaching (*waʿz*) develops most prominently in Iran and its spread remains confined to the limits of the Iranian commonwealth—the number of public preachers drops as the extent of the Iranian commonwealth fades.

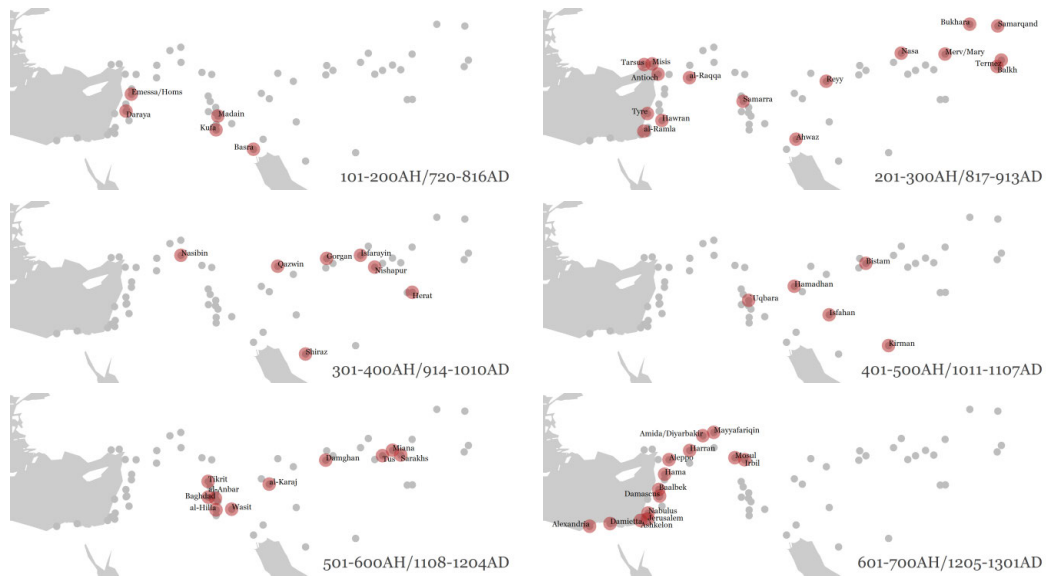


Figure 2.14: Peaks of Major Urban Centers of the Islamic East (at least 25 individuals per center).

## 2.2.4 A Note on Urban Growth

The peaks of urban centers—periods when the largest number of individuals associated with these centers flourished—seem to show best how the geography of the Islamic world was changing over the first seven centuries of Islamic history.

Figure 2.14 shows peaks of the major urban centers of the Islamic East (at least 25 individuals per center). Placed on chronological maps, peaks of urban centers in the East form a pattern: an expansion that reaches its limits in Central Asia and Anatolia (the region of al-*ʿ*Awāṣim) during 201–300 AH/817–913 CE, a contraction to Iran and Iraq during 301–600 AH/914–1204 CE, and a sharp turn toward the Mediterranean during 601–700 AH/1205–1301 CE.

During 601–700 AH/1205–1301 CE, urban centers of the Islamic East form a

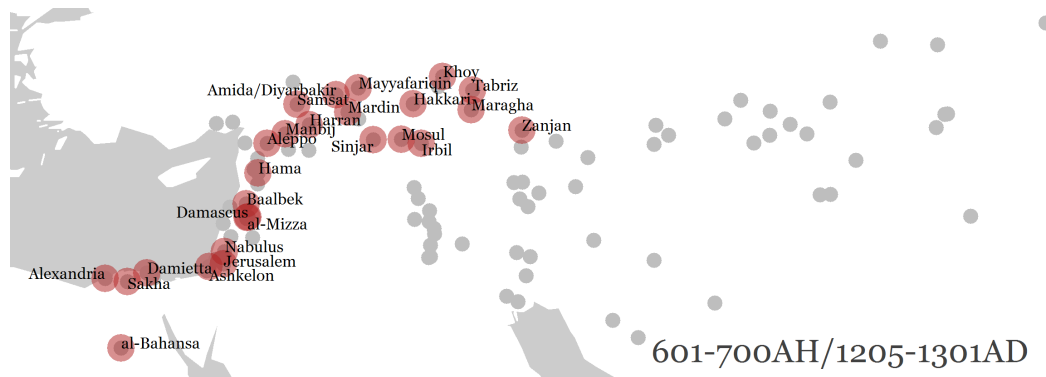


Figure 2.15: The Urban Crescent of the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> Century: Peaks of Urban Centers with frequencies 10 and higher during 601–700 AH/1205–1301 CE.

continuous crescent-shaped cluster that brings together a number of provinces into one macro-region (Figure 2.15). This crescent extends from Egypt (al-Bahansā, Alexandria/al-Iskandariyya, Sakhā, and Damietta/Dimyāt) in the south, through Jordan (Ashkelon/ʿAsqalān, Jerusalem/al-Quds, Nābulus), Syria (al-Mizza, Damascus/Dimashq, Baalbek/Baʿlabakk, Hama/Ḥamā, Aleppo/Ḥalab, Manbij), the Jazīra (Ḥarrān, Samsat/Sumaysāt, Amida/Āmid, Mārdīn, Mayyāfāriqīn), the northern part of Iraq (Mosul/al-Mawṣil, Irbīl), the very south of the Caucasian cluster (Hakkari/al-Hakkāriyya, Khoy/Khūy, Tabrīz, Marāgha) in the north, and even touches northwestern Iran (Zanjān).

A similar shift toward the Mediterranean shore happens with the western urban centers a century earlier—during 501–600 AH/1108–1204 CE (Figure 2.16)—and it is most clearly visible in Andalusia. This shift towards the Mediterranean shore could have been a consequence of the itinerant rule of the Almohad caliphs who systematically moved back and forth between Andalusia and the Maghrib.

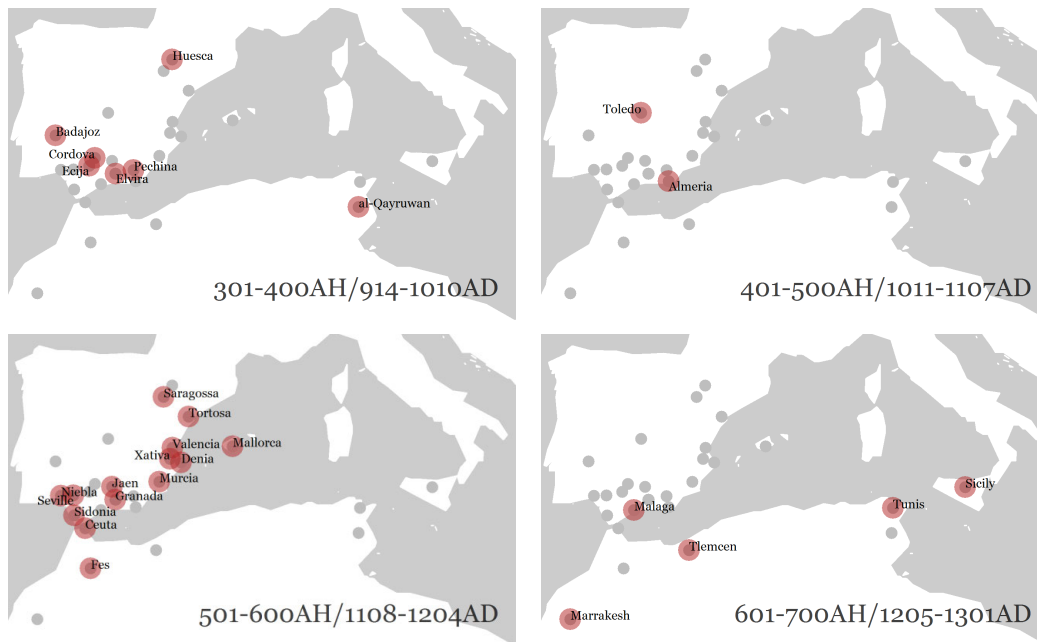


Figure 2.16: Peaks of Urban Centers in Andalusia and North Africa.

On a bigger scale though, discernible in the West as well as in the East, the shift toward the Mediterranean can be interpreted as a sign of the formation of the new Mediterranean commonwealth with the Italian “Maritime Republics” (Genoa, Pisa, Venice, Almalfi and others) actively conducting trade between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

## 2.3 Society

### 2.3.1 Modeling Society

The individuals whose lives are described in biographical collections were not ordinary people. They were integrated into the life of society to a noticeable

degree—somewhere on the scale from noteworthy to extraordinary. Almost every biographical note contains some information on a sphere of life to which its protagonist contributed—and “descriptive names” is the most manageable indicator of this.

Major studies that use “descriptive names” for analytical purposes split them into categories. Cohen’s classic study concentrates primarily on “secular occupations” during the first four centuries of Islamic history. He offered a major division of occupational *nisbas* (textiles, foods, ornaments/perfumes, paper/books, leather/metals/wood/clay, miscellaneous trades, general merchants, bankers/middlemen) and supplied an extensive appendix with explanations for about 400 *nisbas* and relevant linguistic formulae. Unfortunately, the *nisbas* in Cohen’s appendix are not explicitly categorized and—since any categorization involves pushing the boundaries, especially in instances that stubbornly resist classification—the exact scheme remains somewhat unclear.<sup>20</sup>

Petry’s scheme is built on biographical data from Mamlūk Egypt (1258–1517 CE). Petry divided his subjects into six major, often overlapping occupational groups: executive and military professions, bureaucratic (secretarial-financial) professions, legal professions, artisan and commercial professions, scholarly and educational professions, and religious functionaries. Although explicit classification is not given in the “Glossary of Occupational Terms,” numerous tables provide enough information to form a rather clear idea about the specifics of each category in Petry’s classification scheme.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>COHEN (1970), ‘The Economic Background and the Secular Occupations of Muslim Jurisprudents and Traditionists in the Classical Period of Islam: (Until the Middle of the Eleventh Century)’.

<sup>21</sup>PETRY (1981), *The civilian elite of Cairo in the later Middle Ages*. For the “Glossary,”

Shatzmiller approached this issue from the much wider perspective of labor in general. Her scheme covers a much wider variety of occupational names and splits the entire society into three major sectors—extractive, manufacturing, services—with each sector having its overlapping subcategories. Schatzmiller offers an explicit categorization of each and every descriptive name.<sup>22</sup>

As is the case with any scheme, all three examples are designed to serve specific purposes. Although immensely helpful, none of them are suitable for the purposes of broader analysis: unlike the above-mentioned schemes, the scheme needed here must take into account *all* meaningful descriptors, not only those that can be classified as “occupations.” In other words, it must consider anything that would allow discerning all potentially identifiable groups so that their evolution could be traced. Some of these descriptors do not pose significant problems, others are so complex that even presenting them as ideal types might be highly problematic.

The list of “descriptive names” from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* is based on frequencies and for the moment I consider *nisbas* that are used to qualify at least ten individuals (slightly over 700). Thus, my list of descriptive names overlaps only partially with those of Cohen, Petry and Shatzmiller. Figure 2.17 shows how the categories of “descriptive names” from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* are interconnected from the individual perspective.

The innermost layer of categories includes **tribal**, **toponymic**, **ethnic** and **physical** descriptions. These are descriptors over which individuals have the

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see pp. 390–402.

<sup>22</sup>MAYA SHATZMILLER, *Labour in the medieval Islamic world* (Leiden [The Netherlands]: E.J. Brill, 1994); For extensive lists of names/occupations, see pp.101–168, 410–424.

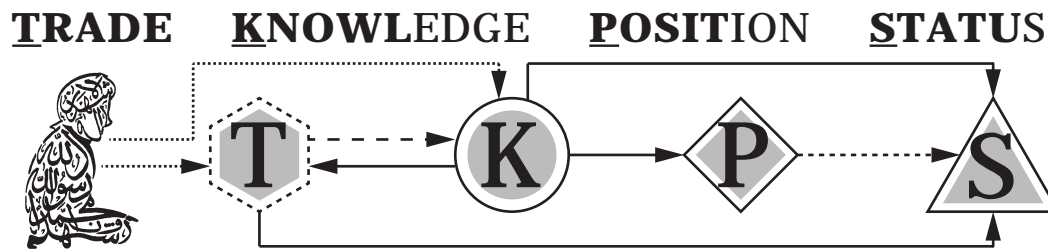


Figure 2.18: Hierarchical Connections of the Middle Layer.

least control—in a sense that no one chooses into which **tribe** to be born, where to be born, what **ethnic** group to belong to, and what **physical** peculiarities to have or suffer from. To a certain degree these description are also acquirable—in the early period being a Muslim meant being affiliated with an Arab **tribe**; individuals were constantly moving around the Islamic world, changing their **toponymic** affiliations; **physical** peculiarities could have resulted from life experience. However, these are only probable—and thus secondary—cases that would usually be piled up on top of primary, “by-birth” descriptions. The first three categories— **tribal**, **toponymic**, **ethnic**—also tend to overlap.

The middle layer groups “descriptive names” in terms of acquirable qualities— **trade**, **knowledge**, **position** and **status**. These are not categories that rest on the same level and their connections are better represented in an hierarchical manner (Figure 2.18). The main gateways to élites were **trades** (or “secular occupations”) and **knowledge[s]**. However, practicing some **trade** alone was almost never enough: biographical collections rarely—if ever—include individuals who were involved exclusively in some specific “secular occupation.” In order to climb up the social ladder a practitioner of any **trade** had to start converting his economic capital into social—this was most commonly done



through acquiring religious **knowledge**. **Knowledge**—as specialized training in a specific area that would set an individual aside from the masses—opened ways for acquiring **positions** and **status**[es]; it could also allow one to practice **trade** on a new level, thus improving individual’s **status**.

The outermost layer represents the major sectors to which a person could belong in pre-modern Islamic society: **religious**, **administrative**, **military**, and “**civilian**.” The term “civilian” is problematic, and is used here essentially as a negative blanket category that encompasses everything that does not clearly belong to the first three sectors. Descriptive names often cross boundaries among these categories and most individuals do not clearly belong to one specific sectors, but rather balance between them.

For current purposes it will be more efficient to invert this scheme so that “descriptive names” are presented from the social perspective. Now, each category contributes to the composition of Islamic society, and every “descriptive name” can be seen as a social role. These roles are likely to receive a centripetal charge from individuals who attempt to expand their influence on society at large; how close they get to the center—i.e., how much social influence they can exercise—would depend on the success of particular individuals and/or

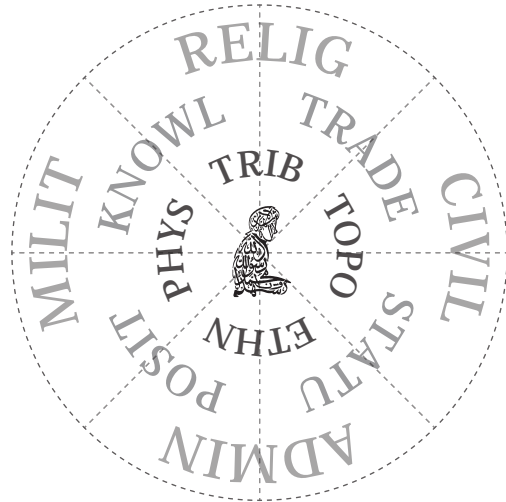


Figure 2.17: Interconnectedness of Descriptive Names (Individual Perspective). Shifting circles and dashed lines denote the intricate interconnectedness of the three layers of name categories.

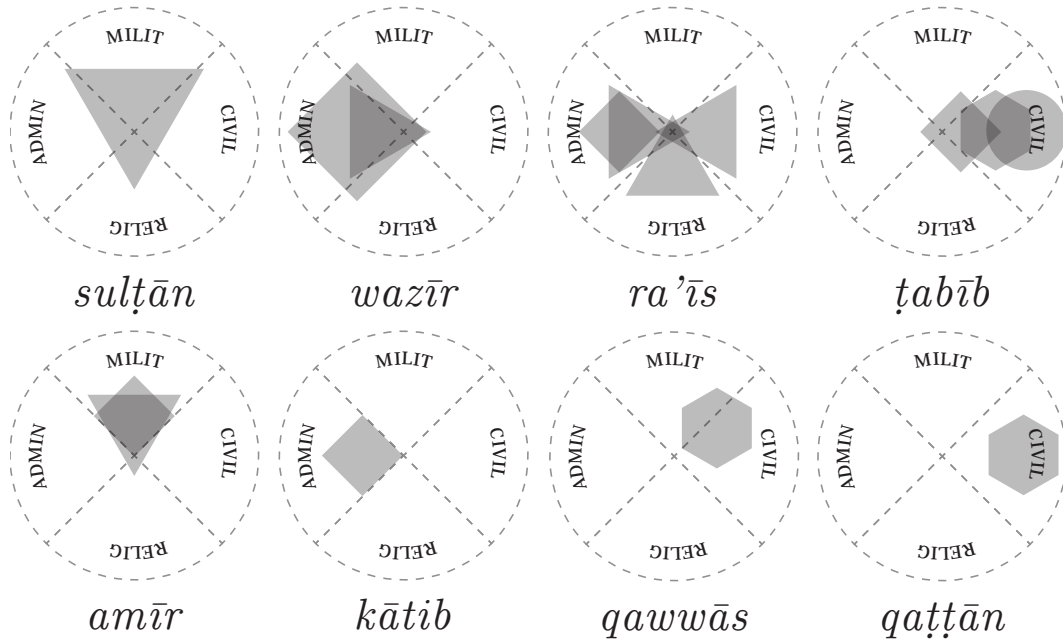


Figure 2.20: *Nisba* Classification Examples.

historical circumstances that might be favorable to particular groups. Social influence here is understood broadly as a pressure that forces someone to do something that s/he otherwise would not have done; at this point I do not make a distinction between physical threats and social pressures. Clearly, the sword of an *amīr*, “military commander,” and the word of a *shaykh*, “religious authority,” are different in their nature, but both may have equally serious societal consequences.

Figures 2.20 & 2.21 should provide a visual clue to how these overlapping categories are used in the classification scheme. On Figure 2.20: *amīr*, “governor, commander,” and *sultān*, “sultan,” both belong to the **military** sector of society. *Amīr* can be seen primarily as a **position**—in a sense that there is somebody above who granted this **position** to a given individual;

arguably, this **position** provides one with a relatively high **status**. *Sultān* is the apex of the **military** hierarchy and thus is primarily seen as **status** with significant influence over all other sectors. *Kātib*, “scribe,” and *wazīr*, “vizier, prime minister,” belong to the **administrative** sector, where the former is a **position** with potential for social influence, while the latter is the apex of the **administrative** hierarchy, which gives one significant resources to influence society at large—hence, it is also **status**.<sup>23</sup> Somewhat an equivalent to *amīr*, *raʿīs*, “chief, director,” is a denomination of high **status** in either the **civilian**, the **religious** or the **administrative** sector (also **position** in the latter). *Ṭabīb*, “physician,” stands for special training—**knowledge**—within the **civilian** sector, which is also likely to fall into the categories of **trade** and **position**, especially after hospitals (sing. *bimaristān*) become a constant element of the Muslim cityscape.<sup>24</sup> *Qaṭṭān*, “producer or seller of cotton,” and *qawwās*, “bow-maker,” are both secular occupations—**trades**—and thus belong to the **civilian** sector, although the latter—if bows are produced for war-making purposes—may cross into the **military** one.

On Figure 2.21: *shaykh*, literally “elder,” and *imām*, “leader,” are the markers of the highest **religious status**, although in the later period *imām* also refers to a **religious position** of “prayer leader” that was only marginally influ-

<sup>23</sup>Some *wazīrs* rivaled their “employers” in influence. The most prominent examples are the Barmakid family that served the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs and Niẓām al-mulk who served Mālikshāh, the Great Saljuq *sultān*.

<sup>24</sup>There are 322 physicians in the ʿ*Uyūn al-anbāʿ fi ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbāʾ*\* of Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270 CE) and quite a few physicians are Jews and Christians, judging by their names. al-Dhahabī’s count of physicians is about 200 which can be considered a very thorough coverage, since Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa’s book is devoted exclusively to the physicians (and as it often happens, tends too overstretch the definition of the group), while al-Dhahabī’s book is a general history.

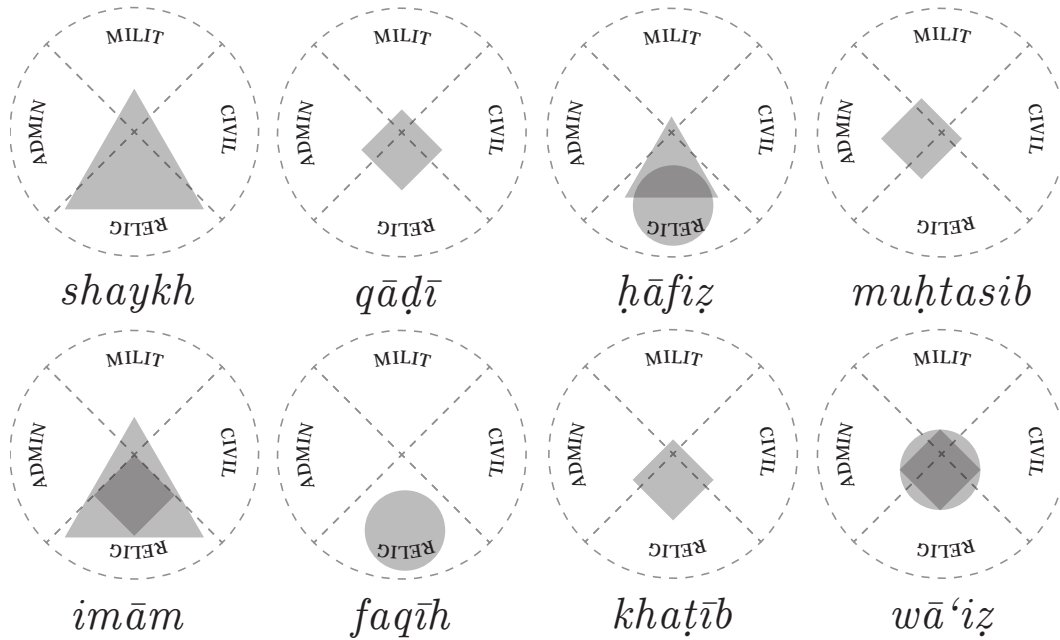


Figure 2.21: *Nisba* Classification Examples.

ential in social terms. *Faqīh* refers to **knowledge** of Islamic law, whereas social influence is exerted primarily through other roles, such as *qāḍī*, “judge,” which is always a **position**—or *muftī*, “juristconsult,” which turns into a **position** in the later period (not graphed). *Ḥāfiẓ* denotes **knowledge** of Prophetic tradition and high achievement (**status**) within this area of **religious** expertise. *Muḥtasib*, “market inspector,” is an **administrative position** with strong **religious** underpinnings. Last on the list are *khaṭīb*, “Friday preacher,” and *wā'iz*, “public preacher.” Both belong to the **religious** sector, but while the former is always a **position**, the latter refers to a specific field of religious **knowledge** that tends to become a **position** only during the later period.

Individuals in the Islamic biographical dictionaries usually wear many turbans and are qualified with more than one “descriptive name.” Using the

same method, each individual can be represented as a unique constellation of **trades**, **knowledge[s]**, **positions** and **status[es]** that are fitted into the diagram of the four major sectors. Pushing this approach even further, we may try to evaluate how the composition of Islamic élites—and, possibly, society at large—changed over time, although conventional graphs may be more efficient for this task.

### 2.3.1.1 Updated Cumulative Curve: Possible Readings

Before proceeding, I need to return to the cumulative biographical curve from *Taʿrīkh al-islām*. Figure 2.22 shows the updated version of this curve. It is formed and adjusted in the same manner as the curve in Figure 1.16, although here biographies are grouped into 20 lunar year periods (quantities of biographies are shown at the bottom of the graph) and the dataset is some 200 biographies larger—initially these biographies were excluded as cross-reference suspects (short notes that refer readers to actual biographies in some other place of the collection).

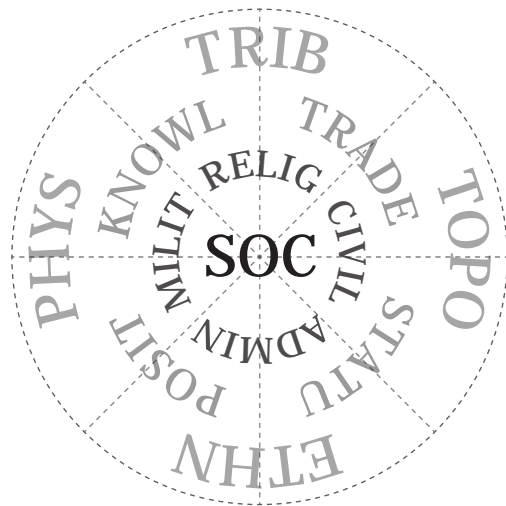


Figure 2.19: Interconnectedness of Descriptive Names (Social Perspective). Shifting circles and dashed lines denote the intricate interconnectedness of the three layers of name categories.

The curve can be split into several periods, each beginning at a point that

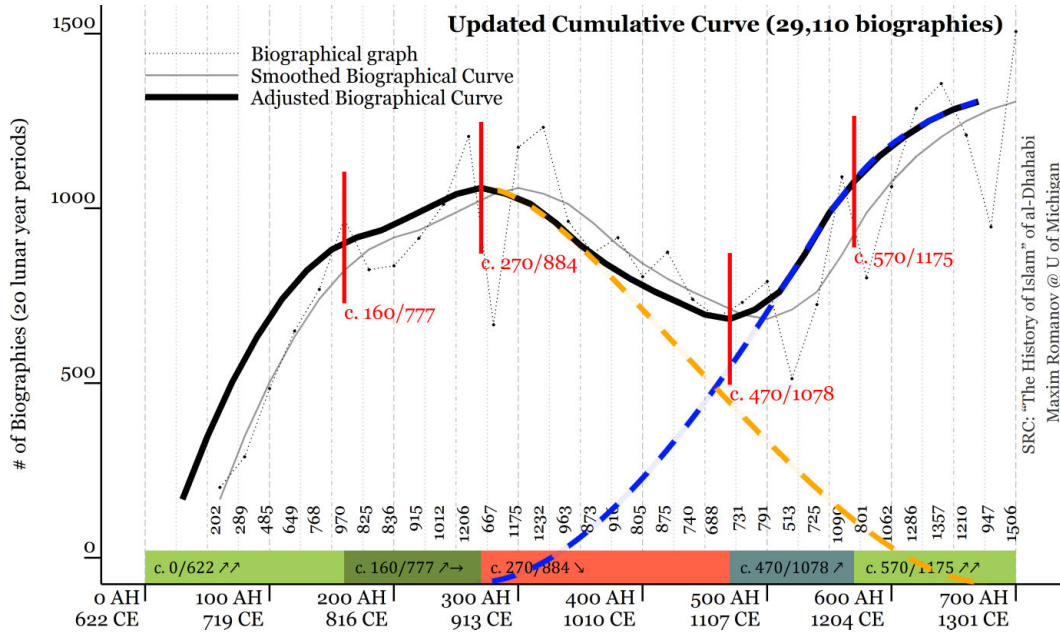


Figure 2.22: Updated Cumulative Biographical Curve. The row of numbers shows the quantities of biographies per 20 lunar year periods, beginning with 41–60 AH/662–681 CE and up to 680–700 AH/1282–1301 CE. Colored stripe designated period, each beginning with a noticeable change in the curve’s direction.

marks a noticeable diversion of the curve. The number of biographies keeps on growing quite rapidly until *c.* 160/778 CE, which marks the slowing of growth. During *c.* 270–470 AH/884–1078 CE there is a steady decline. After *c.* 470/1078 CE the curve starts recovering, reaching its highest point around *c.* 570/1175 CE, after which it keeps on growing, but slows its pace by the end of the period—with the second peak being somewhere after 700/1301 CE. For convenience, many of the graphs that will follow will include the scaled-down cumulative curve and color-coded periods.

The updated cumulative curve also has two additional dashed lines. The normal distribution of data that represent any particular process usually has

a bell-shaped form (the so-called *bell curve*).<sup>25</sup> Curves with more than one peak—two and more “overlaid bells”—are considered to represent mixed data regarding the more than one process. This is exactly what we have in the cumulative biographical curve based on data from the *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, where at least two major processes can be discerned.

**2.3.1.1.1 Transformation of the Religious Class** One of the possible interpretations is that these peaks reflect two different paradigms of becoming a religious scholar: the itinerant teacher-apprentice paradigm of the early period is replaced by the settled *madrasa* paradigm of the late period. The dashed lines offer projections for the two processes,<sup>26</sup> suggesting that—whatever these processes were—the second process began some time around the peak of the first one; meanwhile the first one lingered well into the prime time of the second.

**2.3.1.1.2 The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean** Another possible interpretation of the dive of the curve may be related to demographical changes within the Islamic society of our period. Some studies suggest such an interpretation: the most recent one is Ellenblum’s *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean*<sup>27</sup> that presents the period of 950–1072 CE as the period of almost pan-Islamic dearth: agricultural crisis (in Iran, Iraq and, most im-

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<sup>25</sup>This is one of the basic principles that are explained in any primer of statistics. For explanations directly relevant to Islamic history, see: BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*, 16–32.

<sup>26</sup>At the moment no math is involved in these projections, only Photoshop.

<sup>27</sup>RONNIE ELLENBLUM, *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean: Climate Change and the Decline of the East, 950-1072* (Cambridge University Press, September 2012).

portantly, Egypt—“the granary of the ancient Mediterranean”), nomadization, and population decline—all caused by the climate change directly or indirectly through what Ellenblum calls “domino effects.” Unfortunately, testing such a relation is extremely difficult, since demographic data on the pre-modern Islamic world are practically non-existent. In part, this is an objective problem of available sources, since we do lack primary sources that contain this kind of information,<sup>28</sup> but it is also a methodological issue, as very few attempts have been made to model demographic processes using mathematical models.<sup>29</sup>

The only attempt at estimating the population of the pre-modern Islamic world has been undertaken by European economists and historians Maarten Bosker, Eltjo Buringh, Jan Luiten van Zanden.<sup>30</sup> Their estimates of population

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<sup>28</sup>We indeed can only envy the Roman historians who have a significant number of original censuses. See, WADĀD AL QĀDĪ, ‘Population Census and Land Surveys under the Umayyads (41-132/661-750)’, *Der Islam*, 83:2 (2006).

<sup>29</sup>This is something the Roman historians do, even though they are blessed with surviving censuses. One of these models was actually designed to check the plausibility of censuses: PETER TURCHIN and WALTER SCHEIDEL, ‘Coin hoards speak of population declines in Ancient Rome’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 106:41 (October 2009); also see Scheidel’s chapter on demography in: WALTER SCHEIDEL, IAN MORRIS and RICHARD P. SALLER, *The Cambridge economic history of the Greco-Roman world*, Economic history of the Greco-Roman world. (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38–86. A comparable chapter on the Islamic world, on the other hand, lacks numeric data of any kind altogether (SURAIYA FAROQHI, ‘Demography and migration’, in: ROBERT IRWIN, editor, *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, volume 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)). In general, there are very few attempts to model demographic processes in our field. In this light, Agha’s study that estimates the Arab population of Khurāsān relying on demographical “dependency ratios” is worth mentioning: SALEH SAID AGHA, ‘The Arab Population in Hurāsān during the Umayyad Period’, *Arabica*, 46:2 (April 1999).

<sup>30</sup>None of these scholars are Islamicists and, unfortunately, lands east of Iraq are not included. See: MAARTEN BOSKER, ELTJO BURINGH and JAN LUITEN VAN ZANDEN, ‘From Baghdad to London: Unraveling Urban Development in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, 800–1800’, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, (May 2012). Different pre-print versions are available online on authors’ webpages—these versions have more tabulated data than the final published version. Their entire dataset is also available: I am grateful to Maarten Bosker for sharing this dataset with me, and to Eltjo Buringh for answering my



for the Middle East and North Africa seem to mirror the curve of *Taʿrīkh al-islām*: 8<sup>th</sup> century 19,320 mln.; 9<sup>th</sup> century 20,583 mln.; 10<sup>th</sup> century 21,650; 11<sup>th</sup> century 18,500; 12<sup>th</sup> century 18,803; 13<sup>th</sup> century 20,808 (Figure 2.23). These data demonstrates the decline of the population curve during the 11<sup>th</sup> century and recovery in the 12<sup>th</sup> century: something Ellenblum’s study argues and the biographical curve of the *Taʿrīkh al-islām* may suggest.

It is tempting to conclude that the biographical representation in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* reflects the overall demographical situation in the Islamic world, but before jumping to this conclusion, the dataset of these European scholars must be carefully analyzed—more carefully than time currently permits.

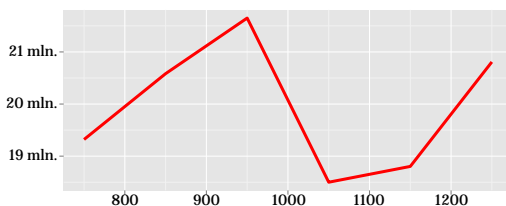


Figure 2.23: Estimates of the Population of the Middle East and North Africa (800–1400 CE). Based on the Bosker–Buringh–van Zanden dataset (lands east of Iraq and Andalusia are excluded).

**2.3.1.1.3 “The Shīʿite Century”** The ebb and flow of Sunnī élites—and the absolute majority of individuals in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* are Sunnīs—mirror political/dynastic developments in practically every region. This should not be taken as a direct relationship between the two; however, the lasting rule of any dynasty would bring a period of stability—by which I simply mean that new patterns of social relations would begin to form and possible career paths would emerge. Soon individuals begin to take advantage of these developments, and

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questions of how the information was gathered. The fact that such a scholar as Shatzmiller uses their data in her research attests that nothing comparable is available (see: MAYA SHATZMILLER, ‘Economic Performance and Economic Growth in the Early Islamic World’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 54:2 (2011)).

the more individuals join this game, the more social groups form and grow. The policies of ruling dynasties contribute to the overall social climate, whether they openly support particular groups, or [do not] leave them enough social space to develop. As a result some groups flourish, while some go into decline.

The so-called “Shīʿite century” falls entirely on the downward slope of the cumulative biographical curve from *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. The Shīʿite dynasties—most notably the Fāṭimids of North Africa and Egypt and the Būyids of Iraq and Iran—did not cause the decline, but they both came to power during a period of turmoil: dearth and famine in Egypt<sup>31</sup> and the military “junta” in Iraq. The Fāṭimids declare their caliphate in 909, conquer Egypt in 969 and stay there until 1171. The Būyids come to Baghdad in 946 and carry on their “guardianship” until the Saljūqs come to claim their place in 1055. The social climate of the prolonged rule of these two regimes could not have possibly fostered the growth of scholarly communities of Sunnī persuasion.

The Būyids and Fāṭimids had different perspectives on Shīʿism: the former supported Twelver Shīʿism, while the latter professed Sevener, Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism. This factor profoundly affected how Shīʿite learned communities could develop in their respective domains. With the Fāṭimids, who claimed to be Imāms, the ultimate authority in religious matters, there was not much social space for the development of a thriving scholarly community that would be comparable—at least in numbers—to those of the Sunnīs in other regions of the Islamic world. After all, why have dozens of squabbling scholars when the Imām has all the answers? It is not to say that there was no learned Ismāʿīlī community, but

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<sup>31</sup>Ellenblum makes this argument in his latest book, see: ELLENBLUM (2012), *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean*, 41.

it was hierarchical and incorporated into the administrative apparatus of the Fāṭimid state.

Unfortunately, practically no quantitative data are available on the Ismāʿīlī scholars of Fāṭimid Egypt. The only exception is, Poonawala’s “Biobibliography”<sup>32</sup> which lists 51 Ismāʿīlī authors from the pre-Fāṭimid and Fāṭimid periods (c. 250–524 AH/865–1131 CE). It is hard to say to what extent this number characterizes the learned Ismāʿīlī community in Fāṭimid Egypt, but for comparison, we may look into the classical Sunnī biobibliography. In his *Hadīyat al-ʿarīfīn*, Ismāʿīl Bāshā al-Baghdādī (d. 1339/1921 CE) listed about 1,650 biobibliographies for the same period.<sup>33</sup> As to the Sunnī presence in Egypt during the Fāṭimid period, it is clearly in decline—numbers of individuals with Egyptian *nisbas* go down starting around 300/913 CE and reach their lowest point around 500/1107 CE, when connections between Egypt and other regions practically get severed.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike the Fāṭimids, the Būyids claimed no religious authority for themselves, nor did they want to remove the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs entirely from the historical scene. They supported Shīʿism, but more on a popular level by restoring and building Shīʿite shrines and instituting Shīʿite commemorations—the martyrdom of the *imām* al-Ḥusayn (ʿ*āshurāʿ*) and the festival of Ghadīr Khumm

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<sup>32</sup>ISMAIL K. POONAWALA and TERESA JOSEPH, *Biobibliography of Ismāʿīlī literature*, Studies in Near Eastern culture and society. (Malibu, Calif.: Undena Publications, 1977), For the list of authors, see 467-468; their works are listed on pp.31-133. I am grateful to Paul Walker for drawing my attention to this reference..

<sup>33</sup>The number of biographies in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* for the same period is about 12,170.

<sup>34</sup>There clearly were cases of conversion of Sunnī scholars to *Ismāʿīlism*. The most striking example is *qāḍī* al-Nuʿmān (d. 351/963 CE), one of the most prominent scholars of the Fāṭimid state, who used to be a Mālikī jurist (SAN, 16, 150). At the moment, however, I have no means to estimate the rates of such conversions.

commemorating the Prophet’s nomination of ‘Alī as his successor.<sup>35</sup> Although they only marginally supported Shī‘īte scholars, the Būyids managed to create a socio-political climate in which a Twelver learned community could develop: quantitative data from the Shī‘īte biographical collections suggests that the learned community of the Twelver Shī‘ītes begins to grow rapidly in the Būyid period and within their domain. Besides, the beginning of the Būyid period coincides with the “Greater Occultation” (*ghayba*) that began in 329/942 CE. Now, with no ways to reach their Imām, the Twelver Shī‘īte community was ready for—and was in a desperate need of—a community of scholars who would interpret their sacred texts in a way similar to that of the Sunnī scholars.

In his comprehensive introduction to Shī‘īte Islam, Momen provides quantitative summaries of data on Twelver Shī‘īte ‘*ulamā*’: 302 individuals in the period up to 400/1010 CE, 146 during 401–500 AH/1011–1107 CE, 395 during 501–600 AH/1108–1204 CE, and 170 during 601–700 AH/1205–1301 CE. Although such a crude grouping does not allow for any nuanced trend tracing, I should not be too far off in pointing out that the Twelver learned community peaks sometime during 400–600 AH/1010–1204 CE.<sup>36</sup> According to the *Ta’rīkh al-islām*, the peak of individuals with the Shī‘īte *nisbas* is around 470/1078 CE—when the Sunnī community hits the lowest point of its decline (more details below).

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<sup>35</sup>MOOJAN MOMEN, *An introduction to Shi‘i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi‘ism* (Oxford: G. Ronald, 1985), 82.

<sup>36</sup>These summaries are based on the Shī‘īte biographical collections: Momen collected the data for the first four centuries from *al-Fihrist* of Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1069 CE, known under the honorific *Shaykh al-ṭā‘ifa*), and then—lumped into century-long periods—from *Ṭabaqāt a‘lām al-shī‘a* of Āghā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī (d. 1389/1969 CE), “one of the most meticulous of modern Shi‘i scholars,” as Momen himself characterizes him. (See, *Ibid.*, 83, 84, 91, 97).

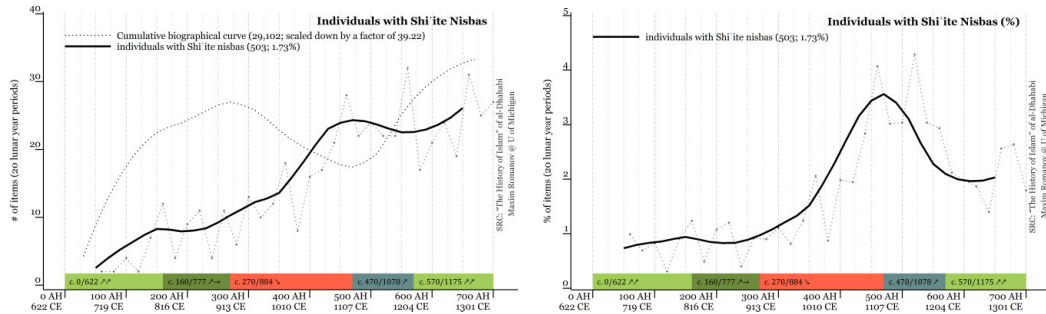


Figure 2.24: Individuals with the Shī'ite *Nisbas*.

Prozorov’s study of the historical writings<sup>37</sup> of the early Shī'ites also suggests a very small learned community during the pre-Būyid period. Prozorov collected biographies of 70 early authors with Shī'ite affiliations, all the authors that he could excavate from the Shī'ite and major Sunnī biographical collections. Together, these authors could have written up to 1,500 books and epistles of varying volume—according to biographical collections whose authors listed their titles, or gave a lump sum of their literary output. However, even if the books were actually written, only few of them survived. Prozorov quotes al-Najāshī (d. 450/1059 CE) who decided to put together a biographical collection of Shī'ite luminaries, *Kitāb al-rijāl*, because people were saying that “the Shī'ites do not have their own books.”<sup>38</sup>

Biographical data from the *Ta'rīkh al-islām* are not particularly rich for the Shī'ites, but some 500 individuals may be identified by their *nisbas* as belonging to different Shī'ite groups. The most frequent *nisbas* are: al-'Alawī

<sup>37</sup>PROZOROV (1980), *Arabskaia istoricheskaiia literatura v Irake, Irane i Srednei Azii v VII-seredine X v.: shiitskaia istoriografiia*; “Historical writings” are defined rather broadly here, and the term itself was used largely to avoid ideological complications within Soviet academia of the late 1970s.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 7.

(221), al-Ḥusaynī (135), al-Shīʿī (91), al-Rāfiḍī (56), al-Ḥasanī (56), al-Zaydī (28), al-Ismaʿīlī (25), al-Jaʿfarī (21), al-Mūsawī, al-Bāṭinī (18), al-Imāmī (10). Arguably, some of these can be “ancestral” *nisbas*, that is they go back to the name of one’s father or grandfather who does not necessarily have anything to do with Shīʿism. However, keeping in mind the very strong Shīʿite connotations of these names, the number of false positives in this set should be insignificant. The curve of individuals with these names (Figure 2.24) is rather interesting and shows that while the absolute numbers of these individuals steadily grow throughout the entire period, there is a clearly visible “bump” of growth during 350–570 AH/962–1175 CE with the peak around 470/1078 CE—the lowest point of the cumulative biographical curve. After 470/1078 CE, when the cumulative curve begins its recovery, the Shīʿite curve goes down, returning to its earlier rate of growth. The percentage curve shows this spike even more vividly, although it suggests that the period of this spike starts earlier and lasts longer. Geographically, this Shīʿite spike is most visible in Iraq and Iran.

Discussions of Shīʿite leanings are also rekindled during the “Shīʿite century.” Figure 2.25 shows that the frequencies of the word *tashayyūʿ* and its forms spike during the period of decline of the cumulative curve between 270/884 CE and 470/1078 CE.

### 2.3.1.2 Looking into Major Sectors

Introducing the categories of sectors—**military**, **administrative**, **religious** and **civilian**—I hope to use them as markers of change within the composition of Islamic élites. Society would remain healthier when more social groups are

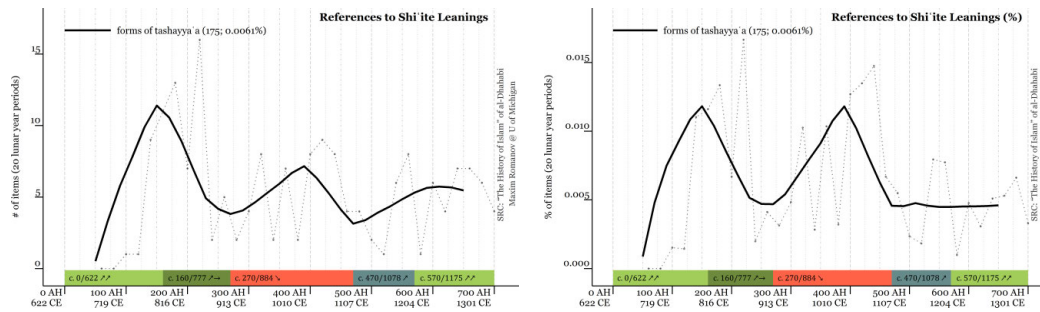


Figure 2.25: Discussions of Shi'ite leanings (*tashayyu'*) in Biographies.

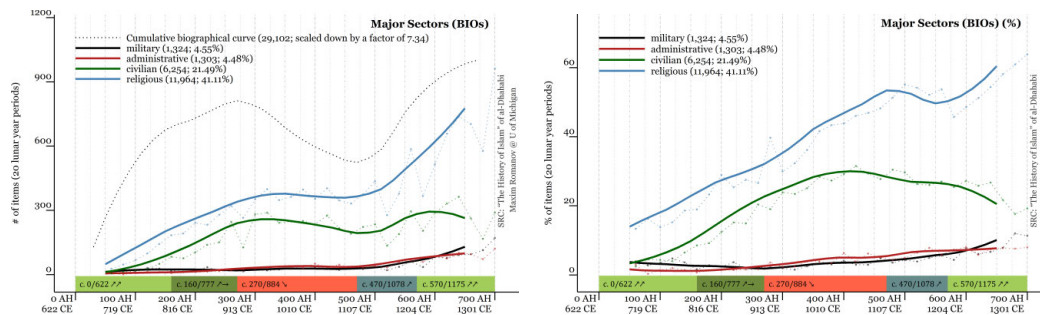


Figure 2.26: Major Sectors of Islamic Society.

represented in the élites, since a more diverse population will be participating in the [re]negotiation of the rules of the game. This is what the share and the diversity of the civilian sector—with a number of trades, crafts and knowledge[s]—is meant to represent.

Figure 2.26 shows the cumulative curves of all four sectors. Although this is still work in progress and algorithms for determining the administrative and military sectors still need adjustment, the curves do agree with the major trends that we expect to be confirmed by quantitative analysis.

The religious sector keeps on growing throughout the period. Occasional fluctuations notwithstanding, it hits the 60% mark by the end of the period.

One would expect this number to be higher, but a significant number of individuals participated in the transmission of knowledge without specializing in specific fields of religious learning and thus did not not earn relevant *nisbas*. This, of course, may result from irregularities in naming practices or the lack of verbal patterns in my **synsets**.

The civilian sector is at its highest during 300–400 AH/913–1010 CE, when it reaches a 30% share. By the end of the period it goes down to 20%. The number of individuals involved in trades and crafts is about 24-25% at its highest point around 400/1010 CE and goes down to 13-14% by the end of the period.

The administrative and military sectors are not as significant in terms of numbers, but the representatives of these sectors are in better positions to make the most immediate and most striking impact on society at large. Both sectors keep on growing, although while the growth of the administrative sector is constant, albeit rather slow, the growth of the military sector is quite remarkable, especially after 500/1107 CE. Overall, the share of the military sector could have been reaching up to 10% during the later periods, which is very significant considering that at some earlier periods this sector is lacking altogether. The administrative sector may have hit the mark of about 8% during the later periods.



## 2.3.2 Major Social Transformations

### 2.3.2.1 De-tribalization

De-tribalization is one of the most striking processes that the onomastic data show. Islamic society starts as a tribal society with up to 85% of individuals in the earliest periods qualified through tribal affiliations. As the Islamic community grows and spreads over the Middle East and North Africa, the number of individuals with tribal identities rapidly goes down (Figure 2.27) and by about 350/962 CE only 20-25% of the individuals in the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* have tribal affiliations. From this point on—perhaps even earlier—tribal affiliations persevere in different capacities: some as dynastic (most prominently, the *nisba* al-Umawī that spikes again after 350/962 CE in Andalusia), but in most cases as status markers.

Such *nisbas* as al-Anṣārī<sup>39</sup> and al-Qurashī make quite a noticeable comeback. The numbers of al-Anṣārīs (this *nisba* is particularly frequent in Andalusia as well) begin to grow quite rapidly after 350/962 CE and the number of al-Qurashīs practically skyrockets right after 500/1107 CE. However, even though their absolute numbers are much higher in the later periods, their percentage never reaches their early peaks: the highest peak of al-Anṣārīs in the earliest periods is 18.32%, while the highest one in the later periods is only 6.53%; with al-Qurashīs these numbers are 8.42% and 3.31%. Some other tribal *nisbas* are re-claimed as well, but the overall number of individuals with names that associate them with Arab tribes remains rather low, only briefly

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<sup>39</sup>Although al-Anṣār, “The Helpers [of the Prophet],” are not exactly a tribe, this group, being a product of the tribal society of Arabia, in many ways functioned as such.

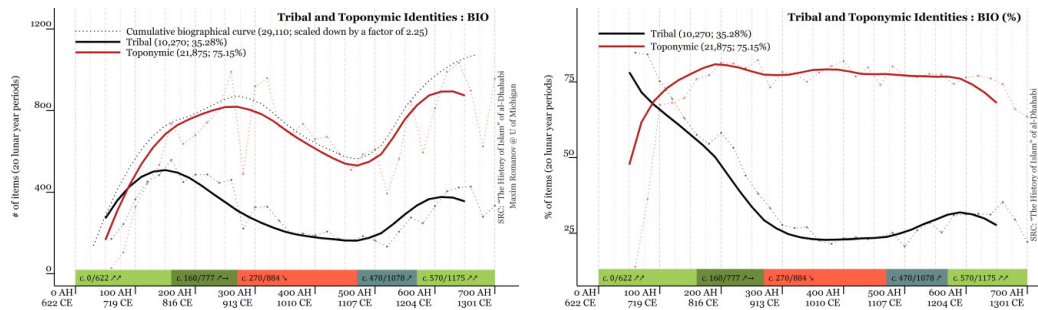


Figure 2.27: Individuals with Tribal and Toponymic *Nisbas* in *Ta'rikh al-Islam*.

going above the 30% mark.

Most tribal *nisbas* display rather distinctive orientations toward the East or the West of the Islamic world. “Late bloomers” are most often oriented toward the West (Figure 2.28). For example, such *nisbas* as al-Qaysī (208) and al-Lakhmī (183) feature most prominently in Andalusia (84 al-Qaysīs and 83 al-Lakhmīs); al-Tujībī (127)—in Andalusia (57) and Egypt (46); al-Makhzumī (182)—in Egypt (33);<sup>40</sup> al-Sa’dī (191)—in Egypt (50) and Syria (25). But again, the percentages of “late bloomers” never reach those of the earlier periods.

The change in tribal identities can also be seen through the numbers of unique tribal *nisbas* per period. In general, they display a similar trend. At its highest the number of unique tribal *nisbas* fluctuates at around 115 during the period 100–200 AH/719–816 CE. It drops to about 60 by 500/1107 CE and then grows back to about 80—most likely through the re-appropriation of old tribal *nisbas* that are now used as status markers as well as through the introduction of Turkic and Kurdish tribal identities—but by the end of the

<sup>40</sup>The first major peak of the *nisba* al-Makhzūmī is around 150/768 CE and geographically it peaks largely in the Central Arabian Cluster (65 al-Makhzūmīs).

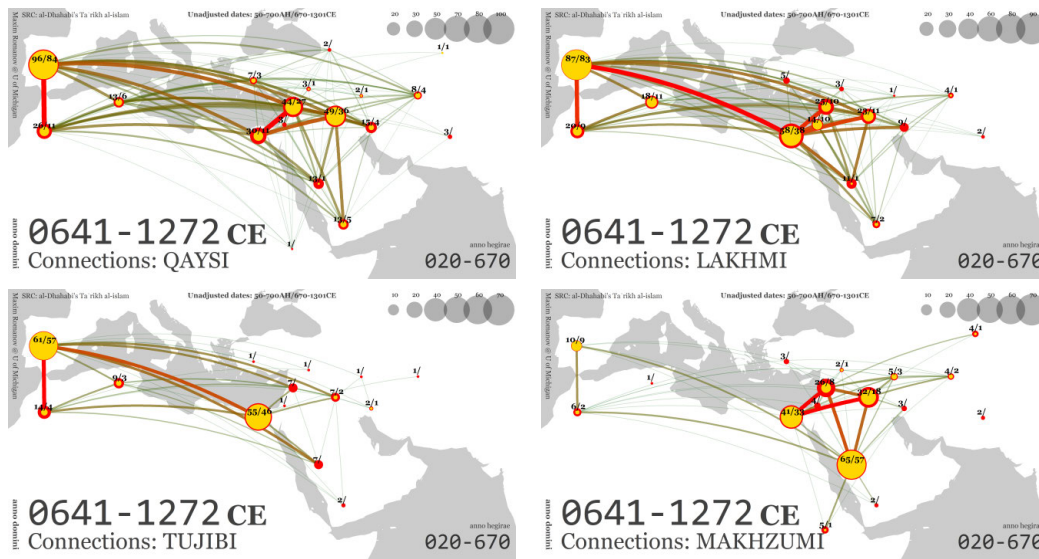


Figure 2.28: Western Orientation of Some Tribal “Late bloomers.”

main period this number goes down to the 60–70 range.

### 2.3.2.2 Militarization

The reduction of central political authority took the form of what was perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Middle Islamic periods in general, as compared with other times and areas in the Agrarian Age: its militarization.

Marshal Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*. Vol. II, p.64

Onomastic data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* allows us to take a closer look at the process characterized by Hodgson as militarization. The absolute numbers on Figure 2.29 (left)<sup>41</sup> show that the military sector of élites begins to grow rapidly after 500/1107 CE—the numbers of *amīrs* included in the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* are

<sup>41</sup>Unfortunately, at the moment my algorithms are not tuned well enough to trace all individuals who belonged to the military sector. The *nisba al-amīr* should serve well as an indicator: it is the most frequent “descriptive name” within the military sector and it is the easiest to trace computationally.

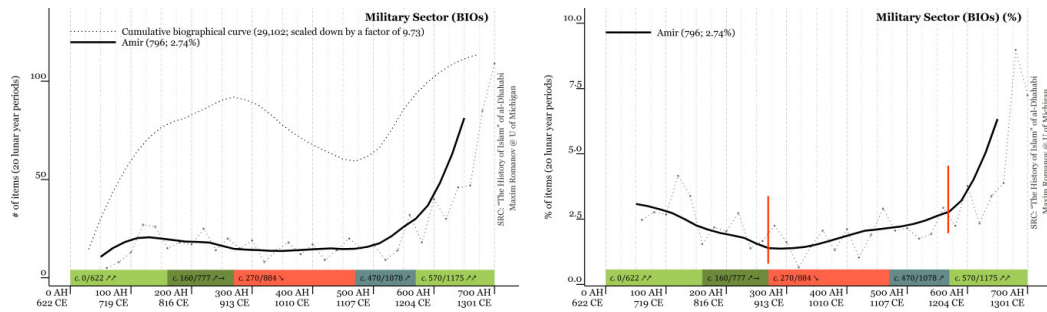


Figure 2.29: The Military Sector in *Ta'rikh al-Islam*.

staggering. Geographically, this spike of militarization is clearly visible in Iraq, the Jazīra, Egypt, but in Syria more than anywhere.

The relative numbers in Figure 2.29 (right) allow for a more detailed glimpse into how the military were treated by the learned class who composed biographical collections that became sources of al-Dhahabi's "History." And the percentages tell a somewhat different story. Interestingly, the turning points of the military curve coincide with those of the cumulative biographical curve. The military curve, however, has three clearly visible sections, or periods. The first section, the early period up until 270/884 CE, shows the decline of the military in Islamic society. This process of de-militarization went on hand-in-hand with de-tribalization, during which the diversity of the Islamic community grew, the ethos changed and swords and horses were exchanged for pens and donkeys. 270/884 CE is the first peak of the cumulative biographical curve: the highest percentage of the learned and the lowest percentage of the military in the *Ta'rikh al-Islam*.

During the middle period of 270–570 AH/884–1175 CE, when the cumulative biographical curve takes a dive and then, after 470/1078 CE, begins to recover,

the share of the military in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* grows slowly. This can be marked as the beginning of [re-]militarization of Islamic élites. Unlike in the early period, however, now the *amīrs* are not Arab[ian] warriors, but Turkic military commanders.

After 570/1175 CE—when the cumulative curve recovers and continues growing further—the percentage of military commanders in the élites begins to grow as rapidly as their absolute numbers. This third period shows a successful integration of the military into the élites and the their numbers strongly suggest that religious scholars take even minor commanders seriously.

Military commanders do a lot to make a place for themselves in the dense social space of the Islamic society: as their biographies show, they build *madrasas*, hospitals (*māristān*) and establish other *waqf* institutions. More and more often they participate in the transmission of knowledge, which scholars report.

The military—the *amīrs* themselves and members of their families<sup>42</sup>—are not the only ones building *madrasas* and, judging by the frequencies of their mentions, their establishments are not the most prominent. However, they definitely compensate for this in numbers: there are significantly more endowments established by the military than by members of other groups.<sup>43,44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Most prominently, women from their households, see, R. STEPHEN HUMPHREYS, ‘Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus’, *Muqarnas*, 11 (January 1994).

<sup>43</sup>See, for example: **TI**, 28, 311–312; **TI**, 29, 68–76; **TI**, 37, 57–58; **TI**, 37, 185–186; **TI**, 38, 157–158; **TI**, 39, 370–387; **TI**, 41, 161–164; **TI**, 42, 407; **TI**, 44, 220; **TI**, 45, 119; **TI**, 45, 164; **TI**, 45, 311–313; **TI**, 45, 359; **TI**, 45, 402–406; **TI**, 46, 87–88; **TI**, 46, 289; **TI**, 46, 431–432; **TI**, 47, 165; **TI**, 47, 308; **TI**, 49, 192; **TI**, 50, 264; **TI**, 51, 196–197; **TI**, 51, 369–370; **TI**, 52, 368; **TI**, 52, 409–411.

<sup>44</sup>On the military patronage, see also: R. STEPHEN HUMPHREYS, ‘Politics and Architectural Patronage in Ayyubid Damascus’, in: CLIFFORD EDMUND. BOSWORTH, editor, *The*

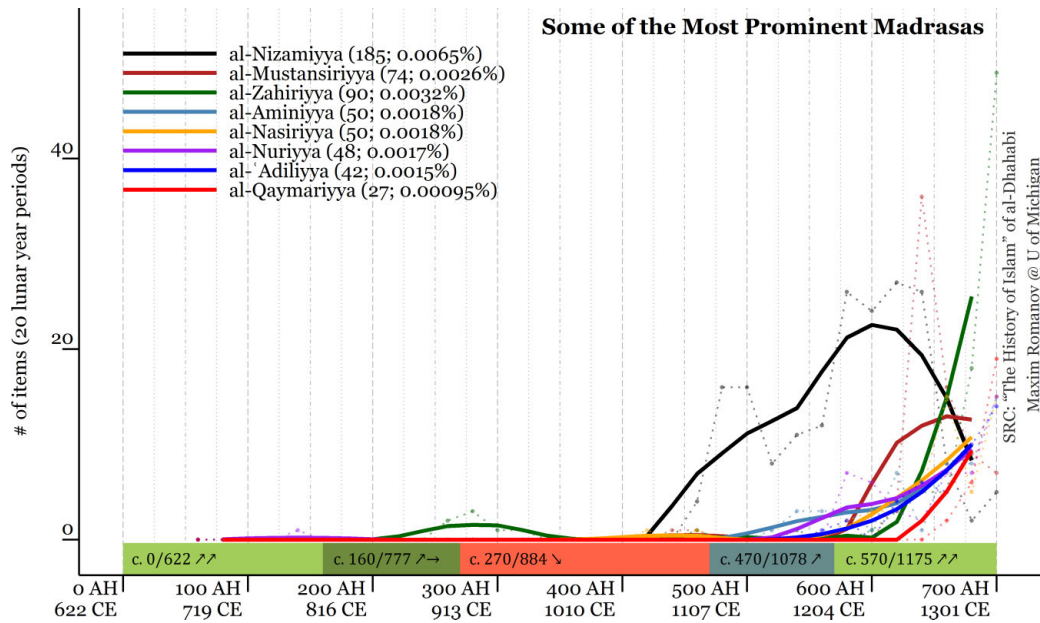


Figure 2.30: Mentions of Most Prominent *Madrasas*.

Figure 2.30 shows the curves of the most frequently mentioned *madrasas* in *Taʾriḫ al-islām*. The vizieral al-Niẓāmiyyas and the caliphal al-Mustansiriyya feature more prominently. However, their curves strongly suggest that their prime time is over, while “military” *madrasas*—al-Zāhiriyya, al-Amīniyya, al-Nāširiyya, al-Nūriyya, al-ʿĀdiliyya and al-Qaymariyya and others—are on the rise.

The “Fulān al-dīn” honorifics that in the earlier periods were reserved for religious scholars become very common among the military, while the old pattern of “Fulān al-dawla” practically disappears (see Figure 2.31).<sup>45</sup> It is

*Islamic world from classical to modern times: essays in honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1989).

<sup>45</sup>Somehow, the “Fulān al-dīn” names still have a strong steel aftertaste. The most common names of the “Fulān al-dawla” pattern are Sayf al-dawla, “Sword of the Dynasty;” Nāšir al-dawla, “Helper of the Dynasty;” Našr al-dawla, “Victory of the Dynasty;” Muʿizz al-dawla, “Strengthened of the Dynasty;” ʿIzz al-dawla, “Strength of the Dynasty;” ʿAḍud

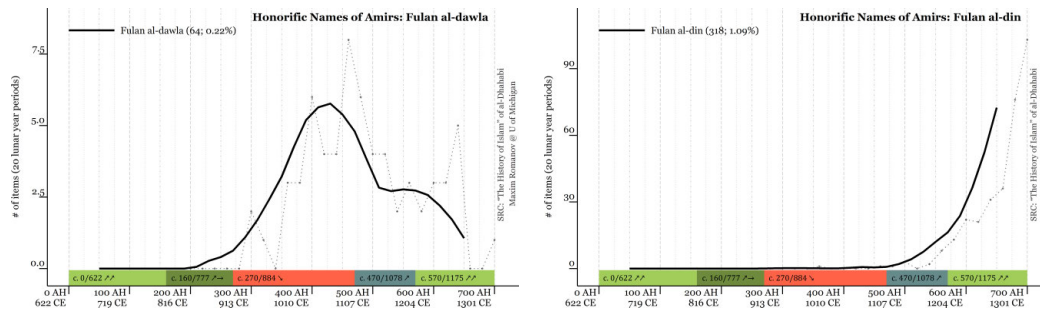


Figure 2.31: Patterns of Military Honorific Names: Fulān al-dawla, the most common pattern in the middle period, gets replaced by Fulān al-dīn pattern in the later period.

not entirely clear whether these names are given to the military by religious scholars or if they are self-claimed (most likely both), but the fact that the military are listed under these honorifics in biographical collections implies that at the very least religious scholars endorsed them.

Frequencies of such words as *khalīfa/amīr al-muʾminīn*, *sultān* and *amīr* in biographies show that the 4th/10th century was a the period (Figure 2.32) when scholarly attention started shifting from caliphs to *sultāns* and *amīrs* who were gaining more power and more social presence. This shift in frequencies also neatly marks the end of the period which Hodgson characterized as the High Caliphal Period (in his chronology: *c.* 692–945 CE),<sup>46</sup> and the beginning of the Earlier Middle Islamic Period (in his chronology: *c.* 945–1258 CE): the era of *sultāns* and *amīrs*.

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al-dawla, “Support of the Dynasty;” Tāj al-dawla, “Crown of the Dynasty;” Bahāʾ al-dawla, “Splendor of the Dynasty;” Ḥusām al-dawla, “Cutting Edge of the Dynasty.” The most common names of the “Fulān al-dīn” pattern are: Sayf al-dīn, “Sword of Religion;” ʿIzz al-dīn, “Strength of Religion;” Jamāl al-dīn, “Beauty of Religion;” Badr al-Dīn, “Full Moon of Religion;” Shams al-dīn, “Sun of Religion;” Ṣalāḥ al-dīn, “Goodness of Religion;” Ḥusām al-dīn, “Cutting Edge of Religion;” Quṭb al-dīn, “Pole of Religion;” ʿAlam al-dīn, “Banner of Religion.”

<sup>46</sup>There is also a late peak that corresponds to the restoration of the independence of the

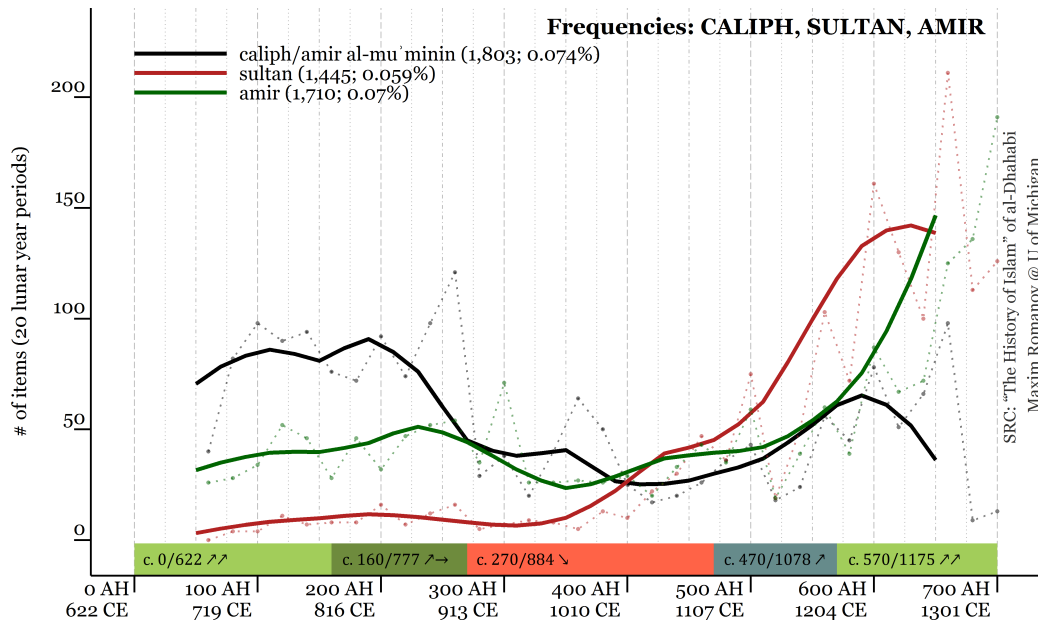


Figure 2.32: Frequencies of *khalīfa*, *sultān*, *amīr*.

### 2.3.2.3 De-civilianization

As was noted above (Section 2.3.1.2) the share of the civilian sector noticeably decreases after 400/1010 CE. The diversity of crafts and trades within the civilian sector reaches its highest point around 300/913 CE, when 85 different trades and crafts are represented.<sup>47</sup> After 300/913 CE the diversity goes down, getting to the 60s range by the end of the period.

Looking closer into trades and crafts, it can be pointed that several sectors are clearly distinguishable:<sup>48</sup> textiles (1,495), foods (799), metalwork (331),

<sup>46</sup>Abbāsid caliphate during the second half of the 6th/12th century, but it is short-lived.

<sup>47</sup>I should remind the reader that only *nīsba*s that are used to describe at least 10 individuals are considered in this analysis.

<sup>48</sup>Largely following Shatzmiller's classification, see: SHATZMILLER (1994), *Labour in the medieval Islamic world*; these sectors often overlap.



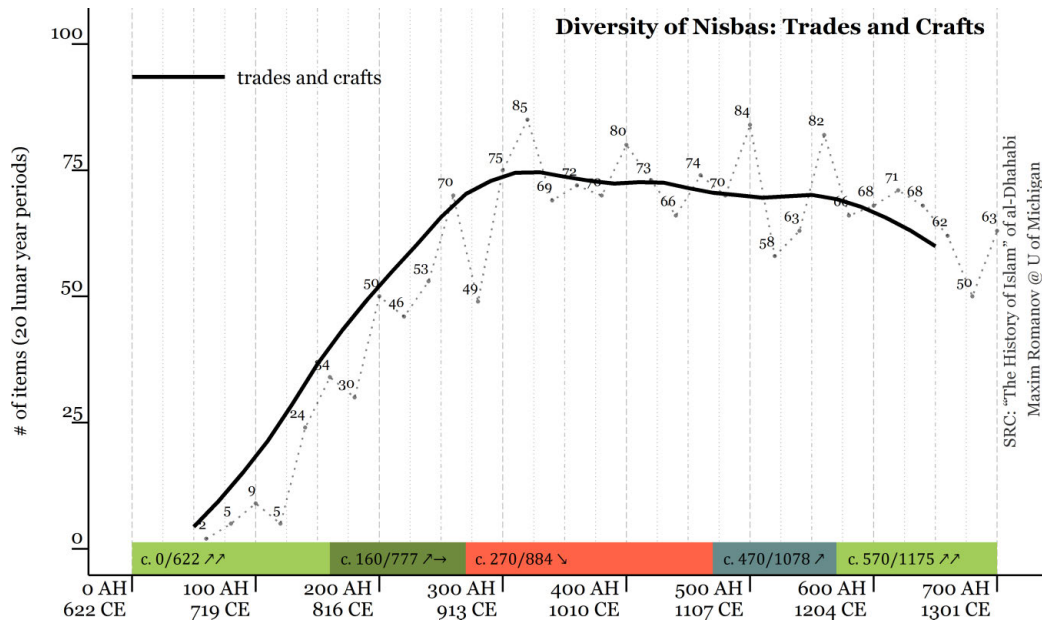


Figure 2.33: Diversity of Trades and Crafts: Numbers of unique *nisbas* referring to trades in crafts by 20 lunar year periods.

“chemistry” (349),<sup>49</sup> clothes (306), finances (278), paper/books (253), brokerage (231), jewelry (218), and sundry services (170).

All sectors peak sometime between 300/913 CE and 500/1107 CE, but after that they show steady decline—even in those rare cases when absolute numbers remain quite significant, their percentage unmistakably go down. Practically all individual *nisbas* show the same trend. Merchants (sing. *tājir*, 294; Figure 2.35) constitute the only group that shows a different trend and their numbers actually grow by the end of the period. This is, however, only because this is a blanket category that encompasses all the above listed “industries,” without emphasizing any specific one in particular. Figure 2.34 shows the cu-

<sup>49</sup>Trades that involve dealing with any complex compounds: al-ʿAṭṭār, “druggist, perfumer;” al-Ṣaydalānī, “apothecary, druggist;” al-Ṣābūnī, “soap maker/seller” etc.

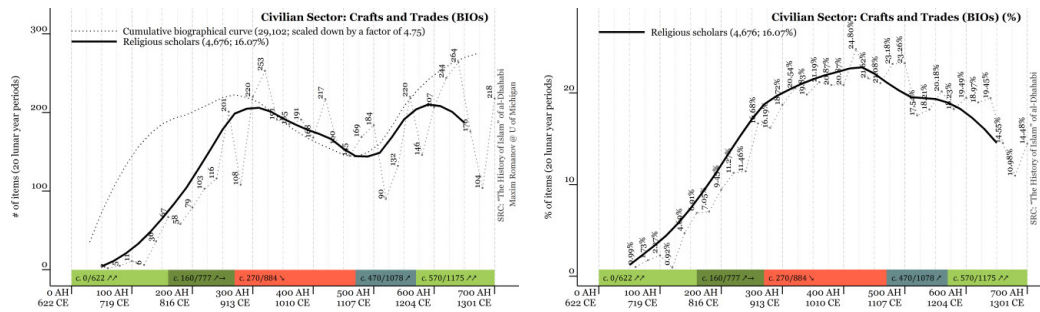


Figure 2.34: The Growth and Decline of Crafts and Trades.

mulative trend of involvement of religious scholars in crafts and trades. The curve based on absolute numbers (left) shows that numbers of scholars—who were either directly involved in specific crafts and trades or came from families that made their fortune in those areas—remained rather high until 600/1204 CE; relative numbers show that the steady downward trend in this sector begins as early as 440/1049 CE—about three decades before the cumulative biographical curve (470/1078 CE) starts recovering.

By the end of the period the emphasis in identities shifts, and while “secular occupations” are still not uncommon among the learned,<sup>50</sup> they are definitely no longer the main focus of biographers, who instead pay more attention to positions and family connections (see Section 2.3.2.4 below).

The geographical distribution of these professions is most puzzling. Essentially, all “industries” display the same pattern: the larger the region, the larger the presence of individuals involved in specific “industries.” Iraq always comes first, followed by Iran (representation by sectors varies slightly, but northeastern Iran usually has highest numbers), then Syria and Egypt.

<sup>50</sup>The decline is not as staggering as, for example, Cohen’s study argued.

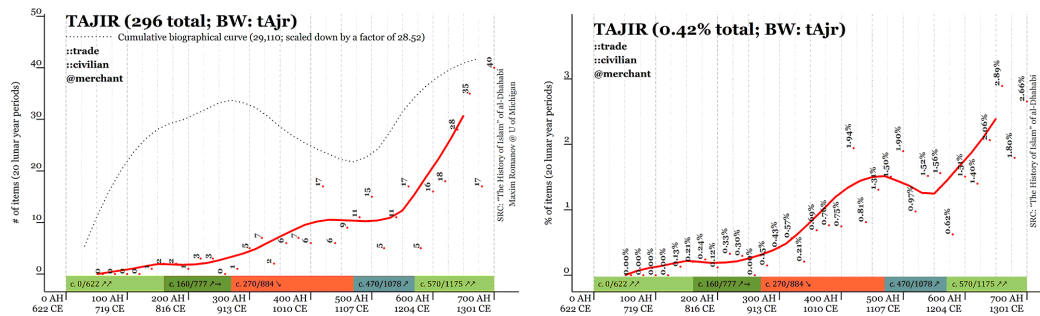


Figure 2.35: The Growth of Merchants.

Such a geographical distribution of “industries” suggests that occupational *nisbas* were used as necessary specifiers to distinguish among individuals in large communities.<sup>51</sup> This issue might be resolved by adding local biographical collections to the corpus and experimenting with data grouping until some distinctive patterns can be discerned. Data from non-literary sources will be crucial for advancing this inquiry, which requires undivided attention.

Whether this decline of the civilian sector is a result of the actual withdrawal of the learned from trades and crafts, or, the loss of awareness of this part of their identity, the general effect on the development of the religious sector would still be the same: the loss of connections with broader population. It is not that religious scholars stopped maintaining connections with populace at large, but they gradually turned into a self-reproducing class whose members were primarily concerned about their own group interests.

<sup>51</sup>Very similar to what Bulliet argued regarding toponymic *nisbas*: “For example Karkh, a popular quarter of Baghdad, appears in the nisba al-Karkhī when representation from Iraq is high. When the proportion is smaller, the name of the major city itself is a common nisba. In the example given, a later resident of Karkh would appear as al-Baghdadī. Finally, when the proportion is very low, the nisba will frequently be derived from the entire province, that is, al-Baghdadī becomes al-‘Irāqī.” (BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*, 12).

#### 2.3.2.4 Professionalization & Institutionalization

Professionalization and institutionalization of the learned class are another two processes that take place during the period covered in *Taʿrīkh al-islām*. These processes have been discussed at length in academic literature,<sup>52</sup> although in most cases the emphasis is on institutionalization.<sup>53</sup>

Here “professionalization” is understood as the growth of complexity of religious learning that leads to its branching into specific disciplines, mastering which eventually requires full-time commitment. Professionalization implies the development of a community of specialists who maintain qualifying standards and ensure demarcation from the non-qualified; ideally, mechanisms of monetary and status compensation for professional services should develop during this process.

If we agree on recognizing the process of branching of the religious learning into specific disciplines as an indicator of professionalization, we may look at the growth of religious specializations as indicated through “descriptive

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<sup>52</sup>The most important studies: GEORGE MAKDISI, *The rise of the colleges: institutions of learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); JONATHAN P. BERKEY, *The transmission of knowledge in Medieval Cairo: a social history of Islamic education* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992); MICHAEL CHAMBERLAIN, *Knowledge and social practice in medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). To a large extent Berkey’s and Chamberlain’s studies are responses to Makdisi’s “over-institutionalization.”

<sup>53</sup>It seems that Gilbert is the only one to use this term in her study of the learned of Medieval Damascus: see, JOAN E. GILBERT, ‘Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the ‘Ulamā’ in Medieval Damascus’, *Studia Islamica*, 52 (January 1980). However, in her study this term appears to blend into institutionalization and both become practically indistinguishable. Other scholars mention professionalization almost exclusively with the reference to Gilbert’s work. See, for example: CHAMBERLAIN (1994), *Knowledge and social practice in medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*, 70; DAPHNA EPHRAT, *A learned society in a period of transition: the Sunni ‘Ulama’ of eleventh century Baghdad* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 104, 179.

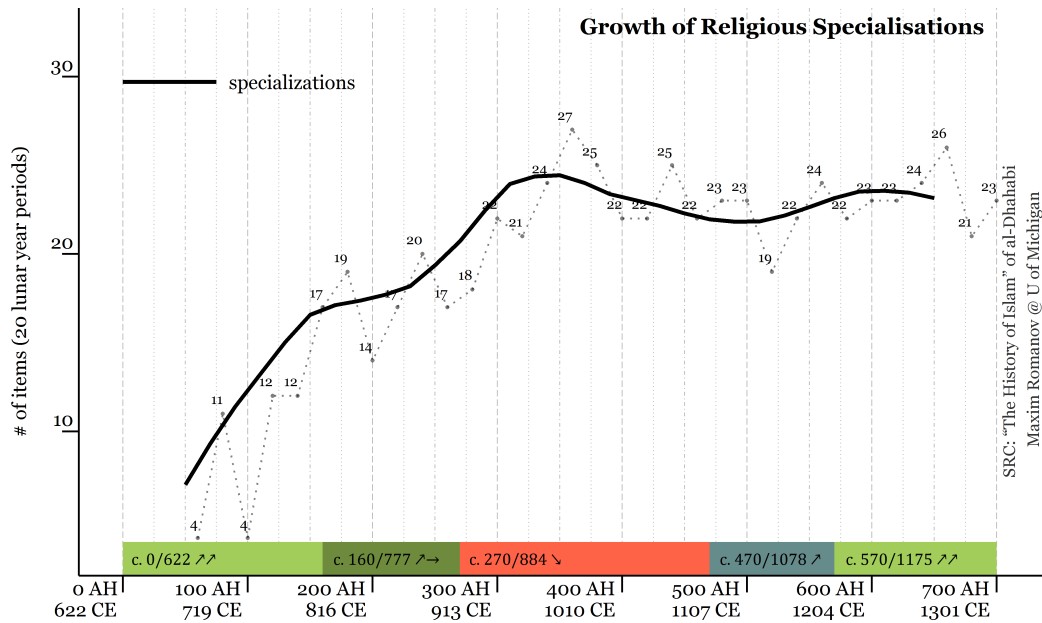


Figure 2.36: Growth of Religious Specializations: Numbers of unique *nisbas* referring to religious specializations by 20 lunar year periods.

names.” Figure 2.36 shows that the process of branching reaches its highest point during 300–350 AH/913–962 CE, after which the number of specializations remains on the same level and fluctuates only slightly.

Although completely devoid of both buzzwords, Melchert’s study is perhaps the most valuable insight into the process of professionalization.<sup>54</sup> In his book on the formation of the Sunnī legal schools (*madhhab*), Melchert offered three major criteria: the recognition of the chief scholar (*raʿīs*), commentaries (*taʿliqa*) on the summaries of legal teachings (*mukhtaṣar*), as a proof of one’s qualification, and a more or less regulated process of transmission of legal knowledge, through which the achievement of required qualification is en-

<sup>54</sup>CHRISTOPHER MELCHERT, *The formation of the Sunni schools of law, 9th-10th centuries C.E.* (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1997).

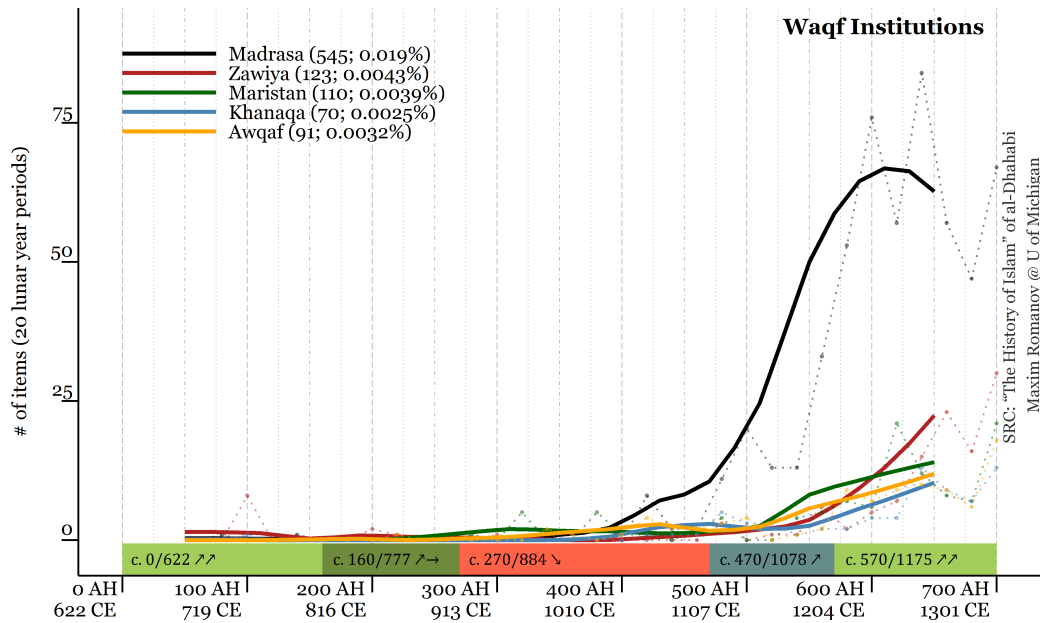


Figure 2.37: References to *Waqf* Institutions in Biographies.

sured. Chronologically, Melchert placed this process for the Shāfiʿīs, Ḥanbalīs and Ḥanafīs in Baghdad of the late 9<sup>th</sup>—early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>55</sup> Keeping in mind this coincidence of Melchert’s close reading of legal *ṭabaqāt* and my distant reading of *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, we may—at least tentatively—consider 300/913 CE to be a turning point in the process of professionalization.

Data from the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* shows that professionalization of religious knowledge (around 300/913 CE) is not directly related to scholars’ abandoning their gainful occupations in the civilian sectors, as this process will start only around 430/1039 CE. However, professionalization failed to bring about one very important thing, namely more paid positions for the learned. This must

<sup>55</sup>The failure of the Mālikīs Melchert explains by their being too closely linked to the caliphal patronage and when the caliphs were eclipsed, so were the Mālikīs. See: MELCHERT (1997), *The formation of the Sunni schools of law, 9th-10th centuries C.E.*, 176.

have forced men of learning into difficult position where they had to maintain a delicate, but uncomfortable balance between keeping up with higher standards of religious learning and earning living. The financial difficulties that professionalization imposed on the life of a scholar may have become quite a discouraging factor for the young who were considering career paths. Keeping in mind that the decline of the main curve begins *c.* 270/884 CE—i.e. roughly around the time when the number of religious specializations reaches its highest point—it is tempting to consider that professionalization has something to do with this decline. After all, a full-time commitment to study religious sciences leaves one no time to earn a living through gainful occupations in the civilian sector. Charging money for teaching religious subjects was considered illicit, and there are hardly any indications that the number of positions for religious specialists grew to compensate for this unfortunate development. To succeed in such conditions, one had to be either extremely resolute or come from a wealthy family to afford the career of a scholar. And since both of these are in limited availability in any society, this could explain the decline in numbers of biographies.

The introduction and spread of *waqf* institutions is considered a turning point in the institutionalization of the learned. The salaried positions of these institutions offered a solution to the complication of professionalization. Frequencies of references to *waqf* institutions in biographies (Figure 2.37) show that they—most importantly the *madrasas*—become a noteworthy detail of biographies soon after 400/1010 CE, about 100 lunar years after the turning

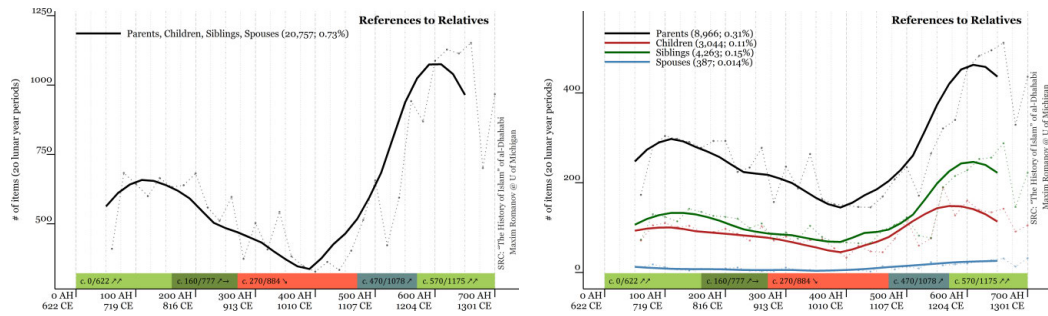


Figure 2.38: References to Relatives. The graph on the left shows the major categories of relatives, while the on on the right shows the same data combined into one graph.

point in professionalization, and a very important one after 500/1107 CE.<sup>56,57</sup>

However, by offering salaried positions, the *waqf* institutions also reconfigured the structure of the learned class, which in the long run had a very negative effect. In his study of medieval Damascus,<sup>58</sup> Chamberlain convincingly argued that salaried positions (*manāṣīb*) became one of the major object of contention among the learned who were now concerned about winning and holding as many of these positions as it was possible. One of their strategies was to ensure that the positions stayed within a family—household—which led to the formation of the dynasties of religious scholars and, in the long run, the transformation of the religious class into a rather closed social stratum, to which the word “clergy” became more and more applicable as time went on.

<sup>56</sup>Early mentions of *zāwiya* refer to *yawm al-zāwiya*, a battle between Ibn al-Ash‘āth and al-Ḥajjāj that took place outside Basra (bi-l-baṣra) in 82/702 CE (TI, 6, 8–16). As is the case with many historical events in *Ta’rīkh al-islām*, this battle becomes a chronological point of reference and is mentioned in some biographies afterwards. Needless to say that the word *zāwiya* also has other meanings.

<sup>57</sup>The decline of the frequency of the word *madrasa* should not be interpreted as a decline of this institution, but rather as a change in the form of reference in general: most *madrāsas* are referred to by their “al-Fulāniyya” names (see Figure 2.30).

<sup>58</sup>CHAMBERLAIN (1994), *Knowledge and social practice in medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*.



As the data from the *Taʾrīkh al-islām* indicate (Figure 2.38), the role of family connections unmistakably increases after 400/1010 CE. The tribal nature of early Islamic society explains the high frequency of references to close relatives in the early periods. However, references to parents are most frequent—largely to fathers<sup>59</sup>—which is understandable, considering the importance of lineage through the male line within tribal society. But again, the curve of references goes down steadily between 120/739 CE and 380/991 CE, mirroring the curve of tribal identities that also goes down while the number of biographies keeps on growing. After 380/991 CE references to family members practically skyrocket, and even increase in pace slightly around 500/1107 CE. Unlike in the early period, references to most members of the immediate family become very common: parents (the word “parent,” *wālid[a]*, become particularly common), siblings (brothers and sisters—*akhū*, *ukht*), children (sons and daughters—*ibnu-hu*, *bintu-hu*, etc.), and, to a lesser extent, spouses (husbands and wives—*zawj[a]*). The same trend can be seen in the references to uncles, aunts, grandparents and grandchildren. These shifts—not just the growth of frequencies, but also the growth of varieties of familial references—may be interpreted as a shift of scholarly attention from the lineage to the household.

If we accept these rates of frequencies as an indicator of the formation of households, than it appears that scholarly households begin growing earlier than *waqf* institutions. The growth of scholarly families thus may have been caused by professionalization and then boosted by institutionalization.

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<sup>59</sup>The most common references are the forms of *abū*, “father.” Since this word is also the essential part of *kunya*, an extremely common patronymic element of the Arab/Muslim name, only its forms with pronominal suffixes—such as *abū-hu*, “his father”—are considered. The same principle is applied to other ambiguous family terms.

# Chapter 3

## Preaching & Preachers

### 3.1 Defining the Subject

#### 3.1.1 Lost in Translation: “Preaching”

Preaching in Islam is a complicated phenomenon that appeared through time and space in different forms and guises. The number of studies that have the word “preaching” in their titles or keywords is rather significant, which may lead one to believe that “preaching” in Islam has already received its deserved share of scholarly attention. However, a even cursory examination of these studies shows that this impression is far from correct and as one takes a closer look the long list starts to thin out rather quickly.

To begin with, the word “preaching” itself is problematic, since in any cultural and confessional context it can be used to refer to forms of communication that range from an act of delivering a religious sermon to an informal “secular” address that seeks in the same way listener’s transformation and is

referred to as “preaching” only figuratively. Even with the figurative use of the term set aside,<sup>1</sup> there still remain a number of different religious practices which this term may refer to; these also range significantly from missionary activities in general, to a formal sermon delivered by an official cleric, to an informal conversation on religious issues where one side assumes the leading role, thus becoming “a preacher.” For this reason one quickly discovers that even in the same historical, cultural and confessional context, studies of preaching often have little in common.

Things get even more complicated when the already ambiguous English word “preaching” is used to render several different Arabic terms: *khutba*, *qaṣaṣ*, *waṣṣ* (or *tadhkīr*) and *daʿwa*. Although the boundaries among these notions may be quite blurry, we should begin by discussing them as distinct preaching practices—as it is often done in academic literature. If viewed as ideal types in the pre-modern context, these forms of preaching had different objectives, took place in different settings, and used different persuasion techniques.

The *khutba* (الخطبة) took place in congregational mosques (sing. *jāmiʿ*) on Fridays (sing. *yawm al-jumʿa*)—“Sundays of the Muslims”—and was deliv-

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<sup>1</sup>One of the first works to have the word “preaching” in its title was actually a general history of Islam in disguise, see: THOMAS W. ARNOLD, *The preaching of Islam: a history of the propagation of the Muslim faith* (Westminster: A. Constable and co., 1896). In addition, one also comes across studies that use references to Islamic preaching to build the main argument, which is only remotely related to preaching per se. For example, Asghar Fathi argues for the unique role of the pulpit (*minbar*) as a public forum in Islam, however, his main goal is to address the theoretical gap in the study of public communication in modern and traditional societies. See, ASGHAR FATHI, ‘The Role of the Islamic Pulpit’, *Journal of Communication*, 29:3 (September 1979); ASGHAR FATHI, ‘The Islamic Pulpit as a Medium of Political Communication’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 20 (1981). Such studies do not add much to the studies of Islamic homiletics, yet contribute to the distorted image of the field.

ered either by the ruler himself or an officially-appointed preacher (*khaṭīb*) to the congregation of male Muslims of legally responsible age. The main goal of this practice was to re-affirm Islamic unity (*jamā'a*) by means of a brief, formalized address. If led by an officially-appointed preacher, this address would include the name of the leader of the Islamic world—or, later, of a specific region of it—simultaneously legitimizing his rule and confirming the community's allegiance to him. In the Sunnī context this practice has existed almost uninterruptedly throughout history. Since the Shī'ites believe that the *khuṭba* is to be delivered by the *imām*, the Twelver community—whose *imām* went into Occultation—soon gave up on this practice; meanwhile the Ismā'īlī communities who believed in their living *imāms* seem to have maintained this practice, although the Fāṭimid caliphs rarely delivered *khuṭbas* themselves and, like their 'Abbāsīd rivals, largely delegated this task to preachers who represented them.<sup>2</sup>

*Qaṣaṣ* (القصاص) is conventionally understood to refer to an early, controversial practice of popular storytelling: an informal, low-scale, spontaneous gathering that took place in naturally crowded locations such as market places, where a *qāṣṣ*—essentially any eloquent daredevil—would entertain a crowd, very likely for a personal gain. The exact definition of *qaṣaṣ* still eludes scholars, since the term may refer to religious storytelling, battlefield preaching and politically charged “lectures” (in the Umayyad and early 'Abbāsīd periods), while practitioners of *qaṣaṣ*—“storytellers” (*quṣṣāṣ*, sing. *qāṣṣ*)—came from

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<sup>2</sup>See, PAUL E. WALKER, *Orations of the Fatimid caliphs: festival sermons of the Ismaili imams: an edition of the Arabic texts and English translation of Fatimid khutbas* (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris; In association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies; Distributed in the U.S.A. by Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

the widest variety of backgrounds, ranging from vagabonds eloquent enough to take advantage of entertainment-hungry crowds, to the appointees of the caliphs, who used “storytellers” to propel their agenda.<sup>3</sup>

*Daʿwa* (الدعوة) stands for the “propaganda” of a specific political-cum-religious cause, often in support of some individual or a family that claimed the right to supreme leadership in the community. If such propaganda was successful and resulted in the establishment of a new ruling house, it would be abandoned, as was the case with the ʿAbbāsīd *daʿwa*. A prominent exception, however, were the Fāṭimids, who turned the *daʿwa* into one of their principal religious institutions. As a result, in the pre-modern context *daʿwa* refers almost exclusively to the semi-clandestine “call” to the Qarmaṭī/Ismaʿīlī cause<sup>4</sup> that took place largely in a private setting, where a “caller” (*dāʿī/dāʿiya*) tried to sway the discussant towards his cause, taking advantage of his trust and, depending on the situation, appealing to deep emotional feelings toward the family of the Prophet or using careful logical arguments intertwined with crafty sophisms. Strongly associated with the Fāṭimid dynasty of Egypt, the *daʿwa* was treated by the ʿAbbāsīds as the main ideological threat—both real and imagined—and the accusation of being a *dāʿī* could lead to imprisonment<sup>5</sup> and was sometimes used to eliminate rivals.

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<sup>3</sup>On these issues and relevant studies, see: KHALIL ATHAMINA, ‘Al-Qasas: Its Emergence, Religious Origin and Its Socio-Political Impact on Early Muslim Society’, *Studia Islamica*, 76:76 (1992).

<sup>4</sup>See, CANARD M., ‘Daʿwa,’ in **EI2**; also, HODGSON M.G.S., ‘Dāʿī,’ in **EI2**, WALTER P.E., ‘Dāʿī (in Ismaʿīlī Islam),’ in **EI3**.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., the [in]famous mystic Abū Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922 CE) was crucified alive under the accusations of being a Qarmaṭī *dāʿiya*; at his execution it was announced: “This is one of the Qarmaṭī missionaries, be aware of him!” (**SAN**, 14, 313–354; also **TI**, 23, 8–9; **SAN**, 15, 47. See also: See, e.g., ALEXANDER D. KNYSH, *Islamic mysticism: a short history* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 68–82.

Over time, although it is not entirely clear exactly when and how, this term lost its strong Shī‘ī connotations and became the dominant term for “preaching” in modern Sunnī Islam. Most studies of contemporary Islamic preaching deal with the modern form of *da‘wa*—an unofficial, anti-state and sincere “call” to Muslims to live according to Islamic norms. In this regard, *dā‘ī* is routinely juxtaposed with *khaṭīb*, where the former is a true believer concerned with the well-being of all Muslims, while the latter is a servant of the oppressing state. At the same time, in the modern context *da‘wa* also stands for “missionary activities” in the broad sense of the word; arguably, “preaching” may be implied, but often is not even mentioned.<sup>6</sup>

*Wa‘z* (الوعظ)—as well as *tadhkīr* (التذكير), its relatively rare counterpart—refers to a pre-modern form of preaching, which is often translated into English with an additional qualifier, such as “popular,” “admonishing,” “[ex]hortatory” or, as in my case, “public.” It is often viewed as a practice that grew out of *qaṣaṣ*. Yet, unlike its “predecessor,” *wa‘z* evolved to fit its Islamic garments perfectly. *Wa‘z* sermons were delivered by preachers (*wu‘āz*, sing. *wā‘iz*) who only occasionally were officially appointed to this job: they would address the public in general, including Muslims and non-Muslims of both sexes and all ages, and strive to bring their listeners to emotional catharsis and spiritual transformation. In its heyday, *wa‘z* gatherings would often take place in open locations in order to accommodate large crowds of people, who would occa-

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<sup>6</sup>Such explanation of *da‘wa* is often the only interpretation of this concept, see, e.g., LARRY POSTON, *Islamic da‘wah in the West: Muslim missionary activity and the dynamics of conversion to Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); also see: “*Da‘wa*,” in MARTIN, RICHARD C., editor, *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim world* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA: Thomson/Gale, 2004), 170–174.

sionally be willing to pay a small fortune to secure the best “seats.” So as not to interfere with *khuṭba*, *waʿz* sermons were expected to be organized on days of the week other than Friday. Once a prominent part of urban life, *waʿz* gradually disappeared from the map of Islamic spirituality. Although some scholars talk about the existence of *waʿz* in the modern context,<sup>7</sup> this practice appears to be the least known form of preaching even among Muslims.

### 3.1.2 Major Studies of Islamic Preaching

Linda Jones’s latest book<sup>8</sup> includes the most up-to-date detailed discussion of bibliography on pre-modern Islamic preaching, so I will limit myself to a brief overview of major contributions that determine the state of the field and help me to build the argument for why another study is needed.

Studies of Islamic preaching in the pre-modern context deal with different preaching practices in specific historical and regional contexts. From early on scholars of Islam paid attention to preaching practices, but the earliest study that dealt exclusively with preaching goes back to the articles of Johannes Pedersen. Merlin Swartz studied *waʿz* in the context of late ʿAbbāsīd Iraq, and in particular, he focused on the career of the famous Baghdādī preacher Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201 CE). In the late 60s, Swartz prepared an edition and translation of *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*, one of Ibn al-Jawzī’s many books on *waʿz*.<sup>9</sup> His dissertation and monograph were followed by a series of

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<sup>7</sup>Usually it is mentioned rather briefly and is never the main subject; see, for example, PATRICK D. GAFFNEY, *The Prophet’s pulpit: Islamic preaching in contemporary Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 32–33; ATHAMINA (1992), ‘Al-Qasas’.

<sup>8</sup>LINDA G. JONES, *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World*, 1st edition (Cambridge University Press, July 2012).

<sup>9</sup>MERLIN L. SWARTZ, ‘Ibn al-Jawzī, a study of his life and work as a preacher: including

articles on Islamic homiletics,<sup>10</sup> including one that offered a periodization of *waʿz*.<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Berkey focused his studies of *waʿz* and *qaṣaṣ* principally on Egypt and the Fertile Crescent (roughly 1000–1500 CE).<sup>12</sup> Daniella Talmon-Heller studied both *khutba* and *waʿz* in several works that focus on Zangid and Ayyūbid Syria (1146–1260 CE).<sup>13</sup> Linda Jones also studies both major manifestations of preaching but her work is mostly concentrated on Islamic Spain and North Africa (11–15 centuries CE).<sup>14</sup> Tahera Qutbuddin contributed an extensive article on early Islamic *khutbas*<sup>15</sup> and a monograph on Ismāʿīlī

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a critical edition and translation of his Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn, with introduction and notes’, Ph.D thesis, Harvard University (1967); MERLIN L. SWARTZ, *Ibn al-Jawzī’s Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn. Including a Critical Edition, Annotated Translation and Introduction* (Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq Éditeurs, 1971).

<sup>10</sup>MERLIN L. SWARTZ, ‘The rules of the popular preaching in twelfth-century Baghdad: according to Ibn al-Jawzī’, in: *Prédication et propagande au Moyen Age: Islam, Byzance, Occident: Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia, III, session des 20-25 octobre 1980* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1983); MERLIN L. SWARTZ, ‘Arabic rhetoric and the art of the homily in medieval Islam’, in: *Religion and culture in medieval Islam. Ed. R.G.Hovannisian & Georges Sabagh (Giorgio Levi della Vida Conferences, 14)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>11</sup>MERLIN L. SWARTZ, ‘Preaching, Islamic’, in: WILLIAM C. JORDAN and JOSEPH R. STRAYER, editors, *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner, 1982).

<sup>12</sup>JONATHAN P. BERKEY, ‘Storytelling, preaching, and power in Mamluk Cairo’, *Mamluk Studies Review*, 4 (2000); JONATHAN P. BERKEY, *Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

<sup>13</sup>For example, see: DANIELLA TALMON-HELLER, ‘Islamic preaching in Syria during the Counter-Crusade (twelfth-thirteenth centuries)’, in: *In laudem Hierosolymitani: studies in Crusades and medieval culture in honour of Benjamin Z.Kedar. Ed. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum and Jonathan Riley-Smith* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007b); DANIELLA TALMON-HELLER, *Islamic piety in medieval Syria: mosques, cemeteries and sermons under the Zangids and Ayyūbids (1146-1260)* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2007a).

<sup>14</sup>LINDA G. JONES, ‘Ibn ʿAbbad of Ronda’s Sermon on the Prophet’s Birthday Celebration: Preaching the Sufi and Sunni Paths of Islam’, *Medieval Sermon Studies*, 50 (2006); LINDA G. JONES, ‘La predicación cristiana y musulmana: puente entre la teología ortodoxa y la religiosidad popular’, in: *Evangelització i ʿaṣwaʿ: fronteres entre musulmans i cristians. [Ed.] Joan Martínez Porcell, Rachid Aarab* (Barcelona: Facultat de Filosofia de la Universitat Ramon Llull, 2007a); LINDA G. JONES, ‘Witness of God: exhortatory preachers in medieval al-Andalus and the Magreb’, *Al-Qantara: Revista de Estudios Arabes*, 28 (2007b), and, most recently: JONES (2012), *The Power of Oratory*.

<sup>15</sup>TAHERA QUTBUDDIN, ‘Khutba. The evolution of early Arabic oration’, in: *Classical Arabic humanities in their own terms. Festschrift for Wolfhart Heinrichs on his 65th birth-*



*daʿwa* poetry.<sup>16</sup> Preaching in the Fāṭimid/Ismāʿīlī context received its share of scholarly attention from Paul Walker who studied extensively the *khutbas* of the Fāṭimid caliphs;<sup>17</sup> and Heinz Halm who dealt with the institution of *daʿwa* within the history of the Fāṭimids and their caliphate in general.<sup>18</sup>

Studies of preaching in the modern Islamic world focus on the *khutba* and even more so on the *daʿwa* (and its variant forms, e.g. *tablīgh* in the South-East Asian context).<sup>19</sup> Cultural anthropologists—most prominently Patrick Gaffney,<sup>20</sup> Richard Antoun<sup>21</sup> and Charles Hirschkind<sup>22</sup>—have made a significant contribution to the study of contemporary Islamic preaching. Occasionally a neglect of Islamic history prompts anthropologists to false discoveries,<sup>23</sup> but their studies do offer invaluable insights that can help improve our under-

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*day*, Beatrice Gruendler, with the assistance of Michael Cooperson edition (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

<sup>16</sup>TAHERA QUTBUDDIN, *al-Muʿayyad al-Shūrāzī and Fatimid daʿwa poetry: a case of commitment in classical Arabic literature* (Boston: Brill, 2005).

<sup>17</sup>WALKER (2009), *Orations of the Fatimid caliphs: festival sermons of the Ismaili imams: an edition of the Arabic texts and English translation of Fatimid khutbas*.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, HEINZ HALM, *The empire of the Mahdi: the rise of the Fatimids* (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 22–44; HEINZ HALM, *The Fatimids and their traditions of learning* (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001), 56–70.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, MASUD, MUHAMMAD KHALID, editor, *Travellers in faith: studies of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat as a transnational Islamic movement for faith renewal* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2000).

<sup>20</sup>GAFFNEY (1994), *The Prophet's pulpit*.

<sup>21</sup>RICHARD T. ANTOUN, *Muslim preacher in the modern world: a Jordanian case study in comparative perspective* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>22</sup>CHARLES HIRSCHKIND, *The ethical soundscape: cassette sermons and Islamic counter-publics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>23</sup>Hirschkind treats the opposition of *khutba* and *daʿwa* as the official message versus dissent counter-message as a unique modern phenomenon, failing to see a similar dichotomy between *khutba* and *waʿz*. Despite this and a few other historical shortcomings, Hirschkind's study offers a particularly valuable perspective on the subject. See also: CHARLES HIRSCHKIND, 'Hearing modernity: Egypt, Islam, and the pious ear', in: VEIT ERLMANN, editor, *Hearing cultures: essays on sound, listening, and modernity* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2004); HIRSCHKIND (2006), *The ethical soundscape*.

standing of pre-modern preaching. Informed by a rather different theoretical framework, these insights also come from the very different nature of sources available to the scholars of the modern world: anthropologists can see, listen and interact with their subjects, while we are limited to artifacts with rather unfriendly interfaces that have managed to survive the vicissitudes of time. Anthropological studies can help us bridge what Linda Jones characterized as “[t]he unavoidable gap between live preaching event, evidence of which in most cases is irretrievably lost, and the surviving written text” of sermons,<sup>24</sup> especially if solid points of reference can be established.<sup>25</sup> Different theoretical concepts employed by anthropologists of the Middle East, primarily the Habermasian concept of the public sphere<sup>26</sup> and its “alter ego,” the notion of counterpublic, also provide a valuable theoretical framework.<sup>27</sup> Despite the fact that Habermas wrote about the European “bourgeois” society, there are striking structural similarities between the formation of the public discourse in Europe and the formation of religious discourse in early Islam. In a nutshell, in both cases those involved in trade were the most active agents of starting and maintaining public discourse; in both cases this became possible through the formation of literary languages as universally understood means of communication; in both cases this discourse was public, i.e. outside the control of

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<sup>24</sup>For more details, see: LINDA G. JONES, ‘Problems in the study of medieval Islamic sermons’, *al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭá: the Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists*, 17 (2005).

<sup>25</sup>For example, there is a rather solid link between Ibn al-Jawzī and a modern Egyptian preacher ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Kishk: the latter used homiletic materials from Ibn al-Jawzī’s collections and preaching strategies that closely resemble those described by Ibn al-Jawzī.

<sup>26</sup>See, JÜRGEN HABERMAS, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, trans. by THOMAS BURGER (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

<sup>27</sup>See, e.g., CHARLES HIRSCHKIND, ‘Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counterpublic’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 16 (2001).

the political authorities, and had its designated *loci* in the urban setting; in both cases, the demise of public discourse was brought about by the process of professionalization and specialization. Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities<sup>28</sup> as well as different concepts of embodiment,<sup>29</sup> also provide useful analytical frameworks.

### 3.1.3 Subject of the Current Study

With quite a few monographs on different aspects of Islamic preaching, why do we need another one? In a nutshell, we are still missing *its history*. All major works on Islamic homiletics are case studies that touch upon the issues of the *longue durée* and institutional history only in passing.<sup>30</sup> On the one hand it is justified by the objective difficulty of locating relevant data that have a nasty habit of being scattered all over pre-modern Arabic sources that rarely come in one volume; while on the other hand, it is predetermined by the fact that the case study is the main form of research in our field and we are trained to think within its confines.

To write a history of Islamic preaching one needs to look at preaching as an institution. Since this notion tends to lead to misunderstandings, it is necessary to dwell on it. My thinking about social institutions in general is informed mainly by the sociological theory of Peter Berger and Thomas Luck-

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<sup>28</sup>BENEDICT ANDERSON, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>29</sup>For an overview, see: HIRSCHKIND (2004), 'Hearing modernity: Egypt, Islam, and the pious ear'.

<sup>30</sup>The issue of origins is usually addressed and, as a rule, discussed in many details, but this is where attempts to trace the formation, evolution, continuity and fate of different preaching practices usually end.

mann<sup>31</sup> that can be summarized in the following manner. Every institution is “a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors.” These reciprocal typifications of actions are built in the course of a history shared by its actors. The actors perform their roles and this performance represents the institutional order, making the institution manifest itself in actual experience. The knowledge of the actors about the institution exists largely on the pre-theoretical level, with theoretically sophisticated legitimations—texts that seek to explain the “logic” of the institution—appearing only at particular moments of the institutional history.

With our main subject shifted in this manner, our approach to the primary sources must be re-evaluated as well. Most studies are based on close reading of texts directly related to preaching—unsystematic prescriptive texts,<sup>32</sup> collections of sermons, preaching manuals—and augmented by the supplementary reading of chronicles and biographical dictionaries. Such an approach seems problematic. First, with its focus on texts that are directly related to preaching—and depending on their genre we can treat them as theoretically sophisticated legitimations or de-legitimations of preaching—we are likely to lose sight of the historical process in which the institution itself has been forming. With their strong normative charge, such texts offer visions of Islamic preaching that better represent agendas of their medieval authors than historical reality. Written by exceptional individuals, such texts, to quote a literary his-

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<sup>31</sup>For a detailed discussion, see PETER L. BERGER and THOMAS LUCKMANN, *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 47–128.

<sup>32</sup>By unsystematic I mean texts that address only specific aspects of preaching without offering a thorough picture: *hadiths*, *fatwás*, social critique etc.

torian, are “rare and curious works, that do not repeat themselves;” they are exceptional and “close reading makes [them] even more exceptional,”<sup>33</sup> taking us further away from history.

Collections of sermons offer texts that are more valuable for the history of Arabic literature—homiletics as a literary genre—than for the history of preaching as a social institution. Studying them, one is left to wonder about the extent to which particular sermons were integral to the institution of preaching on the social, geographical and chronological levels.<sup>34</sup>

Biographical collections and chronicles, on the other hand, appear to be the most valuable sources for recreating the institutional history of Islamic preaching. By their nature, they are plentiful in bits of data regarding most—if not all—aspects of life in Islamic societies. Because of their nature, they are least likely to be systematically “censored,” especially when data on the same topic come in small bits and pieces scattered over multiple volumes. Even though scholars always work with chronicles and biographical collections, their chronological and geographical limits and unsystematic treatment do not allow for full use of their potential. That said, my study is an attempt to read a short, but rather extensive corpus of biographical collections—twelve titles, over 120 volumes, about 45,000 biographical accounts—without any imposition of temporal or spatial boundaries. Although the chronological boundaries of my research—661–1300 AH—are declared in the title, they are determined by the

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<sup>33</sup>MORETTI (2007), *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 3.

<sup>34</sup>Paratextual data from the manuscripts of such collections would be immensely valuable in this regard. However, for the institutional history of preaching one needs data from hundreds of such manuscripts—an interesting venue I hope to pursue some time in the future.

chronological coverage of my corpus. Relying largely on distant reading<sup>35</sup> of these sources, I intend to study all direct and indirect accounts of preachers and their activities, with the main goal of putting together a history of Islamic preaching as an institution. Considering the time constraints, however, this is a long-term goal, while in the current part the main emphasis will be on the chronology and geography of the major preaching forms. It is important to begin with these two perspectives, primarily because they are largely overlooked in academic studies of preaching, but also because in its current state of development computational reading is best suited to these particular tasks.

### 3.1.4 Identifying Preachers

The most problematic issue one instantly runs into is how to identify preachers. The problem with onomastic data in the case of preaching is that while a person may have been involved in some preaching activities, this does not necessarily get reflected in that person's name. In many cases preaching was only an occasional involvement, while person's primary identity belonged to some different area. This is particularly evident in the case of "Friday preaching" (*khutba*), which most commonly was a part-time appointment and therefore would only occasionally become permanent part of one's identity.<sup>36</sup> A similar "part-time" involvement in other forms of preaching was rather common as

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<sup>35</sup>Offered by the literary historian Franco Moretti this approach puts extra emphasis on commonalities and patterns that can be discovered and traced within a significant body of data, and de-emphasizes things that are rare and unique—since when they are emphasized, they become even more rare and more unique. See, for example, FRANCO MORETTI, *Distant Reading*, 1st edition (Verso, June 2013); MORETTI (2007), *Graphs, Maps, Trees*.

<sup>36</sup>Regionally, this is most strikingly visible in the biographies of Andalusian scholars.

well.

Thus, in order to identify all textual evidence relevant to preaching, it is necessary to take a more in-depth approach. Since I am interested in tracing the development of preaching practices in general, I will be looking into all possible references that occur on the electronic pages of my 12-source corpus. In order to identify such references I am looking for all derivatives from five major roots that are used to describe major preaching practices: *kh-t-b*, *q-ṣ-ṣ*, *w-ʿ-z*, *dh-k-r* and *d-ʿ-w*. With false positives manually excluded, the analytical algorithm yields some 3,600 biographical records and event descriptions where relevant actions, individuals or objects are mentioned. Such a body of data is significant enough to allow us to expect that patterns will be revealed that are representative of historical reality. However, the forms of descriptions pose problems and this is yet another methodological issue that we need to deal with.

“Descriptive names” that I use as markers for different kinds of preaching may also have “adjectival” usage and thus can be interpreted both as professional [nick]names and as mere qualifiers—especially when they are used in the indefinite form and/or as complements of the verb *kāna*, “to be.” For example, *kāna khaṭīban* can be interpreted as “he was a [Friday] preacher,” or simply as “he was eloquent.” One would expect that such cases as *kāna khaṭīban balīghan mufawwahan* would make things easier: the last two compliments of *kāna* mean “eloquent” and they are never used as professional markers, which strongly suggests that *khaṭīban* here is also used as a simple adjective. However, the fact that such adjectival usage may also be corroborated by other

kinds of descriptions—for example, *khaṭaba fī jāmiʿ Dimashq*, “he preached in the congregational mosque of Damascus”—makes the complete dismissal of adjectival descriptions problematic. That said, it makes sense to consider *all* forms: after all, in order to be viewed as a *khaṭīb* one must have performed some actions that others could describe with the *khuṭba*-related vocabulary. At the same time, one must keep in mind that the definitive interpretation of specific cases of adjectival usage, especially when nothing else corroborates a particular interpretation, will always remain problematic.

Individuals may also be qualified with compound descriptors. These come as verbal phrases: *qāma khaṭīban*, “he stood up addressing/preaching to [people]”; *waliya-l-khiṭāba*, “he was appointed to the office of *khaṭīb*”; *kāna yaʿīzu-l-nās*, “he was admonishing people;” *takallama bi-lisāni-l-waʿz*, “he spoke with the tongue of admonishment;” *kāna yadʿū-l-nās ilá...*, “he was calling/summoning people to...;” *kāna yudhakkiru-l-nās*, “he was exhorting people [by making them remember what they forgot].” Compound descriptors also come as noun[-adjective] phrases: *khaṭību-l-jāmiʿ*, “*khaṭīb* of the congregational mosque;” *wāʿīzu Baghdād*, “the admonishing preacher of Baghdad;” *min duʿātī-l-ismāʿīliyya*, “one of the Ismāʿīlī missionaries;” *ṣāhibu-l-daʿwa*, “the head of the mission/‘revolution’;” *[la-hu] majlisu-l-tadhkīr*, “he held the assembly of exhortation.” Although these compound descriptors appear more definitive than simple adjectival ones, they may also describe single actions or short-term involvements. Besides, compound descriptors are noticeably less frequent than simple ones. Narrative descriptions are rather rare as well, and may be problematic in the same way. If one is to rely only on biographies with



more than one descriptor that would corroborate each other, the pool of over 2,100 biographies will dry up quickly.

A solution to this problem may lie in the analysis of all available data in their initial narrative form and in an algorithmically reconstructed form that can be graphed and mapped. In other words, it can be done, first, through the analysis of linguistic patterns used in descriptions of what may be a preaching activity or practice (thus, the initial definition of “preaching” is very broad); second, through the quantification of linguistic patterns in conjunction with their contextual markers that specify their usage and meaning, which will allow us to discern pivotal moments in time that mark social and religious changes. Readjusted in such a manner, the biographical curves of preachers of different kinds will help us to reinterpret initially inconclusive descriptors.

As Figure 3.3 shows, for the history of preaching *Taʿrīkh al-islām* remains the main collection of the corpus. Other sources will be used for comparative perspective and further detailed inquiries. It should be noted that even though biographical collections of the legal schools often offer much more detailed biographies of individuals involved in different forms of preaching, they not necessarily offer more details on the preaching activities of these individuals.

### **3.1.5 A Note on the Geography of Preaching**

Major forms of preaching display regional patterns (Figure 3.1). The most staggering difference is between the *khutba* and the *waʿz* in their westward and eastward orientations. However, even though the numbers of preachers of all styles are rather impressive, they are not significant enough for the analysis

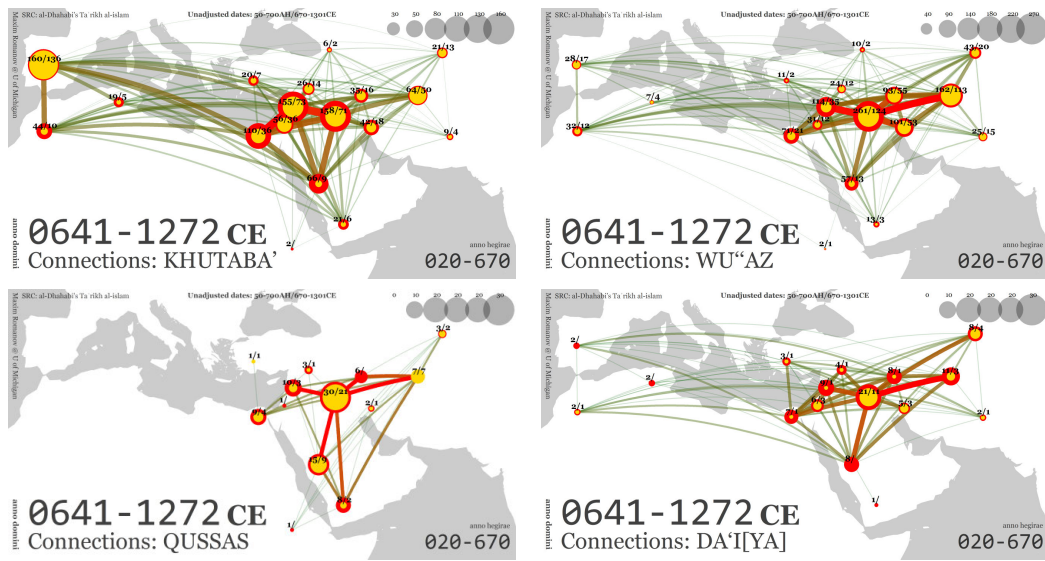


Figure 3.1: Geographical Patterns of Major Preaching Forms. The *tadhkīr* is omitted since it is largely synonymous with the *waʿz* and their geographical patterns are very similar. **NB:** Each map has its own scale.

at the level of regional clusters that has been used in the previous sections. Since the most staggering difference in preaching practices is between the west and the east of the Islamic world, in some sections it will be more efficient to think in larger geographical categories. For this purpose I am regrouping regional clusters into four macro regions grouped around the following core provinces—North Africa and Andalusia, Syria and Egypt; Iraq and Arabia; Iran and Central Asia (Figure 3.2).

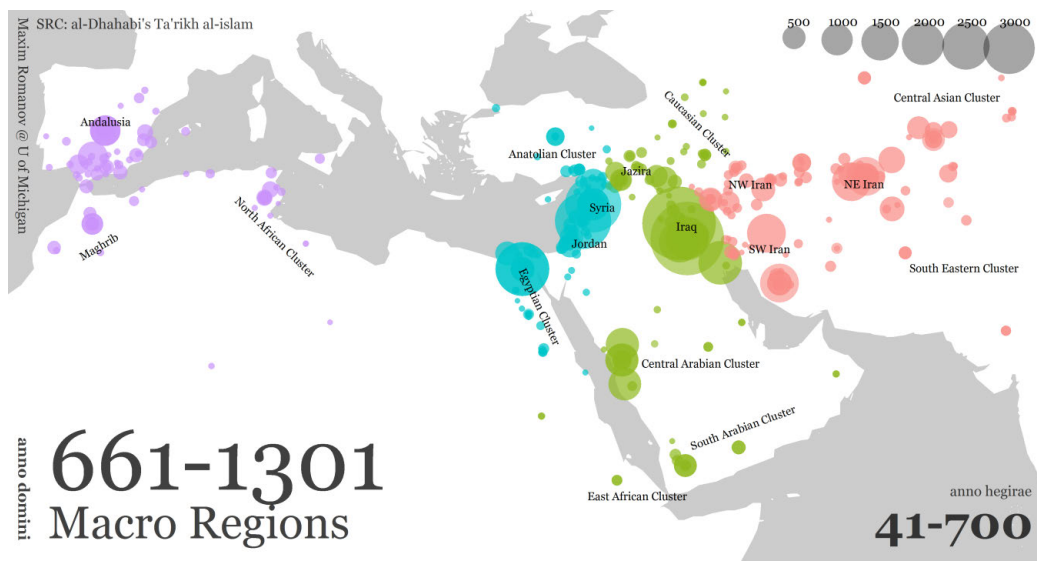


Figure 3.2: Four Macro Regions of the Islamic World. Regional clusters are regrouped into four macro regions that are clustered around the following major provinces: North Africa and Andalusia, Syria and Egypt; Iraq and Arabia; Iran and Central Asia.

<i>type</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>bios</i>	<i>khaṭīb</i>	<i>wā'iz</i>	<i>dā'ir[ya]</i>	<i>mudhakkir</i>	<i>qāṣṣ</i>					
<i>all</i>	<b>TI</b>	29,100	588	2.02%	529	1.82%	33	0.11%	54	0.19%	59	0.20%
<i>all</i>	<b>SAN</b>	5,899	145	2.46%	179	3.03%	37	0.63%	23	0.39%	28	0.47%
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>JM</b>	3,056	47	1.54%	37	1.21%	1	0.03%	9	0.29%	1	0.03%
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>TT</b>	358	6	1.68%	4	1.12%	0	0.00%	2	0.56%	0	0.00%
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>TS</b>	894	24	2.68%	12	1.34%	1	0.11%	5	0.56%	0	0.00%
<i>mālikī</i>	<b>TM</b>	975	25	2.56%	13	1.33%	4	0.41%	1	0.10%	0	0.00%
<i>mālikī</i>	<b>DM</b>	631	34	5.39%	6	0.95%	0	0.00%	2	0.32%	0	0.00%
<i>shāfi'ī</i>	<b>TFSh</b>	277	4	1.44%	17	6.14%	0	0.00%	7	2.53%	1	0.36%
<i>shāfi'ī</i>	<b>TShK</b>	1,420	62	4.37%	92	6.48%	5	0.35%	24	1.69%	2	0.14%
<i>shāfi'ī</i>	<b>TSh</b>	748	75	10.03%	34	4.55%	0	0.00%	9	1.20%	1	0.13%
<i>ḥanbalī</i>	<b>TH</b>	707	1	0.14%	9	1.27%	1	0.14%	1	0.14%	4	0.57%
<i>ḥanbalī</i>	<b>DhTH</b>	547	27	4.94%	63	11.52%	1	0.18%	9	1.65%	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>		<b>44,612</b>	<b>1,038</b>	<b>2.33%</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>2.23%</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>0.19%</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>0.33%</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>0.22%</b>

Figure 3.3: Preachers in Biographical collections. **Sources:** **TI**—*Ta'rikh al-Islām* of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 CE); **SAN**—*Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348 CE); **JM**—*al-Jawāhir al-muḍīya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Abī-l-Wafā' (d. 775/1374 CE); **TT**—*Tāj al-tarājim fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Qutlūbughā (d. 879/1475 CE); **TS**—*al-Ṭabaqāt al-saniya fī tarājim al-ḥanafīya* of al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 1010/1602 CE); **DM**—*al-Dibāj al-mudhahhab fī ma'rifat a'yān 'ulamā' al-madhhab* of Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397 CE); **TM**—*Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-ma'rifat a'lām madhhab Mālik* of al-Yahsūbī (d. 544/1150 CE); **TFSh**—*Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-shāfi'iya* of al-Shahrastūrī (d. 676/1278 CE); **TShK**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iya al-kubrā* of al-Subkī (d. 771/1370 CE); **TSh**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iya* of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448 CE); **TH**—*Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Ya-lá (d. 526/1133 CE); **DhTH**—*al-Dhayl 'alá ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393 CE).

## 3.2 *Daʿwa*: Fracturing the Community

الداعي	6	المتكلم	3	الكوفي	2	الإصبهاني	1
البغدادى	4	القاضي	3	المعتزلي	2	الأستاذ	1
العالم	4	الأديب	2	المولى	2	الإيادي	1
الزاهد	4	الأمير	2	النيسابوري	2	البلخي	1
الإمام	3	الإسماعيلي	2	الصوفي	2	البخاري	1
البصري	3	الباطني	2	الخوارزمي	2	البيع	1
العلوي	3	الضرير	2	الإفريقي	1	البيكندي	1
الشيخ	3	الشاعر	2	الأهوازي	1	العابد	1
الحنبلي	3	الشيعة	2	الأنطاكي	1	العارف	1
المقدسي	3	الفقيه	2	الإربلي	1	العلامة	1

Figure 3.4: *Nisbas* of the *Duʿāt* (34) in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

What the corpus offers on individuals involved in *daʿwa*-related activities has rather little uniformity. Although the *daʿwa* is most commonly associated with Ismāʿīlī missionary activities, there are very few individuals who can be identified as Ismāʿīlī *duʿāt*. The remaining majority is utterly variegated in social, religious and other possible terms (Figure G.1). Geographically, Iraq (and Baghdad in particular) features very prominently; however, since this region surpasses all the other provinces of the Islamic world in perhaps all aspects of social and religious history, this is of little help (Figure 3.5).

Such a variety of affiliations for a relatively small number of biographees who are spread thinly across the entire period covered in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* makes it very difficult to establish patterns. The only common denominator stems

from the meaning of the root *d-ʿ-w*, “to call, to invite,” which in these cases signifies attempts to win new supporters of one’s cause. One can distinguish two major contexts where *daʿwa*-related vocabulary is used: “political” and “religious.” Such a division is rather tentative, since the political context is primarily about leadership—a topic which is never devoid of religious rhetoric; while the religious context is mostly about theological issues, which may also have political connotations. This division is more about which of these two contexts prevail. The Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* is a unique combination of the two: while its religious underpinnings are undeniable, most of what one finds in the corpus is of political nature.

In the early period, when it comes to issues of leadership in the community, *daʿwa*-related actions most commonly feature in the context of *khutba*-related actions: one “addresses” people and “calls” them to support oneself or one’s nominee (*khaṭaba wa-daʿā ilá nafsi-hi*, or *khaṭaba wa-daʿā ilay-hi*). This political usage of *daʿwa* is traceable back to the *fitna* of Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 72/692 CE or 73/693 CE).<sup>37</sup> Ibn al-Zubayr claimed the caliphate for himself after the death of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya in 64/685 CE<sup>38</sup> and a number of governors supported him and “called” people to pledge allegiance to the new caliph.<sup>39</sup> As the “commander of the faithful” (*amīr al-muʿminīn*), Ibn al-Zubayr delivers

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<sup>37</sup>TI, 5, 435–448; the act of *daʿwa* seems to have combined both *daʿwa ilay-hi*, “calling [people] to him” and *daʿwa/duʿā la-hu*, “saying a supplication prayer for him” (SAN, 3, 244).

<sup>38</sup>TI, 5, 442.

<sup>39</sup>In Homs, Qinnasrīn, Damascus, Kufa (SAN, 3, 242; SAN, 3, 546; TI, 5, 36); also: SAN, 3, 546; TI, 5, 36. Some Khārijite group in Egypt also “called” people to support him (SAN, 3, 547; TI, 5, 39).

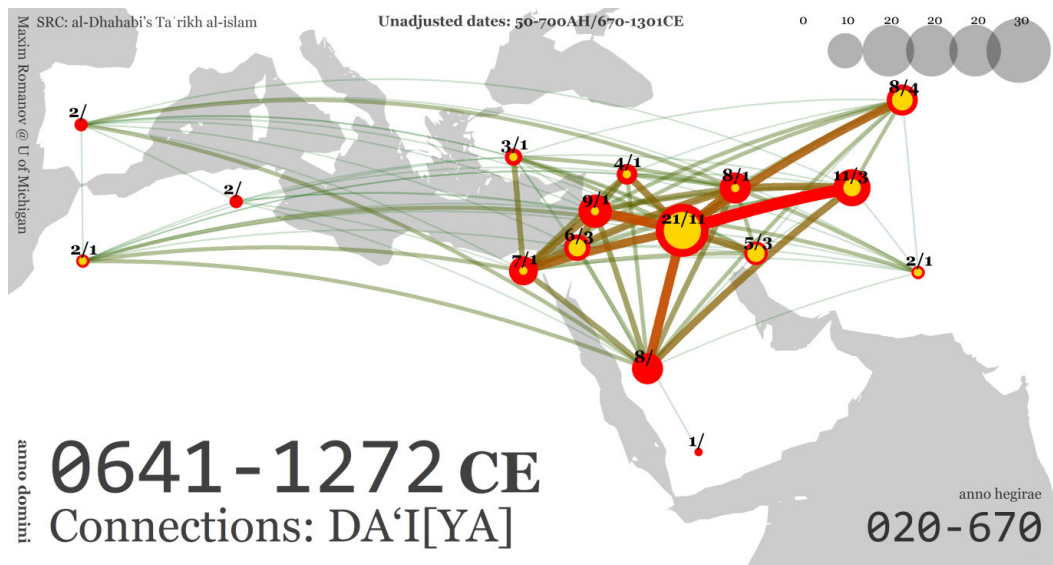


Figure 3.5: Geography of *Dāʿiyas* from *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

addresses-cum-sermons,<sup>40</sup> and leads people on the *hajj*.<sup>41</sup> However, his “calling” to win the support of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya<sup>42</sup> and Ibn ʿAbbās<sup>43</sup> failed. In the turmoil of the *fitna* some of the Umayyad governors<sup>44</sup> and rebels<sup>45</sup> “called” to themselves, and so did the Umayyad caliphs.<sup>46</sup>

By extension, the *daʿwa* is related to the establishment of new dynasties. In such cases, however, the *daʿwa* is often the movement itself. The leaders of such movements “call” others to join their cause and help them bring new claimants to power. The rhetoric of such “calls” is usually dressed in terms of pious religious reform and the restoration of justice, which are also usually

<sup>40</sup>TI, 5, 35–36.

<sup>41</sup>TI, 5, 300.

<sup>42</sup>SAN, 4, 118; TI, 5, 43; TI, 5, 441.

<sup>43</sup>TI, 5, 441.

<sup>44</sup>TI, 5, 131–137 and TI, 5, 46; TI, 7, 162–163 and SAN, 5, 53; TI, 6, 15; SAN, 6, 61.

<sup>45</sup>SAN, 4, 146–150; TI, 5, 331.

<sup>46</sup>SAN, 5, 376–378; SAN, 6, 75–78 and TI, 8, 534–537.

forgotten if/when the dynasty is established. The ʿAbbāsids were brought to power by such a *daʿwa* movement,<sup>47</sup> led by Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī (d. 137/755 CE),<sup>48</sup> who is most commonly referred to as *ṣāhib al-daʿwa*, “the leader of [the ʿAbbāsīd] *daʿwa* movement.”<sup>49</sup> After coming to power, the ʿAbbāsids were contested by similar *daʿwa* movements,<sup>50</sup> although none of them shattered their authority as much as did the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* movements, with the Fāṭimids encroaching from the west and the Qarmatīs from the south.

The usage of *daʿwa*-related vocabulary in the descriptions of biographees (by all the authors in the corpus, not only al-Dhahabī) falls more into the religious context and strongly suggests a rather similar idea: a minority’s attempts to split off new followers from the majority. This is the primary role of anyone described with the *daʿwa*-related vocabulary. At the same time, the term *dāʿiya* is most commonly used in a way that suggests negative connotation: individuals characterized as *dāʿiya* summon to what can be classified as “heresy” from the standpoint of mainstream Sunnism. In these cases the goal of *daʿwa*-related actions is to win new supporters for theological schools, such as the Muʿtazilīs<sup>51</sup> and the Murjiʿīs<sup>52</sup>; or specific theological issues, such as “free

<sup>47</sup>The descendants of the Khurāsānī backbone of the ʿAbbāsīd *daʿwa* are called *abnāʾ al-daʿwa*, “the sons of *daʿwa*,” to whom Ibn Ḥanbal belonged (SAN, 11, 184).

<sup>48</sup>SAN, 6, 49–74; TI, 8, 581–584. Abū Muslim also acts as a *khaṭīb*, and asks the ascetic Ibrāhīm al-Ṣāʿigh for admonishment (*waʿẓ*).

<sup>49</sup>SAN, 5, 464; SAN, 6, 49; SAN, 6, 161; SAN, 7, 307; SAN, 7, 388; SAN, 8, 346–349; SAN, 13, 469; SAN, 16, 84; TI, 8, 25; TI, 8, 26; TI, 8, 334–335; TI, 8, 446; TI, 8, 581; TI, 8, 67; TI, 9, 196; TI, 10, 21.

<sup>50</sup>SAN, 10, 191–192; TI, 13, 29–30; TI, 20, 241; TI, 14, 12–13; TI, 13, 67; TI, 14, 22; SAN, 10, 191; TI, 15, 29; TI, 15, 388; TI, 25, 231; TI, 20, 19; TI, 20, 241.

<sup>51</sup>TI, 9, 238–243; TI, 20, 43; TI, 23, 584–585; TI, 26, 606; TI, 30, 73–74; TI, 33, 95–96; TI, 33, 248–256; TI, 36, 486–490. See also: SAN, 6, 125–128; SAN, 10, 553; SAN, 15, 255–256; SAN, 16, 224–225; SAN, 16, 396–397; SAN, 18, 489–490; SAN, 20, 151–156; SAN, 22, 28; JM, 2, 8–10.

<sup>52</sup>TI, 10, 418–419; TI, 14, 227–229. See also: SAN, 9, 513–516; SAN, 10, 453–457;



will” (*qadar*);<sup>53</sup> “anthropomorphism” (*tajsīm*),<sup>54</sup> “createdness of the *Qurʾān*” (*khalq al-Qurʾān*),<sup>55</sup> or “reprehensible innovations” (*bidʿa*, pl. *bidaʿ*) in general,<sup>56</sup> which often include all of the above. There is a great deal of overlap, of course, and in many cases the difference seems to lurk exclusively in the authorial emphasis, but it is difficult to shake off this negative connotation. At the same time, belonging to “heretical” theological communities or professing “heretical” theological views does not automatically make one a *dāʿiya*—this term emphasizes an active engagement with non-partisans in order to convert them.<sup>57</sup>

There are only very a few cases where *daʿwa*-related vocabulary is used to describe individuals who belong to the Sunnī fold, and most of these cases also seem to fall into the category of a minority facing the majority.<sup>58</sup> For example, individuals are described as those who brought the Sunna of the Prophet to their land, protected it and “called” people to hold fast to it;<sup>59</sup> or they “called” to their legal school (most often among the Ḥanbalīs<sup>60</sup>). The meaning of “calling to Islam” in general is extremely rare and occurs mostly

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**SAN**, 10, 540–541.

<sup>53</sup>**TI**, 28, 160; **TI**, 9, 238–243. Also: **SAN**, 7, 105–106.

<sup>54</sup>**TI**, 19, 310–315.

<sup>55</sup>**TI**, 17, 40–46; **TI**, 17, 199–200. See also: **SAN**, 10, 199–203; **SAN**, 10, 272–290; **SAN**, 11, 169–171.

<sup>56</sup>**TI**, 32, 218–219; **TI**, 19, 310–315. See also: **SAN**, 9, 434–436.

<sup>57</sup>In this regard, the following emphasis is interesting: ʿImrān al-Qaṭṭān al-Baṣrī (d. 170/787 CE) was a Ḥarūrī Khārījite, but he was not *dāʿiya* (**SAN**, 7, 280–281). Another similar example: **SAN**, 7, 149–156. Also, **TM**, 1, 91.

<sup>58</sup>The form *dāʿī* seems more frequent than *dāʿiya*, although the numbers are not sufficient enough to argue for any significant difference between the two.

<sup>59</sup>**SAN**, 11, 405–406, **SAN**, 11, 405–406, **SAN**, 12, 112–114 and **SAN**, 12, 224–232; **TI**, 30, 224–229 and **TShK**, 4, 271–293; **SAN**, 19, 278–279; **TI**, 40, 341–342; **TI**, 49, 206–207; **TM**, 2, 229–231.

<sup>60</sup>**SAN**, 15, 90–93; **SAN**, 18, 503–518 and **DhTH**, 1, 19–27; **TI**, 41, 292–293; **SAN**, 22, 47–52, **TI**, 44, 182–191 and **DhTH**, 1, 220–225; **TI**, 52, 337.

during the lifetime of the Prophet.<sup>61</sup>

There are only a few Ismāʿīlī *duʿāt* among thousands of biographees, and these are only the most prominent figures of the Qarmaṭī,<sup>62</sup> Ismāʿīlī,<sup>63</sup> and Nizārī movements.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, if the history of the Fāṭimid *daʿwa* was not written by the Fāṭimids themselves, one can hardly expect more from the Sunnī authors. In general, it seems that al-Dhahabī included the biographies of only the main main figures involved in major—mostly violent—encounters of the Sunnī world with different groups of the Ismāʿīlīs: the Fāṭimid conquest of North Africa and Egypt, the Qarmaṭī domination over eastern Arabia, Ṣalāḥ al-dīn’s [re-]conquest of Egypt, and the struggle against the unreachable Nizārī stronghold at al-Alamūt.

On the other hand, references to the Ismāʿīlī *duʿāt*<sup>65</sup> and the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in general are quite plentiful, both in the descriptions of events and biographies. Figure 3.6 shows two major spikes of discussions of the Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*: the first one around 300/913 CE (more precisely, 270–320 AH/884–933 CE), and the second—around 500/1107 CE (most tensely

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<sup>61</sup>For example, the Prophet himself “called” people to Islam (**TS**, 1:21–22). He also sent Khālīd b. al-Walīd as a *dāʿī* to the Arab tribes in order to convert them to Islam (**SAN**, 1, 371). Abū Hurayra lamented to the Prophet that his mother is deaf to his “calling” to Islam (**SAN**, 5, 593; **TI**, 4, 353). “Calling to God” (*kāna yadʿū ilá-llāh*) is not uncommon, but such phrases are either too generic, or they stand for “calling to [the *dāʿiyya*’s version of] God.”

<sup>62</sup>Such as Abū Tāhir Sulaymān al-Qarmaṭī (d. 302/915 CE), ʿAdw Allāh Malik al-Baḥrayn, who led the raid on Mecca with 700 horsemen, killed pilgrims on the Sacred land, plucked out the Black Stone, and filled Zamzam with dead corpses (**SAN**, 15, 320–325); also on the Qarmaṭīs: **TI**, 25, 13–17.

<sup>63</sup>**SAN**, 14, 58–59; **SAN**, 15, 141–152; **TI**, 22, 133–135; **TI**, 39, 387–388.

<sup>64</sup>**SAN**, 21, 182–190; **TI**, 41, 325–335; **TI**, 48, 197–198.

<sup>65</sup>Yet, most of these *duʿāt* are nameless: **SAN**, 10, 106; **SAN**, 14, 224; **SAN**, 15, 132; **SAN**, 17, 181; **SAN**, 18, 132; **SAN**, 18, 429; **SAN**, 18, 497; **SAN**, 20, 322; **TShK**, 5, 320; **TShK**, 6, 130; **TI**, 28, 267; **TI**, 33, 237; **TI**, 34, 15; **TI**, 34, 29; **TI**, 36, 43; **TI**, 38, 297; **TM**, 2, 161.

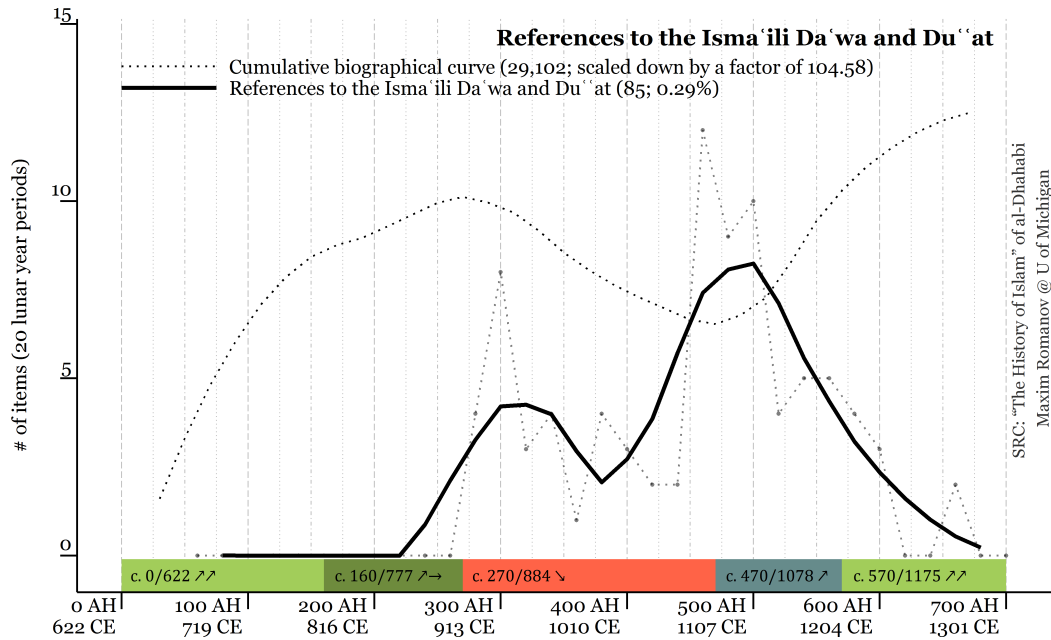


Figure 3.6: References to the Ismā'īlī *Da'wa* and *Du'at* in *Tarikhislam*.

during 450–500 AH/1059–1107 CE). The first one reflects the formative and expansive periods of the Qarmaṭī and Fāṭimid *da'wa*-movements. During the second, however, *da'wa* is most commonly used as a synonym of *khutba*, in its symbolic meaning of confirming the legitimate ruler of the realm. The establishment of the Fāṭimid *da'wa* meant primarily that the name of the reigning Fāṭimid caliph would be mentioned in the Fridays sermons. During 400–500 AH/1010–1107 CE urban centers and provinces between the ʿAbbāsīd and Fāṭimid capitals—mainly Greater Syria, Arabia, and Iraq<sup>66</sup>—went back and forth between the two powers. These shifts are mainly described as: in

<sup>66</sup>In 450/1059 CE the Fāṭimid *da'wa* was established even in Baghdad, the very heart of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate (SAN, 18, 217; TI, 30, 30; TI, 30, 251). In 451/1060 CE, the *khaṭīb* of the Manṣūr congregational mosque who was delivering *khutbas* in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustanṣir under the orders of al-Basāsiri was removed from his position (TI, 30, 273–274).

such-and-such a place the ʿAbbāsīd *khuṭba*/*daʿwa* was interrupted and the Fāṭimid *khuṭba*/*daʿwa* was established, or vice versa; this, however, was often accompanied by a great deal of violence.<sup>67</sup>

It should be noted that the terms *daʿwa* and *khuṭba* are often used interchangeably during this period and applied to both the Fāṭimids and the ʿAbbāsīds. This temporary interchangeability may have resulted from what the psychologists call “a priming effect:”<sup>68</sup> if a chronicler was writing about both the ʿAbbāsīd *khuṭba* and the Fāṭimid *daʿwa*, that which was mentioned first could affect the word usage for the second. The word *daʿwa* allowed such interchangeability, since in addition to the major meaning of “calling,” it may also stand for “supplication.” This is exactly what a *khaṭīb* does while delivering a *khuṭba*: he says a “supplication” for the recognized ruler, although the more common term for such supplication is *duʿā* (and the verbal form is *daʿā la-hu*, “calling [for God’s blessings] unto him,” instead of *daʿā ilay-hi*, “calling [for people’s support] for him”). After the Fāṭimids are removed from Egypt in 567/1172 CE, *daʿwa* almost never features as the synonym of *khuṭba*.

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<sup>67</sup>It would be interesting to map these developments, which would allow to see the dynamics of this struggle for the symbolic hegemony over the world of Islam between two great dynasties.

<sup>68</sup>DANIEL KAHNEMAN, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 1st edition (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, October 2011), 50–58.

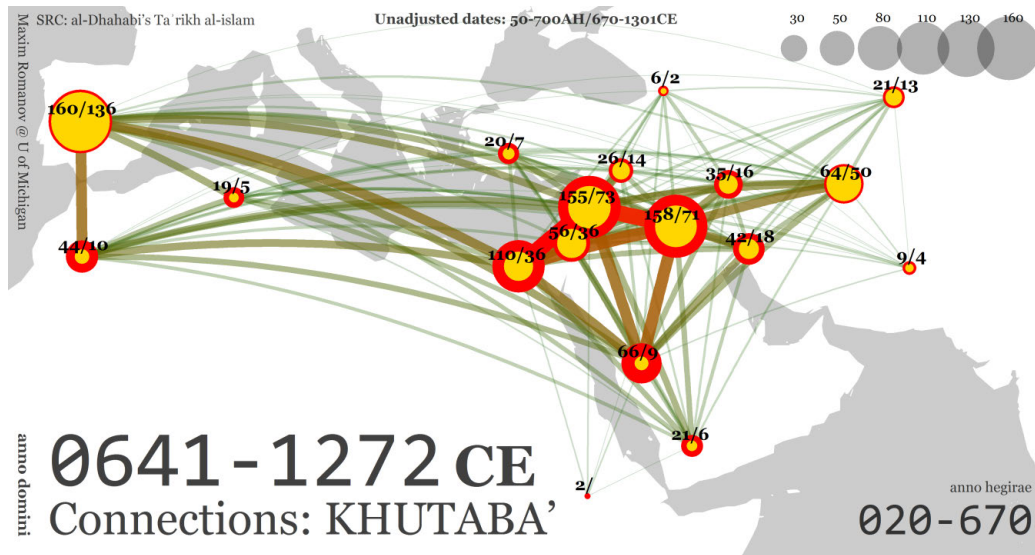


Figure 3.7: Geography of the *Khutabā*.

### 3.3 *Khutba*

#### 3.3.1 Chronology and Geography

The geographical distribution of those who can be identified as *khutabā* has a strong westward leaning (Figure 3.7). Keeping in mind that the *khutba*—the Friday sermon—is an obligatory practice, this distribution cannot possibly represent the actual numbers of Friday preachers, but rather the attention devoted by the biographers and chroniclers to this religious office.

The chronological distribution of *khutabā* suggests three periods: the early period until *c.* 250/865 CE, when the curve goes down; the middle period between *c.* 250–550 AH/865–1156 CE, when the curve steadily goes up; and the late period after *c.* 550/1156 CE, when the curve slows its climb and even goes down slightly (Figure 3.8).

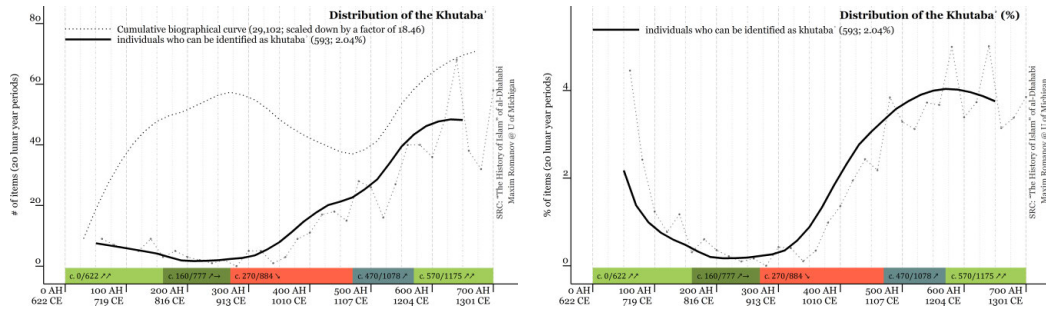


Figure 3.8: The Chronological distribution of the *khutabā* in *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*.

The chronological distribution of *khutabā* in the macro regions (Figure 3.9) give us a slightly different picture. The numbers of *khutabā* in all macro regions begin to grow soon after *c.* 300/913 CE—the turning point that may well mark the beginning of professionalization of the religious class (see Section 2.3.2.4). After *c.* 500/1107 CE all the *khutabā* curves start mirroring the cumulative curves of their respective macro regions.

It should be noted that on the Iraq-Arabia curve, Arabia is present only in the very early period, almost completely disappearing by *c.* 300/913 CE. The end of the curve of *khutabā* for this macro region is the only one that looks slightly more optimistic than the cumulative curve of this region. The reason for that is the growth of the importance of the Jazīra and the northern part of Iraq (which is closer to the Jazīra than it is to central Iraq). This region is not as significant as the central part of Iraq, with its urban centers clustered where the Tigris and the Euphrates come closest to each other. Their growing numbers cannot compensate for the decline of the cumulative curve of the macro region when the center is in decline, yet they are significant enough to affect the curve of the *khutabā*.

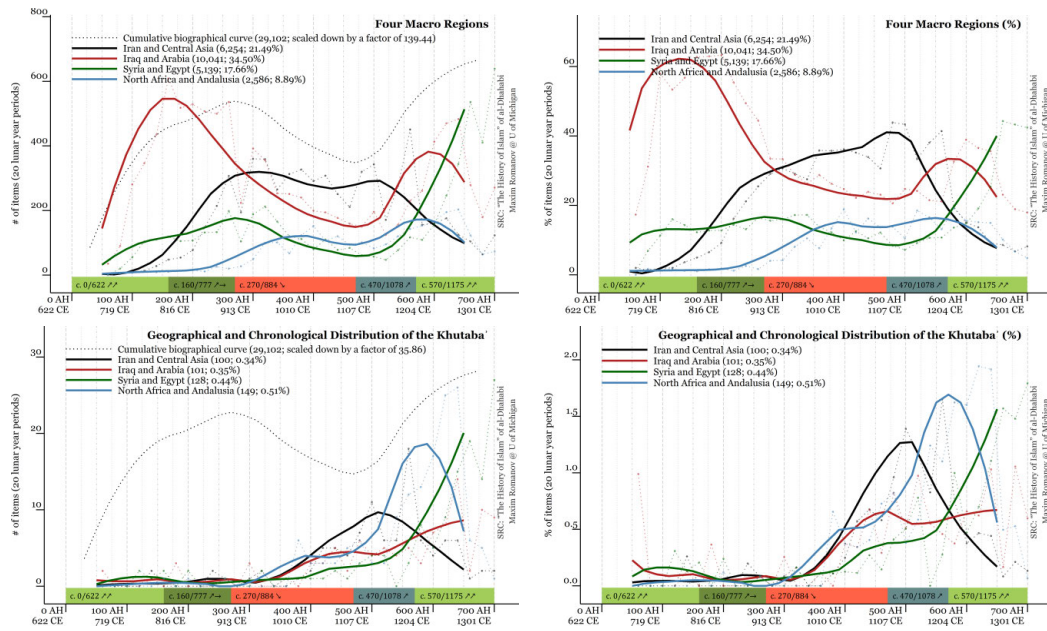


Figure 3.9: Chronological Distribution of the *Khutabā* in Macro Regions. The two graphs on top show the cumulative curves for the same macro regions (given for comparison).

### 3.3.2 Addresses-cum-Sermons

*Khutabā* as “tribal orators” existed in pre-Islamic Arabia.<sup>69</sup> Eloquent individuals, these orators represented their own tribe in verbal exchanges with other tribes. Unlike poets (sing. *shāʿir*) or soothsayers (sing. *kāhin*), orators do not seem to have had any connections to the unseen world and their eloquence was a gift that did not cause their tribesmen to keep their distance. What one finds in the early period (until *c.* 250/865 CE) is that *khutba*-related actions are more about “delivering an address” in general, rather than “delivering a sermon.”

The Prophet Muḥammad “addressed” his followers in this manner; how-

<sup>69</sup>For the detailed discussion, see: QUTBUDDIN (2008), ‘*Khutba*. The evolution of early Arabic oration’.

ever, this religiously charged content added a new dimension to the traditional tribal orations, turning them into religious sermons. In this regard, the early period is transitional and the early *khutabā* of the Islamic community should be viewed as “orators-cum-preachers,” who combined the old form of address with the new religious content.

One does find some who represented the old more than the new. For example, Thābit b. Qays is described as the *khatīb* of the Anṣār, the Medinan companions of the Prophet. On behalf of all the Yathribīs, he “addressed” (*khataba*) the Prophet upon his arrival to Yathrib/Medina in order to confirm their agreement.<sup>70</sup> Later, when the delegation of the tribe of Tamīm arrived, the Prophet asked Thābit b. Qays to respond to their *khatīb* in kind (*qum fa-ajib khatība-hum*), which he did splendidly, to the delight of the Prophet and all the Muslims.<sup>71</sup> Suhayl b. ʿAmr is described as the *khatīb* of Quraysh, who “addressed” (*qāma khatīban*) the Meccans after the Prophet’s death with an “address” in support of Islam similar to that of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiqqīq in Medina (*bi-naḥw min khuṭbati-l-ṣiddīq bi-l-Madīna*), thus silencing all discord and helping Islam prevail.<sup>72</sup>

Such remnants of the times are not frequent in the corpus<sup>73</sup> and more com-

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<sup>70</sup>SAN, 1, 309.

<sup>71</sup>SAN, 1, 312.

<sup>72</sup>SAN, 1, 194–195.

<sup>73</sup>SAN, 1, 194; SAN, 1, 309; SAN, 1, 87; SAN, 2, 433; SAN, 2, 86; SAN, 10, 280; TI, 5, 203; TI, 5, 340; TI, 15, 236; SAN, 2, 433; SAN, 2, 86; SAN, 10, 280; TI, 5, 203; TI, 5, 340; TI, 15, 236. One should keep in mind, however, that of all the sources in my corpus only al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā* covers the period of Muḥammad’s mission; as I discussed above, I had to exclude the first three volumes that cover this period from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* because their structure makes computational analysis extremely difficult. Including early biographical collections, such as *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* of Ibn Saʿd, will allow to shed more light on the early period of preaching.



mon examples from this period are of the transitional “orator-cum-preacher” kind. The prevailing majority of those who actively engage in *khutba*-related actions (about 50 in total)<sup>74</sup> are individuals with positions of high leadership within the community—first of all the Prophet himself,<sup>75</sup> then the early caliphs<sup>76</sup> and their governors and other representatives,<sup>77</sup> and, more rarely, those who contest those already in power and claim their positions for themselves or their nominees.<sup>78</sup> The *nisbas* of these individuals show that the

<sup>74</sup>Numbers are given for *Taʾrikh al-islām*, while references are to all relevant biographies in the corpus.

<sup>75</sup>**SAN**, 1, 209; **SAN**, 1, 481; **SAN**, 2, 108; **SAN**, 2, 157; **SAN**, 2, 513; **SAN**, 2, 88; **SAN**, 3, 251; **SAN**, 3, 47; **SAN**, 4, 116; **SAN**, 4, 457; **SAN**, 5, 257; **SAN**, 6, 194; **SAN**, 6, 33; **SAN**, 12, 237; **SAN**, 13, 157; **SAN**, 13, 82; **SAN**, 14, 507; **TI**, 4, 34; **TI**, 52, 76; **SAN**, 1, 232; **SAN**, 1, 483; **SAN**, 2, 403; **SAN**, 2, 531; **SAN**, 3, 149; **SAN**, 3, 256; **SAN**, 3, 393; **SAN**, 3, 451; **SAN**, 3, 462; **SAN**, 4, 201; **SAN**, 4, 570; **SAN**, 5, 171; **SAN**, 5, 90; **SAN**, 6, 310; **SAN**, 7, 139; **SAN**, 10, 589; **SAN**, 12, 151; **SAN**, 12, 237; **SAN**, 13, 557; **SAN**, 14, 181; **TShK**, 8, 109; **TShK**, 9, 64; **TI**, 4, 188; **TI**, 5, 78; **TI**, 6, 173; **TI**, 6, 213; **TI**, 6, 458; **TI**, 9, 290; **TI**, 9, 541; **TI**, 9, 598; **TI**, 13, 200; **TI**, 32, 207; **TI**, 37, 430; **TI**, 46, 415; **TH**, 1, 349; **TH**, 2, 163; **TH**, 2, 242.

<sup>76</sup>**SAN**, 3, 119–162; **SAN**, 4, 35–40; **SAN**, 4, 246–249; **SAN**, 5, 114–148; **SAN**, 5, 374–376; **SAN**, 7, 83–90; **TI**, 4, 306–317; **TI**, 5, 435–448; **TI**, 6, 135–145; **TI**, 6, 377–382; **TI**, 6, 496–501; **TI**, 7, 187–206; **TI**, 9, 21–33; **TI**, 9, 465–472; **TI**, 10, 434–445; **SAN**, 6, 45; **SAN**, 17, 146; **TI**, 4, 168; **TI**, 8, 337; **TI**, 15, 229; **TI**, 28, 43; **SAN**, 2, 191; **SAN**, 4, 500; **SAN**, 4, 502; **SAN**, 5, 396; **TShK**, 8, 32; **TI**, 5, 35; **TI**, 5, 311; **TI**, 5, 319; **TI**, 5, 325; **TI**, 5, 326; **TI**, 6, 32; **TI**, 6, 270; **TI**, 6, 489; **TI**, 8, 334; **TI**, 8, 413; **TI**, 8, 535; **TI**, 9, 322; **TI**, 9, 370; **TI**, 10, 122; **TI**, 13, 16; **TI**, 13, 310; **TI**, 20, 239; **TI**, 24, 59; **TI**, 24, 35; **TI**, 29, 390; **TI**, 48, 407; **TI**, 52, 10; **TH**, 2, 118.

<sup>77</sup>**SAN**, 1, 93–124; **SAN**, 1, 304–307; **SAN**, 2, 494–496; **SAN**, 3, 18–21; **SAN**, 3, 21–33; **SAN**, 3, 241–245; **SAN**, 3, 331–359; **SAN**, 3, 411–412; **SAN**, 3, 444–449; **SAN**, 3, 479–482; **SAN**, 3, 545–5; **SAN**, 4, 86–97; **SAN**, 4, 140–145; **SAN**, 4, 181–182; **SAN**, 4, 496–500; **SAN**, 4, 603–604; **SAN**, 5, 53; **SAN**, 5, 425–433; **SAN**, 5, 444–445; **SAN**, 6, 207–208; **SAN**, 10, 108–109; **TI**, 4, 117–124; **TI**, 4, 207–210; **TI**, 4, 212–221; **TI**, 4, 224–230; **TI**, 4, 306–317; **TI**, 4, 324–325; **TI**, 5, 131–137; **TI**, 5, 202–205; **TI**, 5, 227–234; **TI**, 5, 260–262; **TI**, 5, 524–528; **TI**, 6, 214–216; **TI**, 6, 314–327; **TI**, 6, 485–490; **TI**, 7, 111–112; **TI**, 7, 161–162; **TI**, 7, 162–163; **TI**, 8, 82–85; **TI**, 8, 111; **TI**, 8, 411–413; **TI**, 8, 476; **TI**, 8, 484–485; **TI**, 8, 534–537; **TI**, 8, 552–553; **TI**, 8, 567–568; **TI**, 8, 581–584; **TI**, 11, 345–348; **TI**, 12, 68–69; **TI**, 13, 83–86; **TI**, 14, 203–205; **TM**, 1, 379; **DM**, 1, 227.

<sup>78</sup>**SAN**, 3, 321–326; **SAN**, 3, 409–411; **SAN**, 4, 151–152; **SAN**, 4, 401–409; **SAN**, 6, 49–74; **SAN**, 6, 78–81; **SAN**, 6, 210–218; **SAN**, 13, 129–136; **TI**, 5, 35–36; **TI**, 5, 435–448; **TI**, 6, 485–490; **TI**, 8, 581–584; **SAN**, 4, 583; **TI**, 5, 27; **TI**, 5, 343; **TI**, 5, 61; **TI**, 6, 10; **TI**, 9, 322; **TI**, 10, 37; **TI**, 12, 13; **TI**, 24, 65; **TM**, 1, 516; **SAN**, 6, 45; **SAN**, 12, 550; **TI**, 5, 44; **TI**, 13, 79; **TI**, 20, 36.

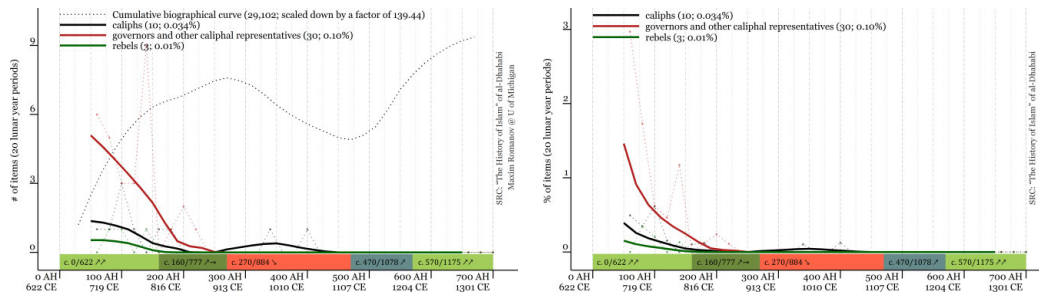


Figure 3.10: Caliphs, Governors, and Rebels as The Early *Khuṭāba*.

*khuṭba* is about power and leadership: the most frequent *nisbas* are al-Amīr, al-Umawī, al-Qurashī, and al-ʿAbbāsī (see Figure E.4). Figure 3.10 illustrates this point in chronological perspective, showing that the engagement of the top leadership in *khuṭba*-related activities is most prominent in the earliest decades and clearly comes to naught by the end of the early period. This process goes hand-in-hand with the de-tribalization of the Islamic society (see Section 2.3.2.1), when the ethos of a tribal warrior—of which the pre-Islamic *khuṭba* was part and parcel—transforms itself into the ethos of a religious scholar. The middle period brings the new model of the *khaṭīb*, although this one will also be closely connected with the powers-that-be of the Islamic world.

As soon as the Islamic community starts disagreeing about its rightful leader and the successor to the Prophet, *daʿwa*-related vocabulary becomes more and more frequent, featuring mostly within the framework of the *khuṭba*-related actions: different groups and individuals “address” people and “call” them to join their cause and pledge allegiance to a new leader.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *Daʿwa*-related vocabulary in the sense of “the call to Islam” (the most common contemporary usage) is very infrequent throughout the corpus with more examples in the period of the Prophet’s lifetime. For example, the Prophet himself “calls” people to Islam (TS, 1:21–22); Abū Hurayra “calls” his unbelieving mother to Islam and laments to the Prophet

الأمير	17	المدني	3	اللخمي	2	الأشعري	1
الأموي	10	الخليفة	3	المروزي	2	الإفريقي	1
القرشي	10	الجزاعي	3	المصري	2	الإمام	1
العباسي	5	الأنصاري	2	المتولي	2	الأخباري	1
الدمشقي	5	البصري	2	القيرواني	2	البعلي	1
الخطيب	5	العالم	2	الطويل	2	البربري	1
الأسدي	4	الشاعر	2	الجزرجي	2	البيع	1
المولى	4	الشامي	2	الأعرج	1	العبدى	1
التميمي	4	الجزاري	2	الأعور	1	العنبري	1
الفقيه	3	الهاشمي	2	الأديب	1	العتابي	1

Figure 3.11: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabā* (51) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–250 AH/642–865 CE).

A common feature of the descriptions of all preaching-related actions in the early period is that they are, by and large, descriptions of single events<sup>80</sup> that lack any indications that they are one of the many that a biographee habitually performed. In the case of the *khuṭba*-related actions their repeated nature may be implied, since it is practically always about caliphs, their governors, or pretenders addressing their actual or potential subjects. Accounts from other biographies and descriptions of events support the reoccurring nature of such addresses-cum-sermons. There are plenty of references to the *khuṭbas* of the early Islamic leaders—this is where one occasionally finds valuable details on the circumstances of these preaching events, but in most cases they are only

that she refuses to listen to him (SAN, 5, 593; TI, 4, 353).

<sup>80</sup>SAN, 1, 113; SAN, 1, 194; SAN, 1, 474; SAN, 2, 466; SAN, 2, 496; SAN, 3, 253; SAN, 3, 351; SAN, 3, 410; SAN, 3, 446; SAN, 3, 480; SAN, 5, 444; SAN, 14, 231; TShK, 3, 197; TI, 4, 226; TI, 5, 348; TI, 27, 190; TM, 1, 471; TM, 1, 486; JM, 2, 266; TT, 1, 332; SAN, 15, 89; TShK, 3, 347; TI, 24, 155.

chronological markers akin to the pre-Islamic *ayyām*, “days [of battles].”<sup>81</sup>

One rarely finds indications as to when and where exactly an address-cum-sermon took place, although the assumption that *khuṭba*-related events would most commonly take place on Fridays in mosques is quite justified. After all, Friday was the day of the week when all adult men were expected to gather in a congregational mosque, which would be the best opportunity for a leader to reach most of the community at once.

*Khuṭba*-related events also seem to have been more “political” in nature: calling people to pledge allegiance to oneself or one’s nominee;<sup>82</sup> cursing opponents and enemies;<sup>83</sup> or bringing the community up to speed on the latest events.<sup>84</sup> They seem to revolve around the issues of leadership<sup>85</sup> more than anything, even though there is always some religious element to these addresses-cum-sermons.

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<sup>81</sup>References of this kind are particularly frequent in the case of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb’s *khuṭba* at al-Jābiya (a place about 50 miles south of Damascus), which is also referred to as *yawm al-Jābiya*: **SAN**, 4, 132; **SAN**, 4, 280; **SAN**, 4, 360; **SAN**, 4, 594; **TI**, 5, 209; **TI**, 5, 409; **TI**, 5, 515; **TI**, 5, 544; **TI**, 5, 555; **TI**, 6, 64; **TI**, 6, 240; **TI**, 6, 512; **TI**, 7, 79. On the importance of al-Jābiya, see, LAMMENS, H.; SOURDEL-THOMINE, J., ‘al-Djābiya,’ in **EI2**. Other references to sermons as chronological markers: **SAN**, 4, 201; **SAN**, 4, 564; **SAN**, 5, 230; **SAN**, 5, 393; **SAN**, 6, 310; **SAN**, 7, 139; **SAN**, 12, 151; **TI**, 6, 55; **TI**, 6, 173; **TI**, 6, 213; **TI**, 6, 458; **TI**, 7, 49; **TI**, 8, 190.

<sup>82</sup>**SAN**, 3, 137; **SAN**, 3, 243; **SAN**, 4, 229; **TI**, 9, 23; **TI**, 11, 240; **TI**, 20, 230.

<sup>83</sup>**SAN**, 6, 212; **TM**, 2, 74; **TI**, 6, 43; **SAN**, 4, 407; **SAN**, 15, 99; **SAN**, 12, 549; **SAN**, 12, 602; **SAN**, 13, 315; **SAN**, 13, 474; **SAN**, 15, 132; **TShK**, 3, 391. This practice becomes even more common in the middle and late periods.

<sup>84</sup>**SAN**, 4, 502; **TI**, 6, 270.

<sup>85</sup>**TI**, 13, 38; **TI**, 13, 39; **TI**, 13, 39.

### 3.3.3 The Game of Thrones

The beginning of the middle period (*c.* 250/865 CE) for the *khuṭba* is marked by several significant changes. First, the caliphs and governors abandon the practice of delivering *khuṭbas* personally, and delegate this role to subordinates. Second, in the sources the *khuṭba* itself becomes primarily a symbolic practice of confirming the legitimate ruler and a local community's allegiance to him. Third, men of learning begin to feature more and more often as *khuṭabā*.

As to the powers-that-be, the shift takes place sometime during the period 200–300 AH/816–913 CE. During the early period, the caliphs are continuously reported as *khuṭabā*: all the Rightly-Guided caliphs,<sup>86</sup> most of the

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<sup>86</sup>Abū Bakr (r. 11–13 AH/633–635 CE): **SAN**, 1, 194; **SAN**, 1, 357; **SAN**, 1, 483; **SAN**, 2, 191; **SAN**, 4, 95; **TH**, 2, 242; ʿUmar (r. 13–23 AH/635–645 CE) **SAN**, 1, 394; **SAN**, 1, 452; **SAN**, 1, 483; **SAN**, 1, 545; **SAN**, 2, 191; **SAN**, 2, 92; **SAN**, 3, 510; **SAN**, 4, 132; **SAN**, 4, 223; **SAN**, 4, 280; **SAN**, 4, 32; **SAN**, 4, 360; **SAN**, 4, 594; **SAN**, 4, 95; **SAN**, 5, 135; **SAN**, 7, 101; **SAN**, 10, 620; **SAN**, 11, 445; **TShK**, 2, 324; **TI**, 5, 209; **TI**, 5, 409; **TI**, 5, 502; **TI**, 5, 515; **TI**, 5, 544; **TI**, 5, 555; **TI**, 6, 64; **TI**, 6, 240; **TI**, 6, 512; **TI**, 7, 79; **TI**, 7, 194; **SAN**, 1, 394; **SAN**, 1, 452; **SAN**, 4, 132; **SAN**, 4, 280; **SAN**, 4, 360; **SAN**, 4, 594; **TI**, 5, 209; **TI**, 5, 409; **TI**, 5, 515; **TI**, 5, 544; **TI**, 5, 555; **TI**, 6, 64; **TI**, 6, 240; **TI**, 6, 512; **TI**, 7, 79; ʿUthmān (r. 23–35 AH/645–656 CE): **SAN**, 2, 191; **SAN**, 4, 564; **TI**, 6, 511; **TI**, 7, 49; and ʿAlī (35–40 AH/656–661 CE) **SAN**, 2, 191; **SAN**, 3, 203; **SAN**, 3, 260; **SAN**, 4, 153; **SAN**, 5, 393; **TI**, 4, 220; **TI**, 5, 549; **TI**, 8, 190; **TI**, 11, 119.

Umayyads,<sup>87</sup> [Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 72/692 CE or 73/693 CE)],<sup>88</sup> and the early ‘Abbāsids,<sup>89</sup> as well as some of the Fāṭimid caliphs.<sup>90</sup> In 279/893 CE we still find the surprised reaction of the chronicler reporting that when the caliph al-Mu‘taḍid (r. 279–289 AH/893–903 CE) prayed with the community, he did not deliver a *khutba*.<sup>91</sup> By the time of the caliph al-Rāḍī (r. 322–329 AH/935–942 CE) this had become the norm: when the caliph was asked to deliver a *khutba*,<sup>92</sup> he found himself in a tricky situation. Apparently, he had no idea what he was supposed to say when he got to the point of saying the *du‘ā* for the ruling caliph, i.e., for himself.<sup>93</sup> This episode shows that by the time of al-Rāḍī, the *khutba* was no longer something the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs would

<sup>87</sup>Mu‘awiya (r. 41–60 AH/662–681 CE) more than anyone: **SAN**, 2, 535; **SAN**, 2, 559; **SAN**, 3, 100; **SAN**, 3, 109; **SAN**, 3, 121; **SAN**, 3, 225; **SAN**, 3, 241; **SAN**, 3, 271; **SAN**, 3, 529; **SAN**, 4, 568; **SAN**, 5, 230; **SAN**, 13, 458; **TI**, 4, 169; **TI**, 4, 312; **TI**, 5, 132; **TI**, 5, 225; **TI**, 5, 272; **TI**, 5, 297; **TI**, 5, 464; **TI**, 8, 508; **TI**, 9, 240; **SAN**, 3, 139; **SAN**, 5, 323; **TI**, 4, 149; **TI**, 4, 308; **TI**, 4, 39; **TI**, 5, 466; **TI**, 5, 539; **TI**, 8, 576; **TH**, 2, 147; Mu‘awiya’s status as a *khatīb* is often discussed through the saying of the Prophet, where one letter changes the meaning entirely: “If you see Mu‘awiya on my pulpit kill/accept him” ( **فاقتلوه** vs. **فاقبلوه** ): **SAN**, 3, 149; **SAN**, 4, 568; **TI**, 4, 312; **TI**, 9, 240; **SAN**, 3, 150. Yazīd I (r. 60–64 AH/681–685 CE): **SAN**, 4, 37. ‘Abd al-Malik (r.): **SAN**, 4, 247; **TI**, 5, 311; **TI**, 5, 319; **TI**, 5, 325; **TI**, 5, 326; **TI**, 6, 138. al-Walīd (r. 86–96 AH/706–716 CE): **SAN**, 4, 500; **TI**, 6, 489; **TI**, 6, 500; **TI**, 10, 122; **TI**, 10, 122. Sulaymān is reported to have preached every Friday (96–99 AH/716–718 CE): **TI**, 6, 270; **TI**, 6, 379; **TI**, 6, 379. ‘Umar II (r. 99–101 AH/718–720 CE): **SAN**, 5, 123; **TI**, 6, 474; **TI**, 7, 194; **TI**, 8, 226. And Yazīd III (r. 126/745 CE): **SAN**, 5, 375.

<sup>88</sup>**TI**, 9, 322.

<sup>89</sup>al-Saffāh (r. 132–136 AH/750–754 CE): **SAN**, 5, 444; **SAN**, 6, 78; **TI**, 8, 336; **TI**, 8, 413; al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158 AH/754–776 CE): **SAN**, 7, 84; **SAN**, 15, 157; **TI**, 9, 468; **TI**, 25, 214; al-Mahdī (r. 158–169 AH/776–786 CE): **TI**, 9, 370; **TI**, 10, 436; al-Rashīd (r. 170–193 AH/787–810 CE): **TI**, 13, 310; and al-Ma‘mūn (r. 198–218 AH/814–834 CE) **TI**, 15, 229.

<sup>90</sup>‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī (r. 279–322 AH/893–935 CE): **TM**, 1, 516. al-Manṣūr (r. 334/946 CE–341H): **SAN**, 15, 157; **TI**, 25, 214; al-‘Azīz (r. 365–386 AH/976–997 CE): **SAN**, 15, 168; **TI**, 27, 130. al-Ḥākīm (r. 386–411 AH/997–1021 CE): **TI**, 28, 43.

<sup>91</sup>**TI**, 20, 239.

<sup>92</sup>In 324/937 CE he was also forced by his rebelling slave soldiers to deliver a *khutba* (**TI**, 24, 35).

<sup>93</sup>In the dead of the night he sent for a famous preacher to help him out, which the latter did (**TH**, 2, 118).

routinely practice. Among other things, al-Rāḍī is described as the last caliph who delivered Friday sermons.<sup>94</sup>

As for the governors, the curve also shows that their engagement with the *khutba* comes to an end during the period 200–300 AH/816–913 CE. al-Dhahabī reports with what can be interpreted as a bit of surprise about the *amīr* Asad b. Nūḥ, a governor of Balkh, who first kept the office of *khatīb* for himself, then decided to give it to one of the most pious scholars of Balkh, Khalaf b. Ayyūb (d. 205/821 CE).<sup>95</sup> This may be a clue that by this time governors would usually delegate this office to somebody else.

Most of the passages that mention the *khutba* in the middle period are about its symbolic meaning. Numerous passages that deal with the symbolic *khutba*, describe it in the passive voice—*khutiba la-hu*, “a *khutba* was pronounced in his name”—and one finds details on the actual preachers who were delivering these sermons only when developments took unexpected turns. Figure 3.12 shows how the frequencies of the symbolic usage of *khutba* changed over the middle and late periods: all three curves peak during 400–550 AH/1010–1156 CE. Considering that these curves reflect the frequency with which the powers-that-be took largely the same provinces from each other, these curves can be treated as the indicators of overall instability in such significant regions as Iraq and Greater Syria. The graph also shows that these peaks of regional instability correlate with the cumulative biographical curve (and in

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<sup>94</sup>**SAN**, 15, 103; **TI**, 24, 268; **TI**, 24, 35; **TH**, 2, 118. One, however, finds that the caliph al-Ṭāʾiʿ (r. 363–381 AH/974–992 CE) delivered at least one *khutba* (**SAN**, 15, 119; **TI**, 27, 287).

<sup>95</sup>Khalaf b. Ayyūb did not accept it, even more so, as any pious scholar should, he tried to avoid the *amīr* at the best of his abilities (**SAN**, 9, 542; **TS**, 1, 271).

fact, with the curves of Iraq and Greater Syria). In other words, the number of biographies drops in these core regions simultaneously with the rise of the symbolic *khutba*.

The symbolic usage of the *khutba* is traceable back to the early period, but it is in the middle and late periods that it becomes prominent, perhaps even primary. The curve of the caliphal *khutba*—even though it groups together the Spanish Umayyads, the ʿAbbāsids and the Fāṭimids—is largely about the struggle for the symbolic authority over the Islamic world between the ʿAbbāsids and the Fāṭimids. During the period of roughly 400–500 AH/1010–1107 CE, urban centers and provinces that lie between the Fāṭimid and the ʿAbbāsīd capitals—mainly in Greater Syria, Arabia and Iraq<sup>96</sup>—go back and forth between the two dynasties. The volume of occurrences of the symbolic *khutba* for the macro regions of North Africa and Andalusia, and Iran and Central Asia is rather insignificant.

This tug of war between the ʿAbbāsids and the Fāṭimids reaches its apogee in 448/1057 CE, when al-Basāsīrī (d. 451/1060 CE),<sup>97</sup> one of the military leaders under the Būyids, pledged his allegiance to the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustansīr bi-Llāh (r. 427–487 AH/1037–1095 CE) and started conquering the cities of Iraq and establishing the Fāṭimid *khutba*—in 448/1057 CE in Mosul,<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup>TI, 26, 220; TI, 26, 254–255; SAN, 16, 271; TI, 26, 258; TI, 26, 406–408; SAN, 16, 307–308; TI, 27, 29–30; TI, 27, 234–235; SAN, 15, 176; TI, 28, 5–7; TI, 30, 371–373; TI, 33, 228; TI, 30, 24–25; SAN, 18, 132–133; TI, 30, 25; TI, 30, 29–30; TI, 30, 32; TI, 30, 48–50; SAN, 17, 633–634; SAN, 18, 307–318; TI, 33, 228; TI, 30, 30–31; SAN, 18, 217; TI, 30, 30; TI, 30, 251; TShK, 5, 247–253; SAN, 15, 140; SAN, 15, 186–196; SAN, 18, 110; TI, 30, 36–37; TI, 31, 7–8; SAN, 15, 190; TI, 31, 21; TI, 31, 29–30; SAN, 15, 193; TI, 31, 32–33; SAN, 18, 431–432; TI, 32, 37–38; TI, 33, 47; TI, 34, 32; TI, 34, 33–34; TI, 34, 15–16.

<sup>97</sup>SAN, 18, 132–133, also see: TShK, 5, 247–253; SAN, 15, 138–141; SAN, 18, 307–318.

<sup>98</sup>TI, 30, 25.



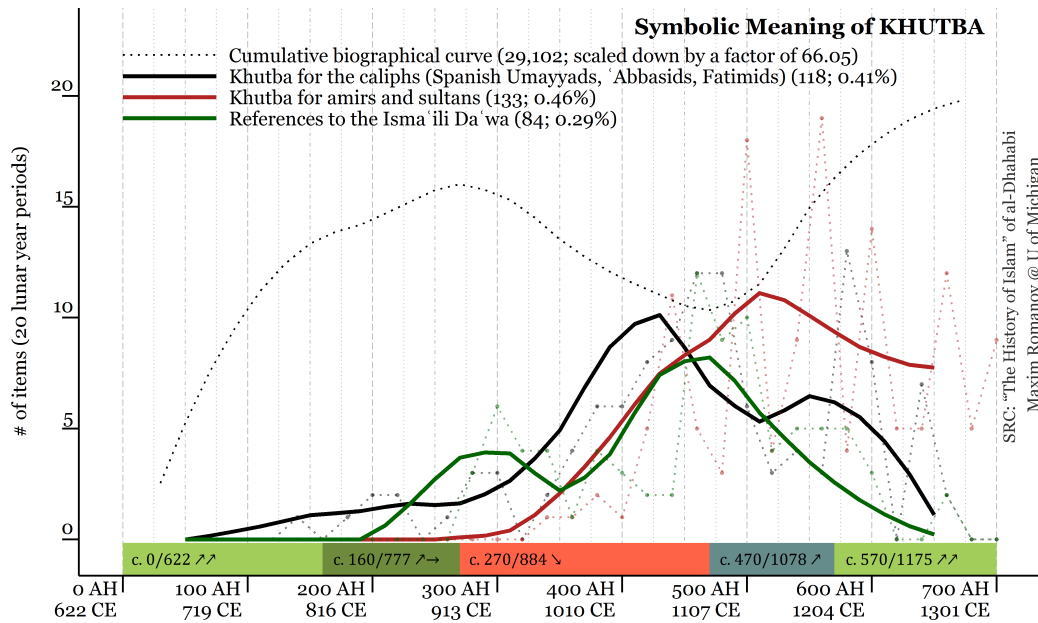


Figure 3.12: The Symbolic Usage of *Khuṭba* in the Middle and Late Periods.

Kufa,<sup>99</sup> and Wasit<sup>100</sup> in 448/1057 CE; in 450/1059 CE in Basra,<sup>101</sup> and then in Baghdad, the very heart of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate.<sup>102</sup>

By and large, however, the biographies of the *khuṭabā* only mention the fact of their preaching positions without any details on their preaching activities. It is during such periods of turmoil as the civil war provoked by al-Basāsīrī<sup>103</sup> that we find some circumstantial details on the preaching of the *khuṭabā* during the middle period. However, these details usually tell us about the most likely consequences of being caught between the hammer and the anvil: when a Ḥanafī *khatīb* of al-Anbār—nicknamed al-Aqṭaʿ, “the Stump,” in the

<sup>99</sup>TI, 30, 25.

<sup>100</sup>TI, 30, 25.

<sup>101</sup>TI, 30, 36.

<sup>102</sup>SAN, 18, 217; TI, 30, 30; TI, 30, 251.

<sup>103</sup>Referred to in the sources as *fitnat al-Basāsīrī* (448–451 AH/1057–1060 CE).

aftermath—refused to deliver a *khuṭba* in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph, al-Basāsīrī had his hand cut off;<sup>104</sup> after the Saljūqs took the capital city back from al-Basāsīrī in 451/1060 CE, a *khaṭīb* of the Mansūr congregational mosque who had delivered *khuṭbas* in the name of the Fāṭimid caliph under the orders of the Būyid commander was removed from his position.<sup>105</sup>

### 3.3.4 The Learned *Khuṭabā*

The third significant change that takes place after the beginning of the middle period (*c.* 250/865 CE) is that representatives of the learned community now occupy the office of *khaṭīb*. A closer look at the biographies of *khuṭabā* after *c.* 250/865 CE shows that they are very similar to most other biographies of this period in terms of length and the general scarcity of biographical details. The information related to their preaching is often limited to brief statements.

As one travels across the Islamic world from west to east the numbers of *khuṭabā* drop. The summary statistics make it clear that there are many more data on the *khuṭabā* of the west than on those of the east—this is visible in the absolute numbers, but even more so in the percentages:<sup>106</sup> North Africa and Andalusia—149 (5.76% of 2,586); Syria and Egypt—128 (2.49% of 5,139); Iraq and Arabia—101 (1.01% of 10,041); Iran and Central Asia—100 (1.60% of 6,254).

Considering that there always must be at least one *khaṭīb* in any major

<sup>104</sup>TI, 33, 185–187; JM, 1, 374–375.

<sup>105</sup>TI, 30, 273–274: himself a descendant of an ‘Abbāsīd caliph, he was replaced by another member of the caliphal family.

<sup>106</sup>The percentages in the graphs are of the total number of biographies in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*; the numbers and percentages are also for the entire period covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

populated center, the real numbers should be significantly higher, but ratios between *khutabā* and the entire scholarly population of each region probably more comparable: technically, the larger the population, the more congregational mosques are required to accommodate every male Muslim of legally responsible age—and the larger the number of *khutabā* to deliver sermons in these mosques. Unfortunately, there are too many unknowns to allow us to consider these data in sociological terms.<sup>107</sup> In historical terms these data should reflect the interest of biographers in the office of a *khatīb* in respective macro regions—by the end of the period their numbers go up or down following their cumulative curves.<sup>108</sup>

Although information on the preaching of *khutabā* is rather scarce and one can hardly trace their life long patterns, their biographies provide enough data to build their profiles, which may help us to understand regional differences. Figure 3.13 offers a numeric summary of the most frequent features found in biographies of *khutabā* after 250/865 CE (these numbers reflect biographical data in general, not just *nisbas*).<sup>109</sup> These numbers, of course, should be considered together with the cumulative curves of the macro regions.

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<sup>107</sup>This is where the historian of the Islamic world need the models of pre-modern Islamic society in general, and of local communities in particular.

<sup>108</sup>Although the graphs are based on al-Dhahabī's *Tārīkh al-islām*, he relied on local sources, preserving the original wording of his sources, as I argued in Section 1.2.2.4. After reading multiple biographies of the same preachers, I am even more convinced that al-Dhahabī relied more on “stitching” rather than paraphrasing, although demonstrating this for a large volume of text would require more time and tools that I currently have at my disposal.

<sup>109</sup>It should be noted, that there is no contradiction between the onomastic data and the descriptions that one finds in the biographies, although, of course, biographical information provides more details than what one finds in the onomastic data. At the same time, it should be added that even though numerically the statistics based on the onomastic data and on the biographical data will differ, their curves mirror each other.

	NAAN*		SYEG*		IRAR*		IRCA*	
<i>ḥadīth</i>	21	14.4%	17	14.1%	15	16.0%	12	13.6%
<i>qirā'āt</i>	66	45.2%	20	16.5%	13	13.8%	7	8.0%
<i>tafsīr</i>	2	1.4%	1	0.8%	2	2.1%	3	3.4%
<i>naḥw</i>	32	21.9%	9	7.4%	6	6.4%	1	1.1%
<i>adab</i>	22	15.1%	9	7.4%	13	13.8%	5	5.7%
<i>taṣawwuf</i>	5	3.4%	3	2.5%	5	5.3%	5	5.7%
<i>fiqh</i>	30	20.6%	68	56.2%	30	31.9%	21	23.9%
<b>noST*</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>54.6%</b>
Ḥanafīs	0	0.0%	2	1.7%	1	1.1%	3	3.4%
Ḥanbalīs	0	0.0%	10	8.3%	5	5.3%	0	0.0%
Shāfi'īs	0	0.0%	34	28.1%	8	8.5%	2	2.3%
Mālikīs	6	4.1%	4	3.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<i>qādī</i>	18	12.3%	20	16.5%	8	8.5%	9	10.2%
positions	48	32.9%	52	43.0%	24	25.5%	18	20.5%
families	31	21.2%	46	38.0%	22	23.4%	25	28.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3.13: The *Khutabā* in Macro Regions after 250 AH/864 CE (Residents Only). *Abbreviations*: **NAAN\***: North Africa & Andalusia; **SYEG\***: Syria & Egypt; **IRAR\***: Iraq & Arabia; **IRCA\***: Iran & Central Asia; **noST\***: no specialized training reported in biographies.

Practically all *khutabā* had some religious training and only rarely does one come across a biography that lacks any information on the religious training of a *khatīb*. However, what one finds in most cases is only a preacher's participation in the general transmission of knowledge, i.e. the name(s) of scholar(s) that he transmitted from and, perhaps, of those who transmitted from him. The general training thus primarily refers to the transmission of *ḥadīth*, but Figure 3.13 shows only specialists in the *ḥadīth* sciences.

The situation with the specialized training of the *khutabā* is different. As Figure 3.13 shows, the difference between east and west is not only in the

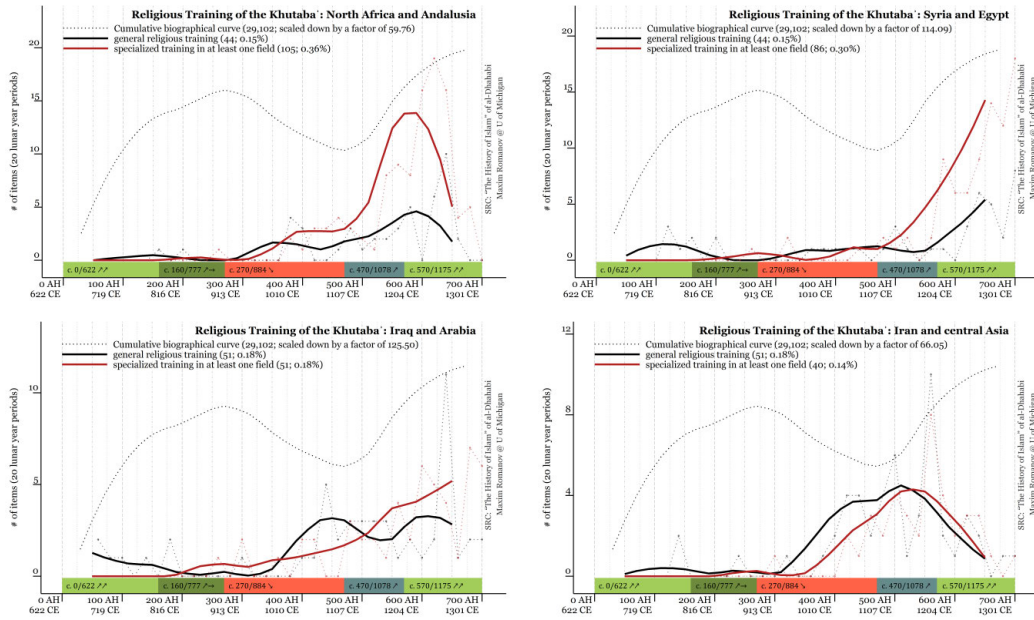


Figure 3.14: General and Specialized Training of the *Khutabā* in Macro Regions.

numbers of *khutabā*, but also in their religious training: the western *khutabā* are much more educated than their eastern counterparts—only 28.8% of the *khutabā* in North Africa and Andalusia do not have specialized training in at least one field, and by the time one gets to the easternmost part of the Islamic world this percentage goes up to 54.6%.<sup>110</sup>

It should be noted that even though Syria and Egypt have very high percentages, the majority of these numbers falls on the late period (after *c.* 550/1156 CE), when all other macro regions are going into decline; these numbers also result from the broad institutional processes, most importantly the growth

<sup>110</sup>One may argue that this is the problem with how biographical information was reported in different regions of the Islamic world. Even though this might be so, the biographies of eastern scholars do not lack educational details. If anything they go to excesses in this regard, thus the biographies of Friday preachers are likely to reflect the actual historical situation.

of *waqf* institutions that offer paid positions. This process does not really take place in such a region as Andalusia, while in others—Iraq and Iran—it does not reach comparable levels of development because the regions themselves go into decline too early. With this in mind the macro region of Syria and Egypt should be included in this comparison with great caution.

A closer look at the fluctuation of these numbers shows that after 500/1107 CE all macro regions start featuring more *khutabā* with specialized training in at least one other religious discipline, although this process starts earlier in the west and later in the east (Figure 3.14). At the same time, one can see that the specialization of the *khutabā* differs from one region to another, and the *khutabā* of North Africa and Andalusia differ from their counterparts in other macro regions of the Islamic world. Here one finds a great number of specialists in Qurʾānic recitation (45.6%), Arabic language and grammar (21.9%)—in both cases the ratios are noticeably higher when compared to any other region. The ratios of those with training in *ḥadīth* sciences and jurisprudence are more comparable across the Islamic world.<sup>111</sup> It should be added that the data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* attest that Andalusia was indeed a prominent center of Qurʾānic recitation, and Arabic language and grammar, but the numbers of specialists in most religious disciplines are significantly higher in the eastern provinces of the Islamic world, particularly in Iraq (see, Figure 3.15).

Interesting and intriguing, however, is the fact that the sources provide no information on the training of the *khutabā* as preachers. The closest that one

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<sup>111</sup>Except for Syria and Egypt (for the reason stated above) where one also finds the highest number of identifiable legal affiliations of the *khutabā*.

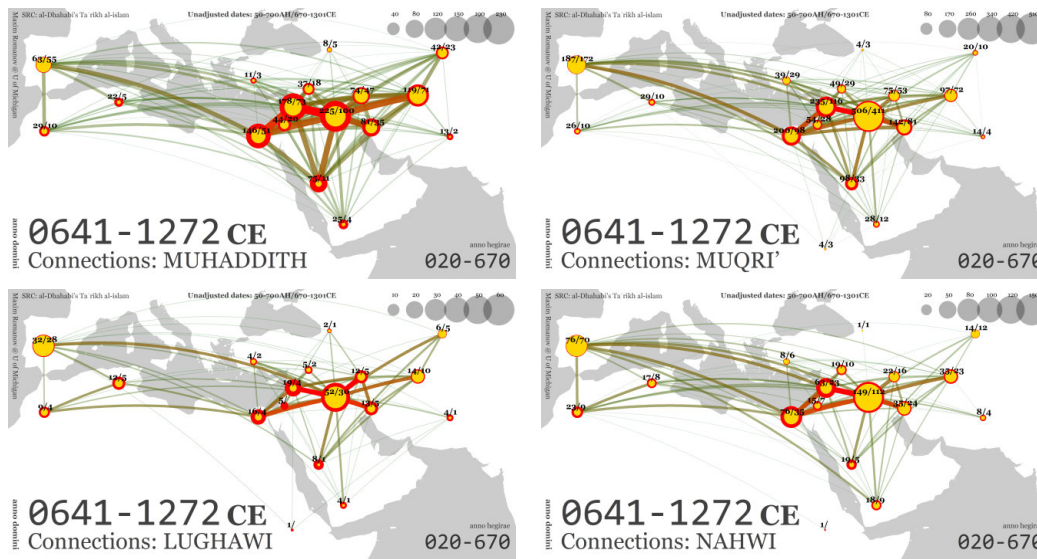


Figure 3.15: Geographical Distribution of Specialists in Ḥadīth, Qirāʾāt, Lughā & Nahw (According to *Taʾrikh al-islām*).

finds is that so-and-so studied the *Dīwān al-khuṭab* of Ibn Nubāta (d. 374/985 CE), a *khaṭīb* of Aleppo.<sup>112</sup> However, a close look at those who studied this book reveals that they were grammarians and linguists,<sup>113</sup> not preachers.<sup>114</sup>

The “descriptive names” of *khuṭabāʾ* in macro clusters show that representatives of particular groups held the office of *khaṭīb* more often. In North Africa and Andalusia one finds a number of Anṣārīs (about 20). Although this *nisba* goes back to the tribal period of the Islamic history—“the Helpers of the Prophet”—in the middle period, it serves as a status marker all over the

<sup>112</sup>SAN, 16, 321–322; TI, 26, 559; also TI, 25, 229.

<sup>113</sup>SAN, 23, 248; SAN, 23, 355; TS, 1, 288; TI, 37, 137; TI, 43, 63; TI, 44, 295; DhTH, 1, 264.

<sup>114</sup>The only statement that might describe the training of a *khaṭīb* is found in a biography of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Dīnawarī (d. 685/1287 CE): *wa-shtaghala fī ṣabāhu bi-l-khuṭab*, “he occupied himself with the study of *khuṭbas* in childhood.” However, it is likely to mean that Jamāl al-dīn was doing it on his own, rather than was receiving instruction under some experienced *khaṭīb*. Moreover, he was a *khaṭīb* of Kafar Baṭnā, a village back then (TI, 51, 246).

Islamic world, but most prominently in Andalusia. As we move east toward Syria and Egypt, the most numerous group among the *khutabā* are Shāfiʿī scholars (over 30)—the dominance of the Shāfiʿī jurists, however, belongs to the late period (after *c.* 550/1156 CE). In Iraq one finds quite a few descendants of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs (about 20).<sup>115</sup> Although their religious training was modest at best, they held the key *khitāba* offices in Baghdad, and it seems that these offices were reserved exclusively for them.<sup>116</sup> In Iran and Central Asia, however, no particular group seem to stand out.<sup>117</sup>

The last interesting development I would like to dwell on regards the positions of the *khutabā*. All regions feature preachers who hold other positions in addition to their preacherships, which often are secondary or even tertiary. The growth of positions held by the members of the learned class is closely connected with the process of institutionalization, which takes different forms in different places and progresses at different paces in different regions. While in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Egypt one finds a number of preachers who also hold positions in the *waqf* institutions—most frequently teaching positions in *madrasas* (and the number of these positions grows as one moves westward); in Andalusia

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<sup>115</sup>**SAN**, 12, 535–540; **SAN**, 15, 551–553; **SAN**, 18, 241–244; **SAN**, 19, 469; **SAN**, 20, 115–116; **TI**, 25, 236; **TI**, 28, 435; **TI**, 31, 155–156; **TI**, 31, 159; **TI**, 31, 186–188; **TI**, 31, 223; **TI**, 32, 266–267; **TI**, 32, 285; **TI**, 35, 79; **TI**, 35, 204; **TI**, 35, 359–360; **TI**, 36, 337; **TI**, 36, 357–358; **TI**, 36, 452–453; **TI**, 36, 521–522; **TI**, 39, 177; **TI**, 39, 236; **TI**, 40, 138; **TI**, 41, 204–205; **TI**, 42, 169–170; **TI**, 42, 192; **TI**, 42, 425; **TI**, 46, 304; **TI**, 47, 116–117.

<sup>116</sup>Such as, for example, the *khitāba*-office in the Maṣṣūr congregational mosque (*jāmiʿ al-Manṣūr*: **SAN**, 15, 374; **TI**, 25, 123; **TI**, 25, 236; **TI**, 27, 194; **TI**, 30, 30; **TI**, 31, 155; **TI**, 31, 159; **TI**, 31, 223; **TI**, 36, 337; **TI**, 36, 357; **TI**, 36, 522; **TI**, 39, 177; **TI**, 42, 425; **TI**, 51, 167; **TM**, 2, 216).

<sup>117</sup>In all regions most frequent toponymic *nisbas* associate preachers with the most prominent regional urban centers; although regional *nisbas* are more frequent for Andalusia and Egypt.



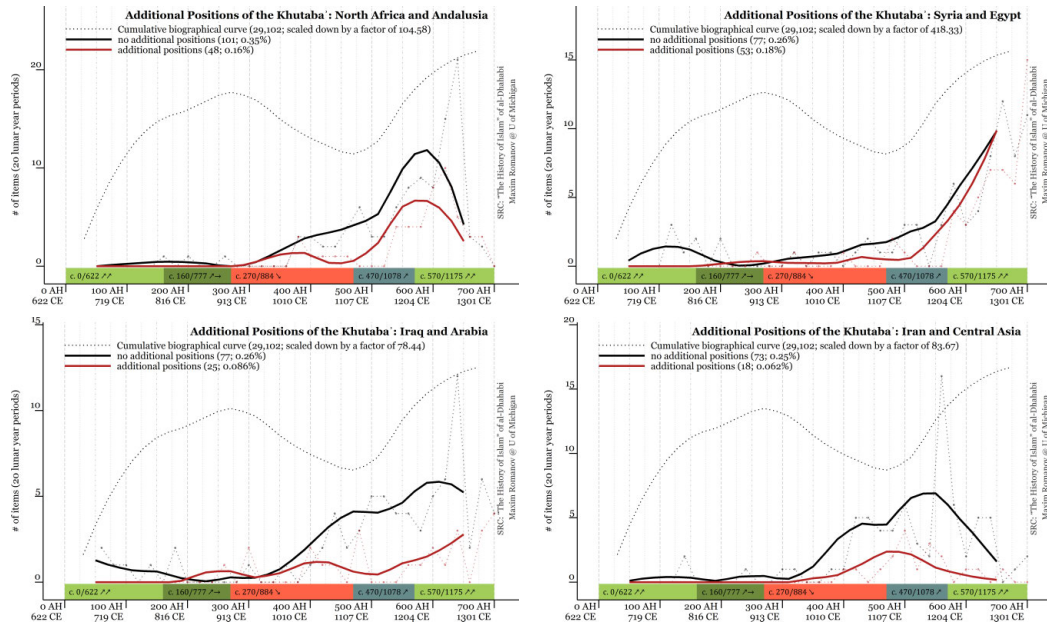


Figure 3.16: *Khutabā* with and without Additional Positions (According to *Tārīkh al-Islām*).

preachers most commonly hold the positions of a *qādī* and a prayer leader.<sup>118</sup> The graphs on Figure 3.16 (red curves) should reflect these processes. In Iran the process starts earlier, around 400/1010 CE, but already *c.* 500 it slides into decline, although this decline follows that of the cumulative curve of the region. In all other regions the curves begin their rise *c.* 500/1107 CE and then follow the flow of the cumulative curves of their respective regions. As Figure 3.14 shows, *c.* 500/1107 CE is also a threshold when the number of *khutabā* with specialized training exceeds that of *khutabā* who have only general religious training.

To conclude, it appears that the office of *khatīb* remained rather insignifi-

<sup>118</sup>The most common description in the biographies of the Andalusian scholars is: *waliya-l-qadā wa-l-ṣalāt idāfatan ilá-l-khitāba*—the order of things often varies.

cant and was held largely by religious scholars with limited training. However, the process of institutionalization reconfigured the social space of the religious class and the office of *khatīb* became incorporated into the overall set of positions that would usually be held by learned men. The office itself still remained minor, but the fact that now scholars with expertise and contributions in other areas held this office started to attract more attention of biographers and chroniclers.

### 3.4 *Qaṣaṣ*: Narrating Religious Stories

In terms of biographees, the *qaṣaṣ* exists only in the early period (Figure 3.17). After 250/865 CE the word *quṣṣāṣ* is increasingly used to refer to a group of faceless individuals—always in plural, always in a quite unspecific, but usually negative context. It looks as if the chroniclers start using this term as a blanket category for all the bad people out there, as whenever one tries to find a person in these groups he is nowhere to be found. The early *quṣṣāṣ*, on the other hand, are very concrete individuals.

*Qaṣaṣ* is usually translated as “the narration of religious stories,” or simply “storytelling.” However, as the biographies of the *quṣṣāṣ* suggest, *qaṣaṣ* is not necessarily about “stories,” but rather about the gradual presentation of information in general: something complex is “cut into pieces” (*qaṣṣa*) and then narrated piece by piece. In the context of preaching, this can be understood as the “spoon-feeding” of religious lore.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>The *qaṣaṣ* is often often mentioned together with *tafsīr*, which usually stands for the explanation of the *Qurʾān*, but in the early period it could refer to the explanation of the

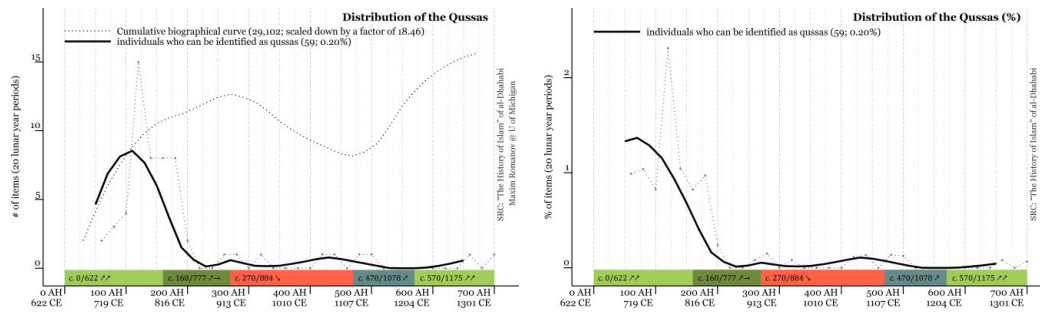


Figure 3.17: Chronological Distribution of the *Qusṣās*.

The numbers of those who may be considered involved in *qaṣaṣ* are rather significant and one finds the first reported *qāṣṣ* during the reign of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb: Tamīm al-Dārī was first to narrate religious lore to the community, for which he received the permission of the caliph.<sup>120</sup> It may have taken him a while to get this permission, but when ʿUmar finally granted it he also instructed Tamīm al-Dārī to “admonish” people before he came out to perform his own preaching duty, namely to deliver a *khutba* (*ʿiz qabla an akhruja li-l-khutba*).<sup>121</sup>

Most biographies of the *quṣṣāṣ* simply state the fact that their biographees were involved in *qaṣaṣ*, but other circumstantial details are often missing. Yet, the contexts in which *qaṣaṣ*-related activities are mentioned suggest that a

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religious lore in general—also a piece-by-piece representation (**SAN**, 4, 156; **SAN**, 4, 321; **SAN**, 4, 599; **TI**, 7, 113; **TI**, 9, 639; **TI**, 23, 520).

<sup>120</sup>**SAN**, 2, 442–449.

<sup>121</sup>**SAN**, 2, 442–449. al-Dhahabī also gives a report on yet another *first* storyteller: ʿUbayd b. ʿUmayr al-Laythī al-Jundaʿī (d. 74/694 CE), who also lived in the time of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. This one is also described as *wāʿiz*, who was “reminding people of what they forgot” (*kāna yudhakkiru-l-nās* **TI**, 5, 480–482; also: **SAN**, 4, 156–157).

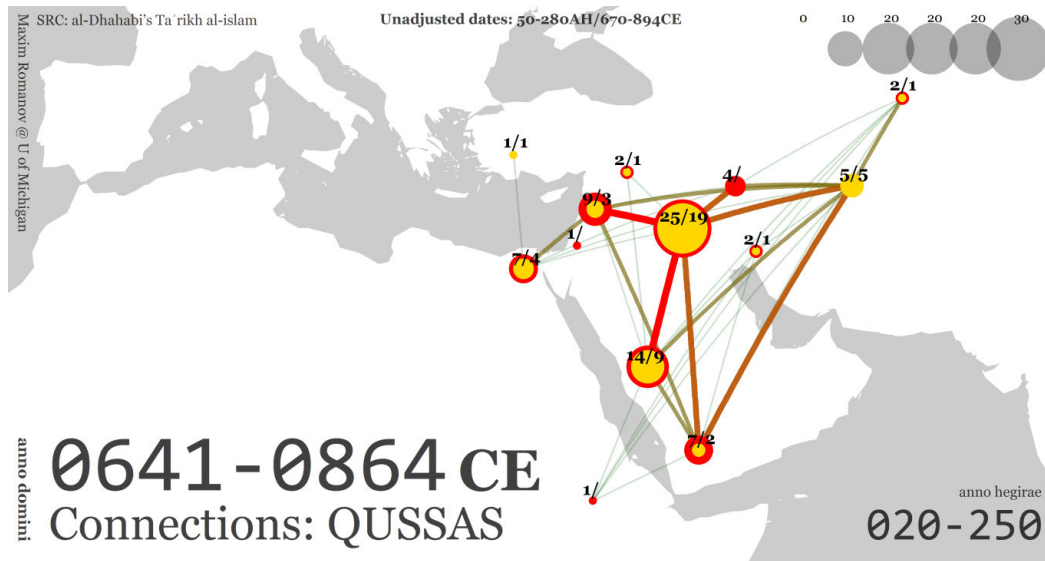


Figure 3.18: Geography of the *Quṣṣāṣ* from *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

*qāṣṣ* may have held a salaried position<sup>122</sup> in a mosque<sup>123</sup> or in the army (*al-jund*).<sup>124</sup> The *quṣṣāṣ* are reported to have been holding their preaching sessions up to two times a day, usually after the obligatory daily prayers (*ṣalāt*);<sup>125</sup> and some are reported to have preached standing, following the example of the early *khuṭabāʾ*-rulers.<sup>126</sup> Unlike the early *khuṭabāʾ*, most *quṣṣāṣ* were of

<sup>122</sup>One finds that ʿUmar b. Abd al-ʿAzīz provided a salary of two *dīnārs* per month to Muslim b. Jandab al-Hudhalī (d. 106/725 CE), a Medinan storyteller, who prior to that was practicing *qaṣaṣ* without any compensation (*wa kāna qabla dhālika yaqaṣṣu bi-lā rizq*) (TI, 7, 256–257).

<sup>123</sup>SAN, 17, 316; TShK, 3, 185; TI, 28, 326; SAN, 5, 188; SAN, 6, 101; TI, 4, 24; TI, 6, 118; TI, 7, 419; TI, 7, 425; TI, 9, 641; TH, 1, 319. Some of the *quṣṣāṣ* are referred to as *qāṣṣ al-jamāʿa*, which may imply that they were “Friday *quṣṣāṣ*” (SAN, 5, 319; TI, 7, 404; TI, 13, 72); unfortunately the sources do not provide any details on what exactly this phrase means. In any case, mosques (*masjid*, *jāmīʿ*) are the most frequently reported places of the *qaṣaṣ*; other places that also come up are: the burial procession (TI, 19, 136); the *qāṣṣ*’ own house (SAN, 4, 516); and the place that is most commonly associated with the *quṣṣāṣ*—the streets/roads (*turuqāt*, TI, 29, 296).

<sup>124</sup>SAN, 3, 146; TI, 6, 5; TI, 6, 317; TI, 7, 136; TI, 7, 481; TI, 9, 520.

<sup>125</sup>SAN, 4, 336; SAN, 6, 101.

<sup>126</sup>SAN, 2, 447; SAN, 4, 132; TI, 5, 409; TH, 1, 319.

humble origin—the number of *mawālī* is rather significant (Figure F.4)<sup>127</sup>—and it seems to have been a way to gain respect and authority in the still largely tribal community.

القاص	24	الأنصاري	3	المقرئ	2	البخاري	1
الكوفي	10	الخراساني	3	الصالح	2	العلاف	1
البصري	9	الأعرج	2	التجيبى	2	الطار	1
المولى	8	الإمام	2	الأعمى	1	الداري	1
المدني	7	الأزدي	2	الأزرق	1	الضبيعي	1
العابد	4	العامري	2	الباهلي	1	الشاعر	1
المصري	4	الدمشقي	2	البعلي	1	الشامي	1
القرشي	4	الفقيه	2	البكاء	1	الفارسي	1
الواعظ	4	الهدلي	2	البلخي	1	الحداني	1
الزاهد	4	المكي	2	البري	1	الحجاج	1

Figure 3.19: *Nisbas* of the *Quṣṣāṣ* (50) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–250 AH/642–865 CE).

The context of *qaṣaṣ* is rather difficult to establish because of the scarcity of data. One does find, however, that the *quṣṣāṣ* are often involved in *tafsīr*, “the interpretation of the *Qurʾān*,”<sup>128</sup> and the major themes seems to have revolved around such issues as death (*mawt*),<sup>129</sup> grave [tortures] ([*adhāb*] *al-qabr*),<sup>130</sup> and godly fear (*khawf*)<sup>131</sup>—the themes that are also at the heart of the *waʿz*. The tears shed by both the *quṣṣāṣ*<sup>132</sup> and their audiences<sup>133</sup> is yet

<sup>127</sup>The “powerful” *nisba* al-Qurashī here refers to the *mawālī* of this tribe.

<sup>128</sup>SAN, 4, 156; SAN, 4, 321; SAN, 4, 599; TI, 7, 113; TI, 9, 639; TI, 23, 520.

<sup>129</sup>TI, 8, 226; TI, 8, 304.

<sup>130</sup>TI, 8, 304.

<sup>131</sup>SAN, 8, 47; TI, 8, 303; TI, 11, 186; TI, 51, 296.

<sup>132</sup>TShK, 3, 185; TI, 8, 303; TI, 10, 499

<sup>133</sup>SAN, 3, 214; TShK, 3, 185; TI, 5, 459; TI, 8, 303; TI, 10, 499

another feature that the *qaṣaṣ* shares with the *waʿz*.

This leads us to another important issue—a quite significant overlap between the *qaṣaṣ* and the *waʿz*.<sup>134</sup> The broad definition of preaching yields a rather large group involved in the *waʿz* during the early period (until *c.* 250/865 CE), but the early *waʿz* can hardly be interpreted as a preaching practice. Unlike the *qaṣaṣ*, the descriptions of which convey a strong sense of regularity and continuity, most instances of the early *waʿz* are single actions (see Section 3.5.2). Those rather rare cases when the *waʿz* may be interpreted as a practice, it usually overlaps with the *qaṣaṣ*. The descriptions of these two practices are very similar—and, in fact, biographers even say that they are the same.<sup>135</sup> However, my reading of *Taʾrīkh al-islām* strongly suggests a regional and perhaps ideological difference between the two.

The geographical distribution of the early *quṣṣāṣ* (Figure 3.18) corresponds to the core of the Islamic world during the early period, which can be described as a triangle that brings together Arabia, Iraq and Syria (see also Figures 3.18 & F.4). However, when the core of the Islamic world starts shifting eastward at the end of the early period, the geography of the *quṣṣāṣ* does not follow this shift and most of them are still found in the urban areas of Arabia,<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>**SAN**, 4, 157; **SAN**, 4, 274; **SAN**, 5, 107; **SAN**, 5, 188; **SAN**, 5, 319; **SAN**, 5, 91; **SAN**, 6, 97; **SAN**, 8, 46; **SAN**, 15, 382; **SAN**, 17, 316; **TFSH**, 2, 569; **TShK**, 3, 59; **TI**, 5, 410; **TI**, 7, 171; **TI**, 7, 339; **TI**, 8, 64; **TI**, 8, 201; **TI**, 8, 303; **TI**, 8, 442; **TI**, 9, 174; **TI**, 10, 269; **TI**, 10, 326; **TI**, 11, 184; **TI**, 13, 410; **TI**, 25, 164; **TI**, 28, 326; **TI**, 31, 173; **JM**, 2, 32; **TSh**, 1, 255.

<sup>135</sup>E.g., *al-qāṣṣ huwa-l-wāʿiz* (**SAN**, 7, 452).

<sup>136</sup>**SAN**, 4, 156–157; **SAN**, 5, 318–322; **TI**, 5, 480–482; **TI**, 7, 403–405; **TI**, 9, 398; **SAN**, 6, 97; **TI**, 6, 533; **TI**, 7, 149–150; **TI**, 7, 171–172; **TI**, 7, 256–257; **TI**, 8, 441–443; **TI**, 9, 341; **TI**, 10, 313–314; **TI**, 10, 325–327; **TI**, 7, 415–416; **TI**, 10, 289–290.

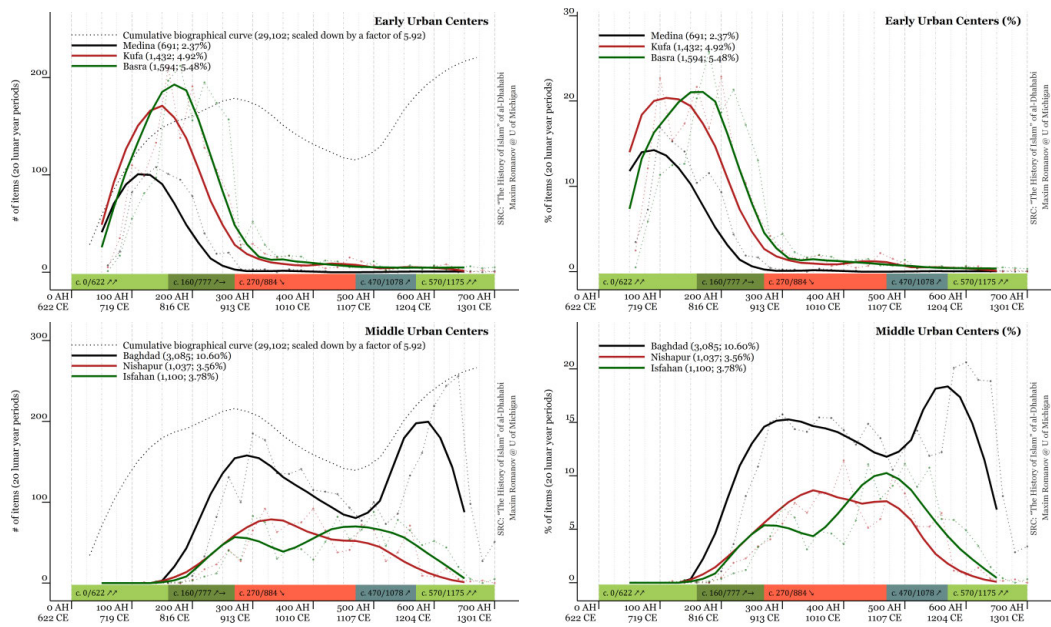


Figure 3.20: The Early and Middle Urban Centers. Most *quṣṣāṣ* are associated with the early urban centers, while the *wuṣāz* are with the middle urban centers.

Syria,<sup>137</sup> Egypt,<sup>138</sup> but perhaps most prominently in the early urban centers of Iraq—Basra<sup>139</sup> and Kufa.<sup>140</sup>

Most *quṣṣāṣ* come from the centers that were prominent under the Umayyads, but these quickly fade under the ʿAbbāsids, almost completely disappearing from the social map of the Islamic world by *c.* 300/913 CE. As these centers fade—mainly, Medina, Basra and Kufa (Figure 3.20)—so too do the *quṣṣāṣ*.

<sup>137</sup> SAN, 2, 442–449; SAN, 5, 90–93; TI, 5, 409–411; TI, 6, 211–212; SAN, 4, 272–277; TI, 5, 542–544; TI, 7, 136; TI, 9, 519–520.

<sup>138</sup> SAN, 4, 131–133; SAN, 5, 107–108; TI, 5, 409–411; TI, 7, 425; TI, 7, 484–485; TI, 8, 90–91; TI, 13, 409–414; TI, 7, 339–340.

<sup>139</sup> SAN, 4, 515–517; SAN, 5, 452–454; SAN, 8, 46–48; TI, 4, 24; TI, 6, 117–119; TI, 6, 158–159; TI, 8, 54–56; TI, 8, 64–65; TI, 8, 268–269; TI, 8, 302–304; TI, 9, 69; TI, 9, 174; TI, 10, 269–272; TI, 10, 499–501; TI, 11, 184–187; TI, 13, 222–224.

<sup>140</sup> SAN, 4, 321–343; SAN, 5, 103–105; SAN, 5, 188–189; SAN, 5, 205; SAN, 6, 275–278; SAN, 6, 278–281; SAN, 6, 385–390; TI, 6, 533; TI, 7, 229–230; TI, 7, 339; TI, 7, 418–419; TI, 7, 437–438; TI, 7, 474; TI, 8, 278; TI, 9, 118; TI, 12, 423–424.

At the same time, the rise of new urban centers—most prominently Baghdad, Nishapur and Isfahan (Figure 3.20)—brings in the *wuṣṣāz* in great numbers, although this development will be most clearly visible in the middle period (c. 250–550 AH/865–1156 CE), when these urban centers flourish. Thus, *waṣz* as a preaching practice starts replacing the *qaṣaṣ* when the core of the Islamic world is shifting eastward, toward central Iraq and north-eastern Iran.

The early *quṣṣāṣ* appear to be knowledgeable and pious individuals,<sup>141</sup> and critical comments against specific *quṣṣāṣ*, or *quṣṣāṣ* in general, do not start until the ʿAbbāsīd period: in these cases they are either directed toward the *quṣṣāṣ* of the early ʿAbbāsīd period, or—if they go back to the Umayyad period—clearly come from the scholars of the ʿAbbāsīd era and the new ʿAbbāsīd centers.<sup>142</sup>

One finds negative comments toward the *quṣṣāṣ* coming from such key individuals as Abū Ḥanīfa,<sup>143</sup> Mālik b. Anas<sup>144</sup> and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,<sup>145</sup> but these are the attacks on all *quṣṣāṣ* who—together with beggars—are the worst of liars.<sup>146</sup> Although not all of these individuals fall squarely into the geographical divide that I suggest, it is not unheard of for the later Muslim scholars to tweak the words of the key early authorities.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>141</sup>Some of them were appointed as judges (**SAN**, 4, 131; **SAN**, 4, 272; **SAN**, 4, 515; **SAN**, 6, 276; **TI**, 5, 409; **TI**, 5, 542).

<sup>142</sup>**SAN**, 8, 47; **SAN**, 9, 477; **SAN**, 19, 36; **TI**, 8, 303; **TI**, 9, 69; **TI**, 9, 118; **TI**, 10, 289; **TI**, 10, 499; **TI**, 11, 185; **TI**, 12, 424; also: **SAN**, 5, 222; **SAN**, 6, 122; **TI**, 8, 263.

<sup>143</sup>**TS**, 1, 53.

<sup>144</sup>**SAN**, 9, 424.

<sup>145</sup>**SAN**, 3, 455; **TI**, 5, 508; **SAN**, 11, 86; **SAN**, 11, 300.

<sup>146</sup>**TH**, 1, 252. Occasionally the Ṣūfīs are added to the mix: **SAN**, 11, 300; **SAN**, 11, 86; **TM**, 1, 243.

<sup>147</sup>On the pages of the same corpus one also finds positive comments toward the *quṣṣāṣ* from Mālik b. Anas (**TI**, 14, 448) and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (**SAN**, 5, 222; **SAN**, 11, 170; **TI**, 8, 55; **TI**, 17, 45; **SAN**, 11, 170; **TI**, 17, 45).



One does find *quṣṣāṣ* in Baghdad, but in dwindling numbers, and as time goes on their descriptions become worse and worse.<sup>148</sup> The last “good” *qāṣṣ* dies in 264/878 CE.<sup>149</sup> Around 300/913 CE—after the *quṣṣāṣ* have practically disappeared from biographical collections—one finds the faceless *quṣṣāṣ* banned from the streets of the ‘Abbāsīd capital as troublemakers who incite people to unrest.<sup>150</sup> Although the faceless *quṣṣāṣ* are found during the Umayyad period as well, their image is quite positive, as they boost the morale of the Muslim warriors.<sup>151</sup>

To conclude, it appears that the shift from *qaṣaṣ* to *wa‘z* is a sign of changing élites in the Islamic world, whereby the new élite rejects the old one by rejecting a practice strongly associated with it.<sup>152</sup> It should be stressed that the borderline between *qaṣaṣ* and *wa‘z* in each specific biography remains a fuzzy one,<sup>153</sup> but the overall pattern becomes clear after all the biographies are examined. Nonetheless, this interpretation should be reexamined on a wider

<sup>148</sup>**SAN**, 12, 114; **SAN**, 15, 381; **TFSh**, 2, 569; **TI**, 18, 57; **TI**, 20, 277; **TI**, 28, 326; **TI**, 29, 296; **TI**, 31, 173; **JM**, 2, 32; **TH**, 1, 151; **TH**, 1, 219; **TH**, 1, 319; **TSh**, 1, 255.

<sup>149</sup>**SAN**, 15, 382; **TI**, 25, 165; **TH**, 1, 151. As usual, there is always another last one—this one dies in 338/950 CE (**SAN**, 15, 381–382; **TI**, 25, 164–165), but the curve clearly shows that by this time the *quṣṣāṣ* have completely disappeared from the pages of biographical collections. These “last good” *quṣṣāṣ* are Baghdadis and in both cases their piety surprises biographers.

<sup>150</sup>**SAN**, 12, 552; **TI**, 20, 238; **TI**, 20, 238; **TI**, 21, 17; **SAN**, 13, 474. See also much later: **TI**, 27, 238; **SAN**, 12, 552; **SAN**, 13, 474; **SAN**, 16, 509; **TI**, 20, 238; **TI**, 21, 17; **TI**, 27, 153; **TI**, 27, 238; **TH**, 2, 157.

<sup>151</sup>E.g., **SAN**, 3, 146, and also references to the *quṣṣāṣ* in the army given above. One also finds that some caliphs of both great dynasties used to have personal preachers—the *quṣṣāṣ* in the case of the Umayyads (**TI**, 8, 225–227.), and the *wu‘āz* in the case of the ‘Abbāsīds.

<sup>152</sup>The practice could have also been associated with the Khārījites (**SAN**, 4, 148; **TI**, 5, 327).

<sup>153</sup>The reference is to “fuzzy logic,” a theory that offered degrees of truth as an alternative to the classical binary logic, which could not give a satisfactory solution to such problems as, for example, at what point a balding man can be considered bold. (On “fuzzy logic” see, for example: PETR HAJEK, ‘Fuzzy Logic’, in: EDWARD N. ZALTA, editor, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2010 edition (2010)).

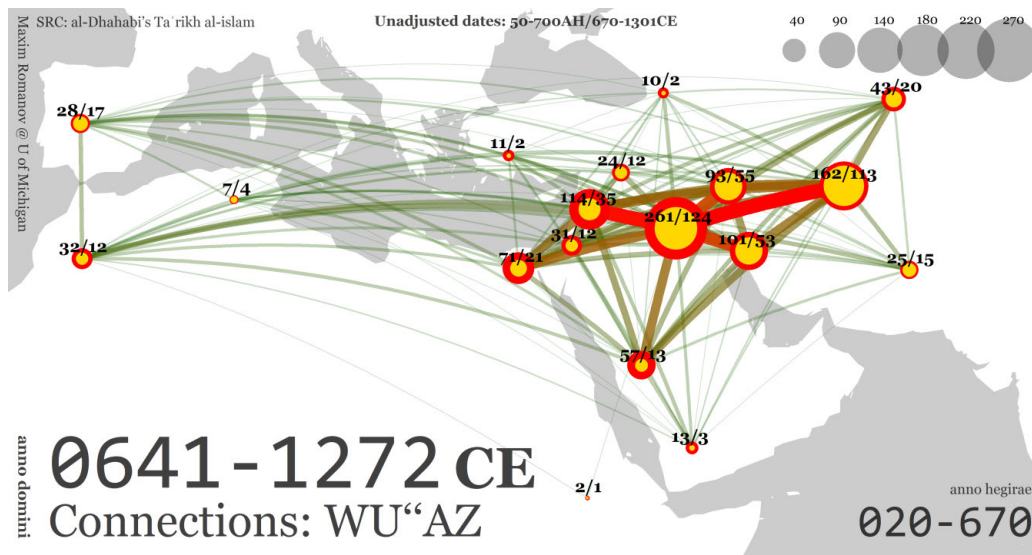


Figure 3.21: Geography of the *Wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz*.

corpus of earlier sources.

## 3.5 *Wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z*

### 3.5.1 Chronology and Geography

Unlike the geographical distribution of the *khutabā*, the geographical distribution of those who can be identified as *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* has a strong eastward leaning (Figure 3.21). Unlike *khutba*, *wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z* was never an obligatory practice, so this distribution most likely represents the actual development of this practice in different regions of the Islamic world up until the end of the period covered in *Ta<sup>ʿ</sup>rīkh al-Islām*.

Like the chronological distribution of *khutabā*, the chronological distribution of *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* also suggests roughly the same three periods: the early period

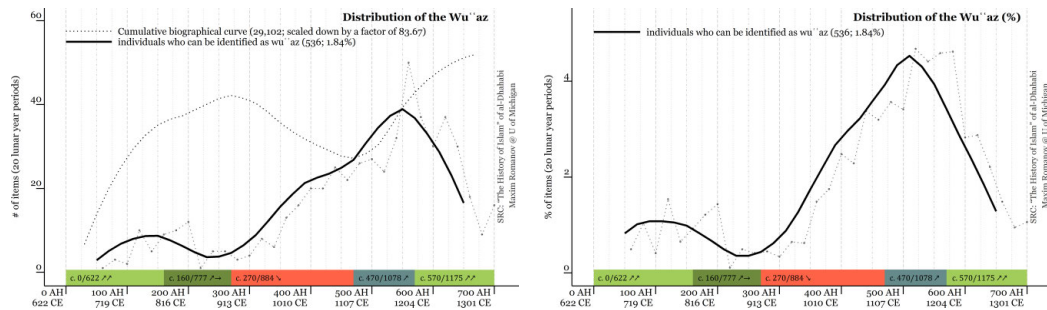


Figure 3.22: The Chronological distribution of the *Wu'az* in *Ta'rikh al-Islām*.

until *c.* 250/865 CE, when the curve goes down; the middle period between *c.* 250–550 AH/865–1156 CE, when the curve steadily goes up; and the late period after *c.* 550/1156 CE, when the curve plummets (Figure 3.22).

The chronological distribution of *khuṭabā* in the macro regions (Figure 3.23) offers a more detailed picture of *wa'z* across the entire Islamic world. It shows even more strikingly that *wa'z* was an eastern practice that never took root in North Africa and Andalusia, and was a rather minor phenomenon in Syria and Egypt.

### 3.5.2 Single Admonitions

The early *wa'z* (until *c.* 250/865 CE) always has a clear edifying message, but most examples of *wa'z* in this period are single actions.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the

<sup>154</sup>**SAN**, 1, 529; **SAN**, 2, 186; **SAN**, 2, 447; **SAN**, 3, 525; **SAN**, 4, 13; **SAN**, 4, 170; **SAN**, 4, 67; **SAN**, 5, 367; **SAN**, 6, 412; **SAN**, 7, 368; **SAN**, 8, 329; **SAN**, 8, 374; **SAN**, 8, 442; **SAN**, 8, 459; **SAN**, 9, 169; **SAN**, 9, 287; **SAN**, 9, 64; **SAN**, 9, 79; **SAN**, 10, 578; **SAN**, 11, 533; **SAN**, 14, 499; **SAN**, 15, 162; **SAN**, 16, 321; **SAN**, 17, 421; **SAN**, 19, 398; **SAN**, 19, 492; **SAN**, 21, 323; **TFSH**, 1, 134; **TShK**, 2, 328; **TS**, 1, 212; **TS**, 1, 263; **TS**, 1, 53; **TS**, 1, 74; **TS**, 1, 80; **TI**, 4, 248; **TI**, 5, 144; **TI**, 5, 297; **TI**, 7, 24; **TI**, 7, 422; **TI**, 9, 168; **TI**, 9, 478; **TI**, 10, 258; **TI**, 10, 317; **TI**, 10, 439; **TI**, 11, 31; **TI**, 11, 347; **TI**, 12, 89; **TI**, 12, 200; **TI**, 12, 213; **TI**, 12, 225; **TI**, 13, 15; **TI**, 13, 193; **TI**, 13, 412; **TI**, 13, 432; **TI**, 16, 155; **TI**, 18, 266; **TI**, 28, 268; **TI**, 28, 268; **TI**, 29, 162; **TI**, 35, 288; **TI**, 40, 26; **TI**, 48,

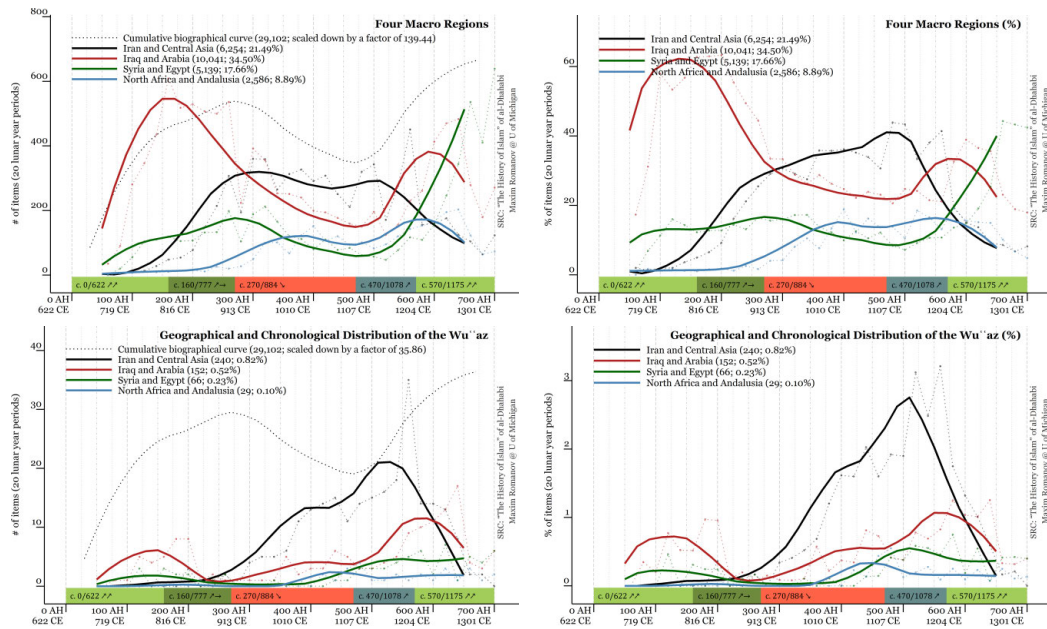


Figure 3.23: Chronological Distribution of the *Wu'az* in Macro Regions. The two graphs on top show the cumulative curves for the same macro regions (given for comparison).

instances of *wa'az* are one-on-one events that usually take place in private settings. The contexts of these events also indicates that often “admonishments” are reactive: someone admonishes someone else in order to correct something quite specific that an upright Muslim should not have done. Such private and singular admonitions better fall into the category of “commanding right and forbidding wrong” (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), rather than preaching proper. Where, of course, the boundary between the two lies is the matter of perspective.

Another distinctive feature of the early *wa'az* is that most commonly a *wā'iz* is someone of lower social standing who “admonishes” someone of higher stand-

21; TM, 1, 190; TM, 1, 52; TM, 1, 523; TM, 2, 316; JM, 1, 177; DM, 1, 27.

ing, most commonly—caliphs<sup>155</sup> and their governors.<sup>156</sup> To put it differently, the subjects of *khuṭba*-related actions now become the objects of *waʿz*-related actions.<sup>157</sup> The powers-that-be occasionally ask those below them for an “admonition:” ʿUmar (II) b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz asked one of his clients—a Berber named Muzāḥim—to keep an eye on him and admonish if need be,<sup>158</sup> which also tells us that *waʿz*-related actions in the early period could also be somewhat involuntary.<sup>159</sup>

What definitely sets the early *waʿz* aside from other early prominent preaching forms is that it also features as a written “admonition,”<sup>160</sup> while other forms are always oral. Most of these written “admonitions” are also directed upward, toward the powers-that-be. Mālik b. Anas is reported to have sent a number of letters to caliphs and governors, which he considered a way of performing the duty of “commanding right and forbidding wrong” (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*).<sup>161</sup>

As was discussed in the section on the *qaṣaṣ*, some instances of the *waʿz* that convey a sense of a regular practice often overlap with the *qaṣaṣ*, but

<sup>155</sup>TI, 8, 442; TI, 6, 474; SAN, 11, 533; SAN, 12, 41; TI, 18, 266; SAN, 7, 85; TI, 9, 469; TI, 10, 258; TM, 1, 115; SAN, 8, 329; SAN, 9, 287; SAN, 9, 64; SAN, 9, 97; TI, 12, 89; TI, 12, 213; TI, 12, 24; TI, 13, 15; TI, 13, 427.

<sup>156</sup>SAN, 6, 54; TS, 1, 74; TI, 8, 584.

<sup>157</sup>Although biographies from all periods are saturated with stories about the Prophet, there are very few reports where Muḥammad “admonishes” anyone—and most of them are from the period after 250/865 CE when *waʿz* as a practice is on the rise. (SAN, 3, 420; SAN, 17, 482; SAN, 19, 43; TShK, 10, 37; TI, 29, 98; TI, 34, 147).

<sup>158</sup>TI, 6, 474–475.

<sup>159</sup>SAN, 8, 436; TFSh, 1, 134; TShK, 2, 97; TShK, 3, 154; TS, 1, 212; TI, 4, 97; TI, 6, 474; TI, 10, 258; TI, 11, 31; TI, 40, 26; DhTH, 1, 22.

<sup>160</sup>SAN, 4, 170; SAN, 9, 64; TI, 11, 387; TI, 12, 200; TI, 12, 24; TM, 1, 110; JM, 1, 177.

<sup>161</sup>TM, 1, 110; TM, 1, 111 (pp. 111–119); he also sent out similar “admonitions” to his fellow scholars (TM, 1, 131).

as a practice the latter features more prominently in the early period. Over the period of 200–300 AH/816–913 CE, *waʿz* as a term replaces *qaṣaṣ*. This shift is gradual both chronologically and geographically. And most likely the biographers—many of whom considered them to be the one and the same thing—were not even aware of this shift. Perhaps it is for this reason that the sources do not mention the first *wāʿiz*, while they do mention the first *qāṣṣ*—actually, even two of them (see Section 3.4).

The *nisbas* of the *wuʿāz* (Figure D.4) of this period also display similarities between *qaṣaṣ* and *waʿz*: toponymic *nisbas* aside, one finds a significant groups of *mawālī* and pietists (*zāhid*, *ʿābid*).

البصري	15	الفقيه	5	البغدادي	2	الأعور	1
الزاهد	15	المدني	4	العباسي	2	الإفريقي	1
الواعظ	12	الشاعر	3	العجلي	2	الأنطاكي	1
المولى	10	المصري	3	العنزي	2	الإسكندراني	1
الكوفي	8	الصوفي	3	المفسر	2	الأستاذ	1
العابد	7	السيد	3	المروزي	2	الأوزاعي	1
الشيخ	7	التمي	3	القاص	2	البربري	1
الإمام	6	الخراساني	3	السهمي	2	البنار	1
المكي	6	الأمير	2	التميمي	2	العالم	1
الدمشقي	5	الأزدي	2	الثوري	2	العارف	1

Figure 3.24: *Nisbas* of the *Wuʿāz* (67) in *Taʾriḫ al-islām* (20–250 AH/642–865 CE).

### 3.5.3 Admonishing the Community

The beginning of the middle period (*c.* 250/865 CE) marks the staggering growth of the *wu<sup>cc</sup>āz* in the Islamic world. Now the *wu<sup>cc</sup>āz* are increasingly individuals with at least some religious training who admonish flocks of people in the cities and rural areas. At the same time, the singular, private form of the *wa<sup>cc</sup>z* never completely disappears and one finds that famous preachers are occasionally brought to some powerful person in order to give him a private admonition.

الواعظ	217	الحافظ	14	البخاري	9	الطوسي	7
الفقيه	47	الصالح	14	العالم	9	العلوي	6
النيسابوري	47	التميمي	14	الدمشقي	8	الهمداني	6
الإمام	36	الحنفي	13	الشيرازي	8	المتكلم	6
البغدادي	36	الحنبلي	11	المفسر	8	السلطان	6
الإصبهاني	32	القاضي	11	الأنصاري	7	السمعاني	6
الزاهد	32	الهروي	10	الجرجاني	7	العارف	5
الشيخ	27	المحدث	10	المقري	7	العلامة	5
الصوفي	25	المروزي	10	المصري	7	الضريير	5
الشافعي	19	الرازي	10	الطليطلي	7	المدرس	5

Figure 3.25: *Nisbas* of the *Wu<sup>cc</sup>āz* (329) in *Tārīkh al-islām* (251–550 AH/ 866–1156 CE).

The geographical distribution of the *khutabā* revealed a quite significant difference between the west and the east of the Islamic world—almost 2:1. The difference between the east and the west in terms of the *wu<sup>cc</sup>āz* is even more staggering—almost 8:1. Compared to Iran and Central Asia, the macro region of North Africa and Andalusia is a barren land. Again, both the absolute

numbers and the percentages clearly show the difference between west and east: North Africa and Andalusia—29 (1.12% of 2,586); Syria and Egypt—52 (1.01% of 5,139); Iraq and Arabia—114 (1.14% of 10,041); Iran and Central Asia—231 (3.69% of 6,254). The numbers of the *wu<sup>c</sup>āz* practically double when one moves from one macro region to another, while the percentages remain roughly the same, until we get to Iran where it triples.

Although the chronological mark for the cumulative curve is *c.* 250/865 CE, the growth of the *wu<sup>c</sup>āz* starts at different periods in different macro regions. The numbers of *wu<sup>c</sup>āz* start growing in the macro region of Iran and Central Asia (mostly Khurāsān) even before 250/865 CE. Iraq and Arabia (mostly the new centers of the former) join *c.* 250/865 CE, but the overall growth is much slower. Syria and Egypt join this race only *c.* 400/1010 CE, and, unlike the curve of the Syrian and Egyptian *khuṭabā*, the curve of the *wu<sup>c</sup>āz* stabilizes rather quickly at a pretty low point. Although the curve of Andalusia and North Africa starts going up earlier—*c.* 350/962 CE—it is very difficult to characterize this curve as one of growth.

This configuration is puzzling. The macro region of North Africa and Andalusia poses a significant problem. With such extremely low numbers of *wu<sup>c</sup>āz* in this region, it is difficult to discuss *wa<sup>c</sup>z* as a preaching practice.<sup>162</sup> The objection may be raised that this results from al-Dhahabī’s regional bias. However, al-Dhahabī’s coverage of that macro region appears to be fair.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>162</sup>At the same time, one finds a rather significant volume of research on the *wa<sup>c</sup>z* in this region produced by Jones. Most recently, JONES (2012), *The Power of Oratory*, for other publications see Section 3.1.2 and Bibliography. At the same time, the number of *wu<sup>c</sup>āz* that Jones mentions with a different degree of detail is still smaller than what my corpus provides.

<sup>163</sup>See Sections 2.1.3 & A.7.1 above.



Besides, his own macro region—Syria and Egypt—is rather shallow on *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz*, yet, as the curves show, he covered it thoroughly, especially after *c.* 500/1107 CE. Moreover, he did not have any objection to including a significant number of *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* from Iraq and Iran, which may only mean that one can rule out any prejudice on his part against the “public” preachers.<sup>164</sup>

*Wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z* as a practice was different from *khutba* in many ways. From very early on<sup>165</sup> *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* preached more frequently, often several times a week, while *khutabā* preached only once a week. The sermons of the *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* never had any duration limits, while a good *khutba* was always a short *khutba*.<sup>166</sup> The preaching of the *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* was often itinerant in nature, while the *khutabā* were always tied to the mosques. Moreover, the descriptions of the *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz* often convey a sense that *wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z* was a vocation which required serious commitment—something one rarely finds in the biographies of the *khutabā*. Last but not least, *wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z* was an art that individuals actually studied under famous and experienced *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz*.<sup>167</sup>

Figure 3.26 shows the most frequent descriptions of *wu<sup>ʿ</sup>āz*. It is rather difficult to discuss the situation in North Africa and Andalusia, since the

<sup>164</sup>The biographical collections of the legal schools seem to offer a similar east-to-west distribution, although, since at the moment I cannot map the data from these collections, my projections are preliminary.

<sup>165</sup>Especially if one considers the *wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z* to be a continuation of the *qaṣaṣ*.

<sup>166</sup>**SAN**, 5, 360; **TS**, 1, 20.

<sup>167</sup>One of the most common formula is *akhadha-l-wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z min fulān b. fulān*, literally, “he took [the art of] the *wa<sup>ʿ</sup>z* from so-and-so.” This and other similar formulae are often used to denote the studies of major religious subjects as *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *qurā<sup>ʿ</sup>āt* etc. See: **SAN**, 11, 33; **SAN**, 19, 606; **SAN**, 21, 373; **SAN**, 23, 9; **TShK**, 5, 235; **TShK**, 8, 339; **TI**, 17, 37; **TI**, 34, 191; **TI**, 39, 92; **TI**, 40, 175; **TI**, 41, 117; **TI**, 42, 288; **TI**, 43, 150; **TI**, 45, 99; **TI**, 45, 362; **TI**, 46, 112; **TI**, 46, 197; **TI**, 46, 212; **TI**, 47, 436; **TI**, 52, 139; **TI**, 52, 404; **JM**, 2, 154; **TSh**, 2, 82; **DhTH**, 1, 57; **DhTH**, 1, 101; **DhTH**, 1, 199; **DhTH**, 1, 244; **DhTH**, 1, 253.

	NAAN*		SYEG*		IRAR*		IRCA*	
<i>ḥadīth</i>	6	20.7%	5	9.6%	17	14.9%	33	14.3%
<i>qirā'āt</i>	4	13.8%	4	7.7%	19	16.7%	10	4.3%
<i>tafsīr</i>	2	6.9%	3	5.8%	9	7.9%	23	10.0%
<i>naḥw</i>	3	10.3%	1	1.9%	10	8.8%	7	3.0%
<i>adab</i>	2	6.9%	6	11.5%	13	11.4%	16	6.9%
<i>taṣawwuf</i>	3	10.3%	2	3.9%	8	7.0%	28	12.1%
<i>fiqh</i>	4	13.8%	26	50.0%	43	37.7%	83	35.9%
<b>noST*</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>41.6%</b>
Ḥanafīs	0	0.0%	6	11.5%	5	4.4%	11	4.8%
Ḥanbalīs	0	0.0%	4	7.7%	19	16.7%	8	3.5%
Shāfi'īs	1	3.5%	6	11.5%	6	5.3%	17	7.4%
Mālikīs	1	3.5%	1	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<i>qādī</i>	0	0.0%	4	7.7%	3	2.6%	11	4.8%
positions	4	13.8%	14	26.9%	28	24.6%	49	21.2%
families	3	10.3%	18	34.6%	21	18.4%	64	27.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3.26: The *Wu'cāz* in Macro Regions after 250 AH/864 CE (Residents Only). *Abbreviations*: **NAAN\***: North Africa & Andalusia; **SYEG\***: Syria & Egypt; **IRAR\***: Iraq & Arabia; **IRCA\***: Iran & Central Asia; **noST\***: no specialized training reported in biographies.

numbers there are too low. The situation in Syria and Egypt is not significantly better. In Iraq and Iran the situation is different and it makes more sense to consider the percentages. The percentages of *wu'cāz* with more than just a general religious training are higher than they are for those of the *khutabā'*—and they would be even higher if we were to consider training in *wa'z* itself as specialized training. The problem, however, is that most statements on training in *wa'z* are found in the biographies of the Iraqi *wu'cāz* after 500/1107 CE, so it is hard to say whether *wa'z* in the Iranian provinces of the earlier period was considered a subject comparable to *ḥadīth*, *qirā'āt*, *fiqh* or

*taṣawwuf*. In any case, the emphasis in specializations of the Iranian *wuṣṣāz* is more on “content-based” religious subjects, such as *tafsīr* (10.0%), *ḥadīth* (14.3%), and *fiqh* (35.9%). A noticeable number of Ṣūfīs is also difficult to miss (12.1%). In Iraq, the rates of those with specialized training in the *fiqh* (37.7%) and *ḥadīth* (14.9%) are quite comparable to those of the Iranian *wuṣṣāz*, but the emphasis shifts from the *tafsīr* and *taṣawwuf* to the *qirāʾāt* (16.7%).

Overall, the summary statistics on the *wuṣṣāz* leave a rather different impression of this group from that of a more conventional reading of their biographies. While reading their biographies, one usually gets the impression that the *wuṣṣāz* were quite an exceptional group. However, the data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* strongly suggest that the prevailing majority of the *wuṣṣāz* do not even remotely resemble such prominent practitioners of *waṣz* as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201 CE) and his grandson Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī (d. 654/1257 CE), who received a lion’s share of scholarly attention.<sup>168</sup> A closer look at the biographies of the *wuṣṣāz* further reveals that the Jawzīs are the most frequent common denominator when it comes to the detailed information on the *wuṣṣāz*—particularly the fascinating descriptions of *waṣz* sessions (it should be stressed that they were also often writing about themselves). They are quoted in all the sources of the corpus that were written after their lifetime. Figure 3.27 vividly illustrates this point: the spike in discussions of *waṣz* and the *wuṣṣāz* (500–650 AH/1107–1253 CE) closely mirrors that of the references to the Jawzīs, both the grandfather and the grandson, who are abundantly quoted by al-Dhahabī.

<sup>168</sup>Swartz’ studies of the *waṣz* deal mainly with the grandfather, while Talmon-Heller’s research of *waṣz* features the grandson most prominently. See Section 3.1.2 for an overview.

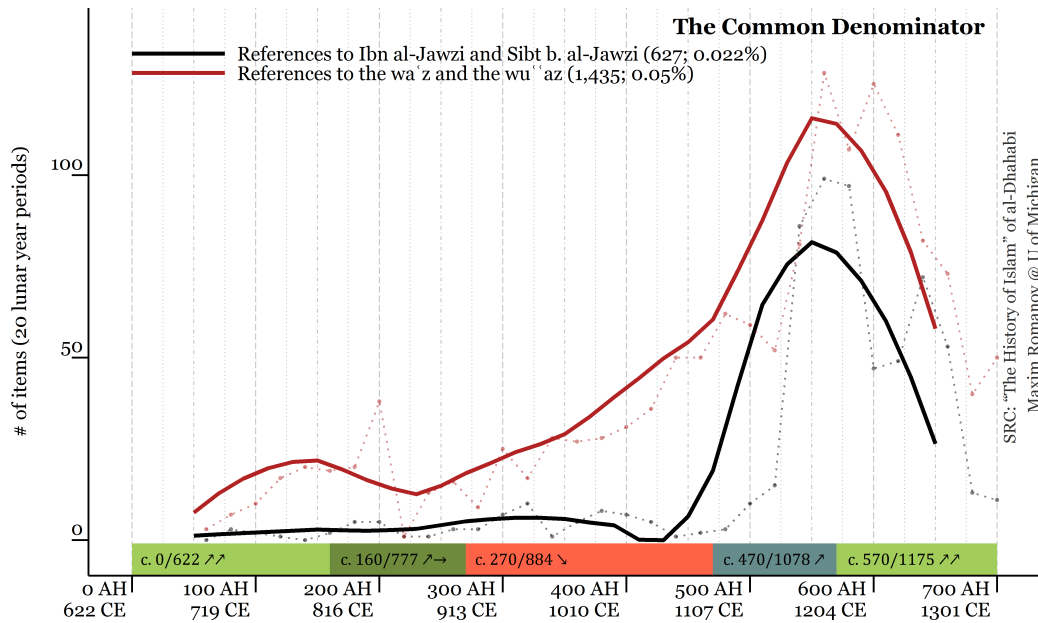


Figure 3.27: References to the Jawzīs and the *Wu'āz* in *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*

This is not to say that what the Jawzīs wrote about preachers should be ignored; yet this is something one must be fully aware of while writing a history of the *wa'z*. Moreover, even considering this significant contribution of the Jawzīs, the actual numbers of the *wu'āz* are not necessarily exaggerated. Figure 3.28 shows that the numbers of the *wu'āz* change rather smoothly—going up during 250–550 AH/865–1156 CE, and then down starting around 550/1156 CE (left). At the same time, the overall volume of the biographies of the *wu'āz* (cumulative length in words—on the right) is changing in a different manner with a significant spike visible during *c.* 440–620 AH/1049–1224 CE, which one can interpret that the Jawzīs augmented the already on-going process, rather than completely altered it.

With all this in mind, it is still worth taking a look at the “educational”

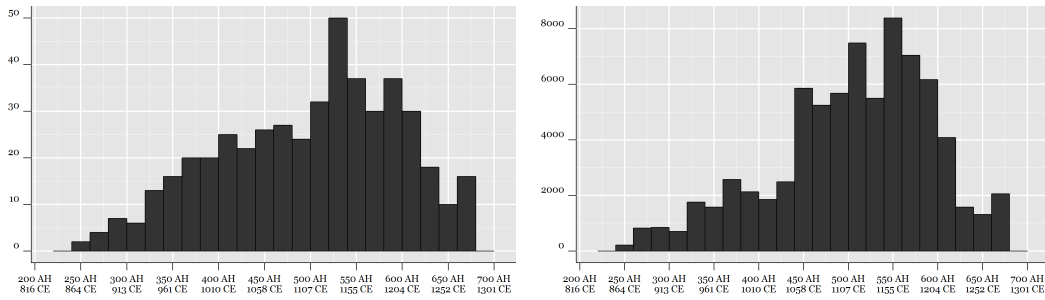


Figure 3.28: The  $Wu'āz$ : Numbers and Volumes (According to *Ta'rīkh al-islām*). The two histograms show how the numbers (left) of their biographies and their cumulative volumes (right) were changing over time.

graphs of the  $wu'āz$ , which actually show that all macro regions start featuring more  $wu'āz$  who specialized in at least one field noticeably earlier than this happens with the *khuṭabā* in the same macro regions: Iran and Central Asia around 330/942 CE (almost 200 lunar years earlier); Iraq and Arabia around 430/1039 CE (almost 70 lunar years earlier); Syrian and Egypt around 420/1030 CE (about 60 lunar years earlier). In North Africa and Andalusia it also happens earlier, but only slightly and, as was stressed above, the numbers of  $wu'āz$  for this region are too low to consider them representative of any process.

### 3.5.4 The Fate of the $Wa'z$

Many  $wu'āz$  preached wherever they happened to find themselves. Moreover, famous  $wu'āz$  were often expected to deliver a sermon during their stay in a new place. Keeping this in mind, one can approach the data on the  $wu'āz$  with more emphasis on geography and the travels of the  $wu'āz$  across the Islamic world. Looking into the geographical connections of the  $wu'āz$ —something

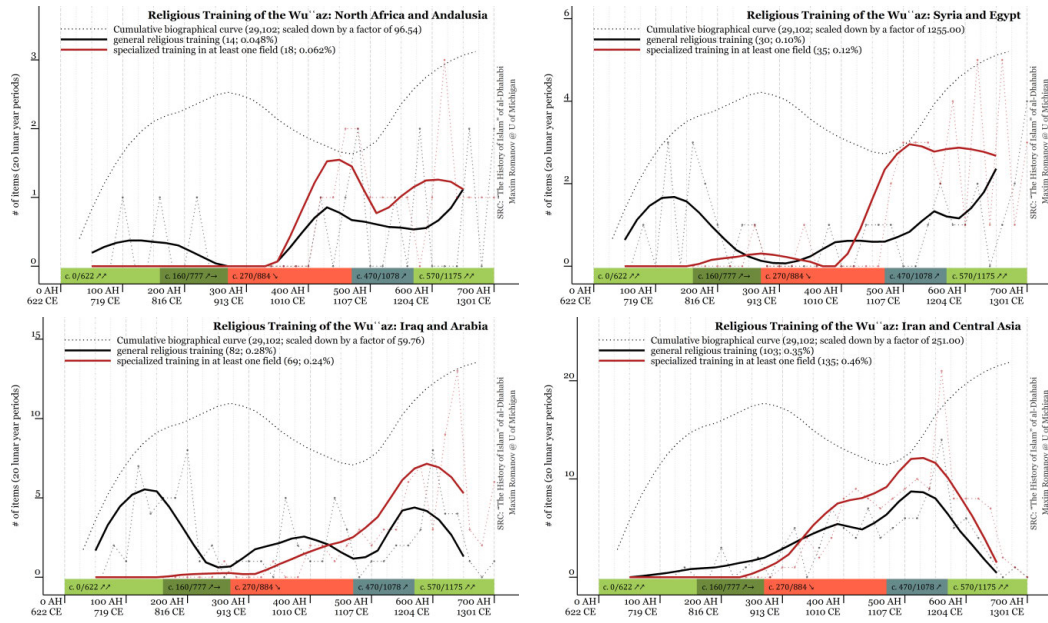


Figure 3.29: General and Specialized Training of the *Wu'az* in Macro Regions.

that did not make much sense in the case of the *khuṭabā*—should provide us with valuable insights into how this practice was developing in time and space.

Figure 3.26 already suggested a gradual westward move of the *wu'az*. Graphs and maps can demonstrate this more efficiently, especially if one adds “visitors” into the equation. In the previous sections the emphasis was on the *wu'az* who can be considered “residents,” i.e. they are associated with particular macro regions through their toponymic *nisbas*. The “visitors” are those whose biographies mention places from particular macro regions, but whose toponymic *nisbas* associate them with different macro regions. Figure 3.30 shows that Iran and Central Asia had only a rather insignificant number of visiting *wu'az*. The macro regions of Iraq and Arabia had both in practically the same amounts, while Syria and Egypt had almost twice as many visiting

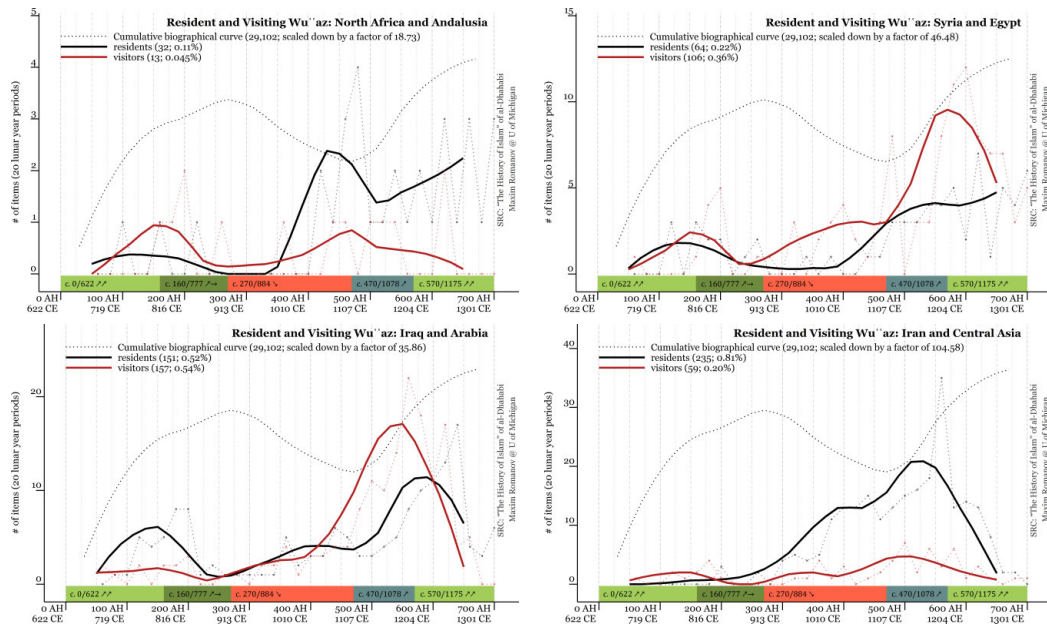


Figure 3.30: Resident and Visiting  $Wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  in Macro Regions.

$wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  as they had their own. North Africa and Andalusia are still outliers, although for what it is worth, here the number of the visiting  $wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  is even more insignificant.<sup>169</sup>

If one takes a closer look at the maps of geographical connections of the  $wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  in the chronological perspective (Figures 3.31 & 3.32), it becomes very clear that a number of Iranian  $wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  traveled to Iraq. Going back to the discussion of regional connections (see Chapter 2.2), it should be added that the geographical connections of the Iranian  $wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  are consistent with the cumulative connections of their respective regional clusters: like their countrymen,

<sup>169</sup>It is tempting to add though, that the highest number of the Andalusian  $wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$  have *nisbas* al-Ṭulayṭilī, i.e. they are strongly associated with the city of Toledo—the only significant urban center that reached its peak during 400–500 AH/1010–1107 CE, the period of the temporary decline of Andalusia. For more details, see Section A.7. Perhaps, the time of instability increased the demand for the  $wu'^{c}\bar{a}z$ .

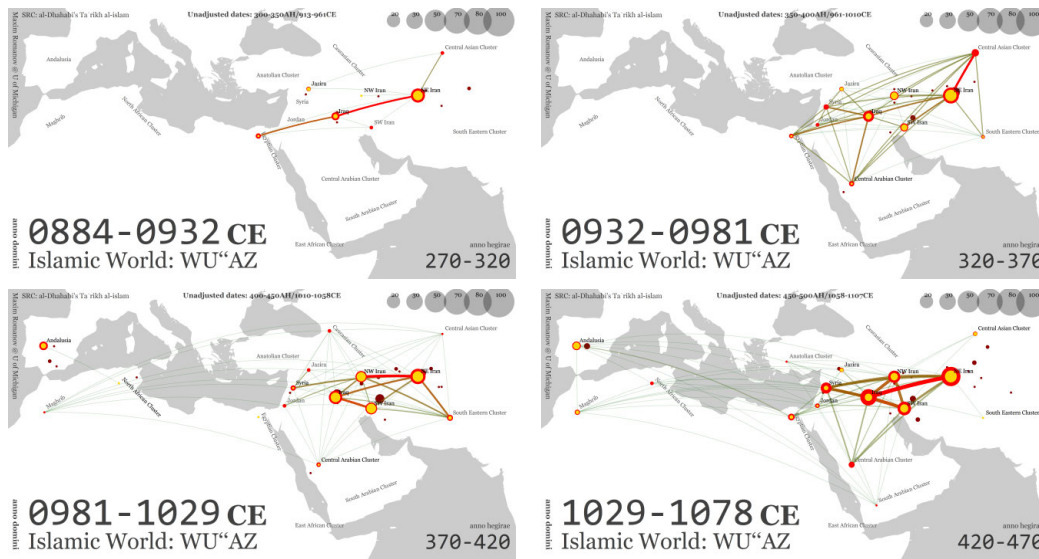


Figure 3.31: Connections of the  $Wu^{\prime}āz$  during 270–470 AH/884–1078 CE.

the  $wu^{\prime}āz$  from the Iranian provinces travel mostly to Iraq, very few of them reach Syria and Egypt (mostly those from northwestern Iran), and almost none get as far as North Africa and Andalusia. This focus on Iraq makes a lot of sense, as Iran and Iraq share the highest number of migrants.<sup>170</sup> The Iranian  $wu^{\prime}āz$  travel to Iraq—more precisely, central Iraq, which flourishes during the middle period. Keeping in mind a significant number of Iranian migrants, these  $wu^{\prime}āz$  must have felt most comfortable and most welcome among their countrymen in central Iraq.

The macro region of Iran and Central Asia reaches its second peak around 500/1107 CE, after which it goes into a rapid decline. The cumulative maps of the Iranian regional clusters show that the volume of this macro region's connections with Iraq and, to a lesser extent, Syria grows significantly after

<sup>170</sup>Please, refer to the descriptions of regional clusters in Appendices for more details.



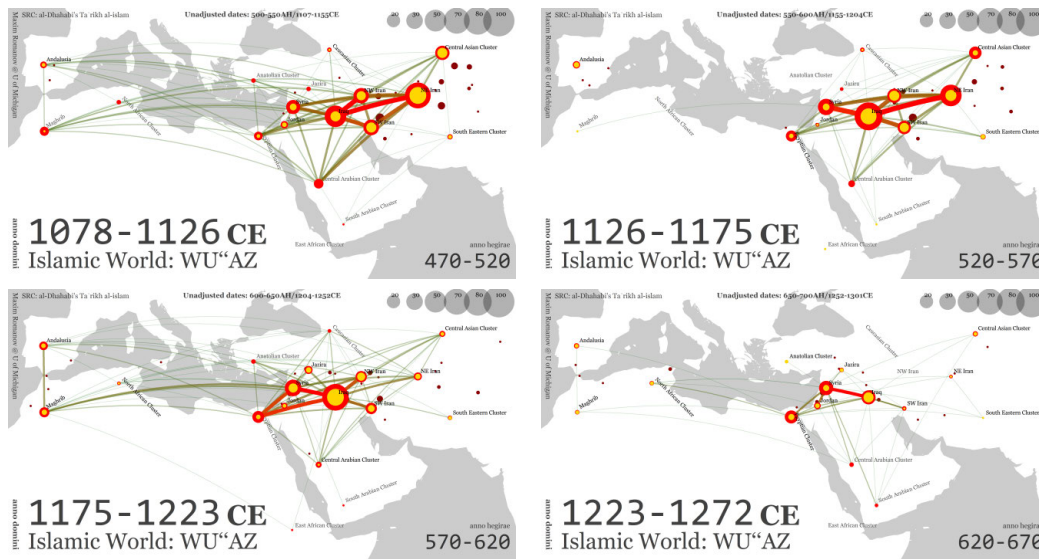


Figure 3.32: Connections of the *Wu'āz* during 470–670 AH/1078–1272 CE.

this point, as a number of Iranian scholars are moving to Iraq and Syria. Around 550/1156 CE the numbers of *wu'āz* visiting Iraq reach the highest point. A number of these Iranians settle in Iraq and become residents—the most prominent examples would be the Jīlānī and the Suhrawardī families, key Ṣūfī families with quite a few *wu'āz* in their ranks.<sup>171</sup> This migration of Iranian *wu'āz* contributes to the growth of the *wu'āz* in Iraq, which reached its own peak around 575/1180 CE. It is also at this moment in time that the numbers of the *wu'āz* who visit Syria reach their highest point—some of the Iranian *wu'āz* do travel to Syria (though not to Egypt), but as the maps show, there is much more movement between Iraq and Syria, starting perhaps as early as 520/1127 CE. From 570/1175 CE on, all the connections shift westward and form a triangle among central Iraq, Syria and Egypt.

<sup>171</sup>In the graphs these cases are considered “residents,” because they also have Iraqi *nisbas*. Both families resided in the ‘Abbāsīd capital.

Thus, the late period (starting *c.* 550/1156 CE), that marks the beginning of the rapid decline of the *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz*, also marks a significant geographical change: now the *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* of Iraq, which is nearing its own decline, travel to Syria and many of them try to settle there. There were three Baghdādī families of *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* that became prominent at roughly this period: the Jīlānīs, Ṣūfīs who belonged to the Ḥanbalīs school of law; the Jawzīs, who were Ḥanbalīs; and the Suhrawardīs, another Ṣūfī family that belonged to the Shāfiʿī school. By the end of the period one finds *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* from all three families who have moved to Syria. The most prominent of these was Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī (d. 654/1257 CE), who became almost as famous a preacher in Damascus as his grandfather had been in Baghdad,<sup>172</sup> although considering that our knowledge about both preachers is based largely on autobiographical information, their importance may be overstated.

Although a number of *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* travel to Syria and later to Egypt, the practice of *waṣz* does not strike deep roots in these regions. It seems that most of the famous preachers in these regions are Iraqis, and when their time comes there is no one to replace them.

As the biographies of the *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* disappear, the faceless *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* start featuring in the biographies of others and descriptions of events (in Syria and Egypt)—a phenomenon strikingly similar to what happened to the *quṣṣāṣ* after the core of the Islamic world had shifted to central Iraq and Iran. These *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* are now “professional lamenters”—or, perhaps, more precisely those

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<sup>172</sup>Writing about the *waṣz* in Zangid and Ayyūbid Syria, Talmon-Heller concentrates almost exclusively on this famous preacher, mentioning a few more only in passing. See, TALMON-HELLER (2007a), *Islamic piety in medieval Syria: mosques, cemeteries and sermons under the Zangids and Ayyūbids (1146-1260)*, 128–141.

who make others weep profusely—at the funerals of military commanders and their wives.<sup>173</sup>

To conclude, *waʿz* was an Iranian practice that planted deep roots in Iraq, together with a great number of other Iranians who moved there. It appears that *waʿz* as a practice encountered no difficulties in Iraq, also because the learned community was in the process of formation while the Iranian *wuʿāz* were moving there. By the time the social space was finally reconfigured, the *wuʿāz* were part and parcel of it. This did not happen in Syria and Egypt, which had never had *wuʿāz* in significant numbers, most likely, because the Iranian connections had never really reached these regions. By the time the *wuʿāz*—now mostly Iraqis—start moving there, the social space is already configured with its *madrāsas* and other *waqf* institutions firmly in place. The *wuʿāz* do not fit in this arrangement and the practice essentially lasts only as long as the *wuʿāz* from the old centers remain alive.

My corpus does not go far beyond 700/1301 CE, and most legal biographical collections are not particularly rich on the *wuʿāz*, but those that offer meaningful numbers (See Figure M.1), strongly suggest the same decline of this preaching practice (Figure 3.34), which coincides with the growth of the *khutba*. The overall demise of the *waʿz* is also confirmed by Petry’s study of the civilian élite in Cairo of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Petry provides tables of individuals involved in different professions, which allow for a glimpse into the ratio between the *khutabāʾ* and the *wuʿāz*. Unfortunately, an absolute number is given only for the *khutabāʾ* (279), but even the most optimistic estimate gives

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<sup>173</sup>See, **TI**, 44, 324; **TI**, 46, 438; **TI**, 52, 458. One also finds a short biography of the *shaykh* of these *wuʿāz*: **TI**, 52, 458. Other references to the faceless *wuʿāz*: **TI**, 52, 458.

<i>type</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>bios</i>		<i>khaṭīb</i>		<i>wāʿiẓ</i>	<i>ratio</i>
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>JM</b>	3,056	47	1.54%	37	1.21%	1.27
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>TT</b>	358	6	1.68%	4	1.12%	1.50
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>TS</b>	894	24	2.68%	12	1.34%	2.00
<i>mālikī</i>	<b>DM</b>	631	34	5.39%	6	0.95%	5.67
<i>mālikī</i>	<b>TM</b>	975	25	2.56%	13	1.33%	1.92
<i>shāfiʿī</i>	<b>TFSH</b>	277	4	1.44%	17	6.14%	0.24
<i>shāfiʿī</i>	<b>TShK</b>	1,420	62	4.37%	92	6.48%	0.67
<i>shāfiʿī</i>	<b>TSh</b>	748	75	10.03%	34	4.55%	2.21
<i>ḥanbalī</i>	<b>TH</b>	707	1	0.14%	9	1.27%	0.11
<i>ḥanbalī</i>	<b>DhTH</b>	547	27	4.94%	63	11.52%	0.43
<i>Ṭaʾrīkh al-islām</i> (c. 250–670 AH/864–1272 CE)							
<i>Ḥanafīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	481	7	1.46%	23	4.78%	0.30
<i>Mālikīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	400	15	3.75%	4	1.00%	3.75
<i>Shāfiʿīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	973	47	4.83%	33	3.39%	1.42
<i>Ḥanbalīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	427	18	4.22%	31	7.26%	0.58

Figure 3.33: The *Khuṭabāʾ* and the *Wuʿāẓ* in the Legal Biographical collections. **Sources:** **JM**—*al-Jawāhir al-muḍīya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Abī-l-Wafāʾ (d. 775/1374 CE); **TT**—*Tāj al-tarājim fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Qutlūbughā (d. 879/1475 CE); **TS**—*al-Ṭabaqāt al-sanīya fī tarājim al-ḥanafīya* of al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 1010/1602 CE); **DM**—*al-Dibāj al-mudhahhab fī maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ al-madhhab* of Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397 CE); **TM**—*Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-maʿrifat aʿlām madhhab Mālik* of al-Yaḥsūbī (d. 544/1150 CE); **TFSH**—*Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-shāfiʿīya* of al-Shahrazūrī (d. 676/1278 CE); **TShK**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya al-kubrā* of al-Subkī (d. 771/1370 CE); **TSh**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya* of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448 CE); **TH**—*Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Yaʿlá (d. 526/1133 CE); **DhTH**—*al-Dhayl ʿalá ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393 CE).

the ratio of 5:1, while the less optimistic is 15:1.<sup>174</sup> These data agree with

<sup>174</sup>The overlap between the *khuṭba* and the *wasʿ* is insignificant: of 279 *khuṭabāʾ* only 9 were involved in *wasʿ* (3.22%).

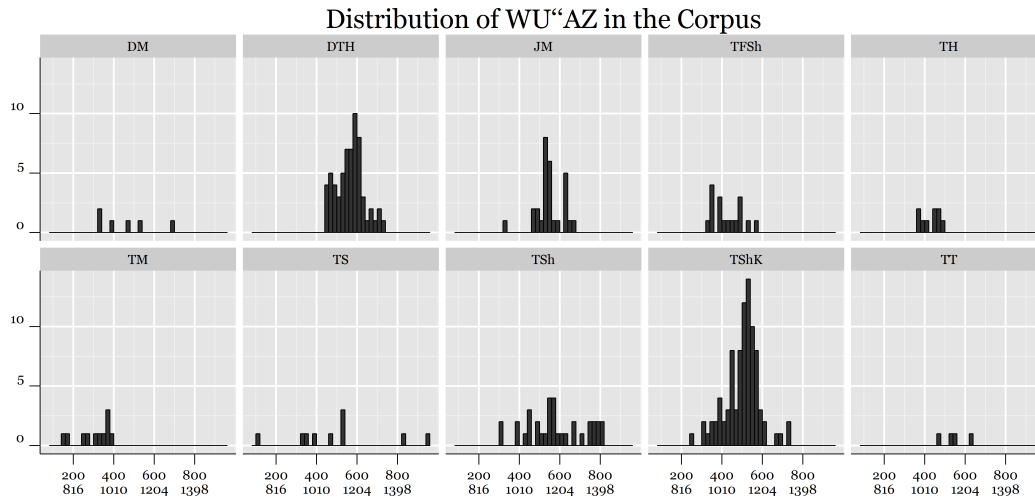


Figure 3.34: Distribution of the *Wuʿāz* in the Corpus. **Sources:** **JM**—*al-Jawāhir al-muḍīya fi ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Abī-l-Wafāʾ (d. 775/1374 CE); **TT**—*Tāj al-tarājim fi ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Qutlūbughā (d. 879/1475 CE); **TS**—*al-Ṭabaqāt al-sanīya fi tarājim al-ḥanafīya* of al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 1010/1602 CE); **DM**—*al-Dibāj al-mudhhab fi maʿrifat aʿyān ʿulamāʾ al-madhhab* of Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397 CE); **TM**—*Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-maʿrifat aʿlām madhhab Mālik* of al-Yaḥsūbī (d. 544/1150 CE); **TFSh**—*Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ al-shāfiʿīya* of al-Shahrazūrī (d. 676/1278 CE); **TShK**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya al-kubrā* of al-Subkī (d. 771/1370 CE); **TSh**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿīya* of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448 CE); **TH**—*Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Yaʿlá (d. 526/1133 CE); **DhTH**—*al-Dhayl ʿalá ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393 CE).

the most likely projection of the curves based on the data from al-Dhahabī’s *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.<sup>175</sup>

### 3.5.5 A Note on Female Preachers

The *waʿz* is the only form of preaching where one finds female actors. The first woman one encounters is ʿĀʾisha, “the Mother of the Believers” (*umm al-muʾminīn*), but she can hardly be considered a preacher. She does engage in actions that are described with the *waʿz*-related vocabulary, but as most *waʿz*-

<sup>175</sup>PETRY (1981), *The civilian elite of Cairo in the later Middle Ages*.

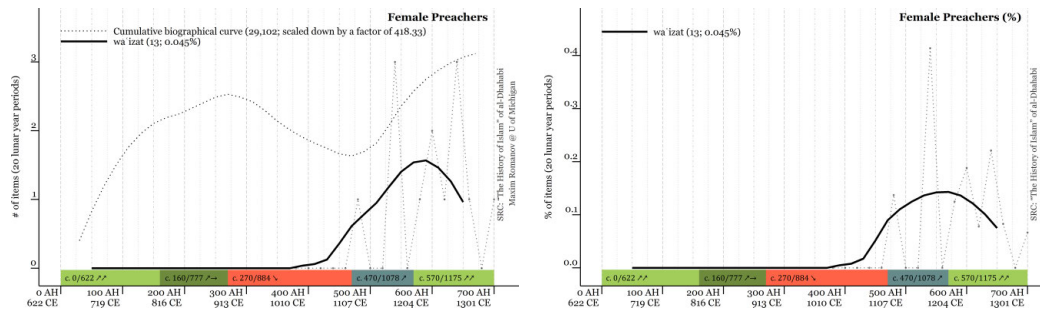


Figure 3.35: Female preachers (*wāʿiẓāt*) mentioned in *Taʾrikh al-Islām*.

related actions of the early period, these are single, private “admonitions” directed at specific individuals, mostly male leaders of the Islamic community.<sup>176</sup> ʿĀʾisha is often compared to the early *khutabā*—her eloquence is second only to that of the Prophet himself—but she is never directly described with the *khutba*-related vocabulary.<sup>177</sup>

Another interesting example from the early period is Ghazāla (killed *c.* 76/696 CE), a courageous wife of Shabīb b. Yazīd (killed 77/697 CE), a Khārijī leader of the Jazīra. Ghazāla vowed to get up on the pulpit of a mosque—and eventually she did so in the mosque of Kufa after Shabīb b. Yazīd captured the city with his troops. Unfortunately, it is not clear what exactly she did when she finally got her chance to rise on the pulpit.<sup>178</sup>

al-Dhahabī included about 450 women in his *Taʾrikh al-Islām*, of whom 13 are described as *wāʿiẓas*.<sup>179</sup> As Figure 3.35 shows, most of them flourished after

<sup>176</sup> SAN, 2, 186; SAN, 2, 243; SAN, 3, 147.

<sup>177</sup> SAN, 2, 191; SAN, 3, 147; SAN, 4, 95; SAN, 13, 585; TShK, 2, 199; TI, 4, 248.

<sup>178</sup> SAN, 4, 148; TI, 5, 329.

<sup>179</sup> SAN, 10, 5–99; SAN, 20, 148–149; SAN, 22, 288–290; TI, 31, 199–200; TI, 36, 69–70; TI, 36, 474; TI, 36, 517–518; TI, 40, 172–173; TI, 41, 215–216; TI, 42, 165–166; TI, 42, 279–280; TI, 44, 70; TI, 45, 138; TI, 45, 379; TI, 46, 329; TI, 47, 405; TI, 50, 112–113; TI, 52, 404–405; DhTH, 1, 244–249.

500/1107 CE. Their biographies are brief and offer few details, but they convey pretty much the same idea—these were pious women who were preaching to other women (*kānat taʿīzu l-nisāʾ*).

Their geography, however, follows the general geographical pattern of the *waʿz*, as most of them are of either Iraqi or Iranian origin. Those who were not born in Baghdad eventually ended up in the capital city. The last of these female preachers, Khadīja bint Yūsuf (d. 699/1300 CE), was a native of Baghdad who moved to Damascus.<sup>180</sup>

### 3.6 Current Findings in the Light of Previous Scholarship

Computational reading of the corpus yielded a significant body of data relevant to different forms of preaching that have already received scholarly attention. However, not all forms are equally represented and the available data are sufficiently coherent only for such forms as *khutba*, *qaṣaṣ*, and *waʿz* (*tadhkīr*).

The analysis of data from the corpus shows that the period of 200–300 AH/816–913 CE was pivotal for all three forms (with a turning point around 250/865 CE): the *khutba* becomes almost exclusively a delegated practice; *qaṣaṣ* as a legitimate preaching practice gradually disappears over this period, while the *waʿz* takes its place.

In the early period, i.e. before *c.* 250/865 CE, the major forms of preaching have clear societal orientations. The early *khutba* is always oriented downward:

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<sup>180</sup>TI, 52, 404–405.

rulers, or their governors who represent them, address their subjects. The early *waʿz* is directed upward: here subjects address those who rule them; however, it should be stressed that the early *waʿz* can hardly be treated as a preaching practice, since most instances are occasional one-on-one admonitions, and, in this regard, it is rather a counterpart of *naṣīḥa*, “advice,” and *waṣīya*, “counsel.” Unlike the *khutba* and the *waʿz*, the *qaṣaṣ* is orientated horizontally: the preachers of this form are of roughly the same social standing as their listeners, although more knowledgeable in matters of religion.

The societal directionality of preaching after the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century is not as clear. This century marks the formation of a learned stratum and we start finding more and more individuals who are primarily identified through their engagement in the transmission and development of religious learning. In social terms, we now deal with an “intermediary” class that occupies social space between the ruling élites and the populace at large. Like governors of the early period, the learned *khutabāʾ* now act as official representatives of powers-that-be, simultaneously confirming the legitimacy of their rule and the loyalty of the community that they preach to during Friday sermons. One can still think of the *khutba* as oriented downward, although rulers are now often found in the audience.

The *waʿz* becomes an important preaching practice after the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century, but as such loses the clear societal orientation of the early *waʿz*. Even though the practice of occasional private admonishment of powers-that-be never completely disappears, *waʿz* now is clearly a preaching practice oriented toward groups of Muslims (as well as non-Muslims) of all social standings.



Data from my corpus relevant to the *qaṣaṣ* do not add much to the already existing discussions of this practice in academic literature.<sup>181</sup> With almost no exceptions, my corpus offers the same textual evidence on the early *quṣṣāṣ*: the same names of the early *quṣṣāṣ*, their often official status, their respectable religious reputation, their role as army preachers, etc. However, working with the corpus of biographical collections it becomes clear that corroborative evidence is not sufficient. Thus, although one can identify about 50 *quṣṣāṣ* in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* during the period before 250/865 CE, there are very few common elements in their biographies as well as in the passages relevant to *qaṣaṣ* as a preaching practice, which makes it difficult to speak of historical patterns. Nonetheless, the emphasis of computational reading on social, chronological and geographical perspectives allows us to see some patterns that were largely overlooked by my predecessors. Confirming that there was a significant number of pietists among the early *quṣṣāṣ*, my reading also adds that most of them were of humble tribal origin and were strongly associated with the early Islamic centers, such as Medina, Basra, Kufa (and partially Syria and Egypt which peak for the first time in the early period). It may be concluded that these were individuals with very limited opportunities for vertical mobility, for whom the role of *qāṣṣ* may have been the only way to improve their status within a Muslim society that remained tribal during its early period.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>JOHANNES PEDERSEN, ‘The Islamic preacher: wāʿiz, mudhakkir, qāṣṣ’, *Ignace Goldzither Memorial Volume*, 1 (1948); JOHANNES PEDERSEN, ‘The Criticism of the Islamic Preacher’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 2 (1953); SWARTZ (1971), *Ibn al-Jawzī’s Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ waʾl-mudhakkirīn. Including a Critical Edition, Annotated Translation and Introduction*; ATHAMINA (1992), ‘Al-Qasas’; BERKEY (2000), ‘Storytelling, preaching, and power in Mamluk Cairo’; BERKEY (2001), *Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East*.

<sup>182</sup>See Section 2.3.2.1 on de-tribalization.

In terms of chronology, the biographical data of my corpus show that *quṣṣāṣ* (at least recognizable ones) disappear over the course of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. This chronology corresponds to the one suggested by Pellat, who dealt mainly with the early *quṣṣāṣ*.<sup>183</sup> However, these biographical data also problematize discussions of *quṣṣāṣ* during later periods, after 250/865 CE. The lack of biographical data on popular preachers in certain regions and periods does not necessarily mean that they did not exist there and then,<sup>184</sup> but any discussion of a practice whose practitioners are missing becomes highly problematic. There appears to be no way of knowing who exactly were those *quṣṣāṣ* who were so feverishly criticized in the polemical literature.

Berkey offers an insightful discussion of controversy around popular preaching/storytelling by weaving together critical comments of religious scholars from different periods and different regions of the Islamic world: the Iraqī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201 CE); Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1337 CE), Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1404 CE), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1506 CE)—all residents of Egypt; and ʿAlī b. Maymūn al-Idrīsī (d. 917/1512 CE), a Moroccan Ṣūfī living in Syria.<sup>185</sup> The similarity of provided comments implies a comparable degree of similarity between manifestations of popular preaching/storytelling in the periods and regions of these scholars. This, however, does not agree with the geographies of *qaṣaṣ* and *waʿz*. It may also be added that descriptions and references to *quṣṣāṣ* in the polemical literature seem too

<sup>183</sup>See, PELLAT CH., ‘Kāṣṣ,’ in **EI2**.

<sup>184</sup>In later periods, *quṣṣāṣ* as biographees are completely absent from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* and other biographical collections of the corpus; even references to them are extremely scarce.

<sup>185</sup>See, BERKEY (2000), ‘Storytelling, preaching, and power in Mamluk Cairo’, BERKEY (2001), *Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East*, 22-35.

generic,<sup>186</sup> and one is left to wonder whether *qāṣṣ*—and even more so *quṣṣāṣ*, its plural form—was just a blanket category applied to everyone who did not belong to established scholarly networks, yet dared to contest the authority of the networked scholars on the popular level.

Later *quṣṣāṣ* are often described as charlatans who pretend to possess religious knowledge only to delude unsophisticated believers.<sup>187</sup> In this light, the appearance of the *waʿz* is often interpreted in academic studies as a natural substitute for the now reprehensible *qaṣaṣ*. However, computational reading offers a different perspective on this issue. Although there is a noticeable overlap between these practices, the data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* strongly suggest that *waʿz* as a preaching practice displaces *qaṣaṣ* when the geography of the early Islamic world shifts eastward, and the early élites strongly associated with the cities of Medina, Basra, and Kufa (and partially Syria and Egypt) become displaced by the new élites of urban centers in central Iraq and southwestern and northeastern Iran (primarily Baghdad, Isfahan, and Nishapur). As the old centers dwindle, so does the *qaṣaṣ*, while the importance of the *waʿz* grows together with the importance of the new centers. It is during and after this chrono-geographical shift that *quṣṣāṣ* start featuring as faceless individuals who endanger the purity of religious knowledge. Considering that it was the members of this new, eastern élite who were developing and imposing standards of authenticity—the names of such scholars as al-Bukhārī and

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<sup>186</sup>One often finds similar descriptions in the biographies of individuals who professed views that were later labeled as “reprehensible innovations” and who belonged to networks that did not survive in the long run.

<sup>187</sup>This issue is covered in all studies that mention the *qaṣaṣ*, but perhaps most vividly in: CLIFFORD EDMUND BOSWORTH, *The mediaeval Islamic underworld: the Banū Sāsān in Arabic society and literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

Muslim should suffice—it is not entirely surprising that the representatives of the dwindling élite were portrayed as jeopardizing the entire Islamic tradition. This interpretation, however, should be considered provisional; further inquiry into earlier biographical collections should provide critical amount of data to trace this pattern more clearly.<sup>188</sup>

With main emphasis on chronological, geographical and social perspectives, computational reading produces data that does not always allow me to engage fully with the arguments that have been advanced by the scholars of Islamic preaching. The difficulty is mainly methodological. To paraphrase Roded,<sup>189</sup> although biographical collections are often cited, little or no indication is given as to how widespread certain phenomena were; nor does one find a comparative perspective as to how these phenomena fit into the larger picture of the social and religious history of the pre-modern Islamic world. My corpus offers biographies for at least five hundred *khutabā* and almost as many *wuṣṣāz*, while no academic study of preaching mentions more than a dozen preachers. This raises questions about methodological considerations that were used by the scholars of Islamic preaching to select specific preachers and treat them as a representative sample of particular preaching practices. Considering that exceptional preachers attract more scholarly attention, academic representations of Islamic preaching become even more problematic. At the moment more decisive conclusion is not possible, but further, more conventional read-

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<sup>188</sup>It is worth mentioning that a similar explanation of rivalry between the Ḥanafis (old élite) and the Shāfiʿīs (new élite) in Nishapur was offered by Bulliet: BULLIET (1972), *The patricians of Nishapur*, 37–40.

<sup>189</sup>The Israeli scholar encountered the same methodological problem during her study of women in Islamic history RODED (1994), *Women in Islamic biographical collections*, vii–viii.

ing of all discovered biographies of preachers should allow us to see whether these studies are off the mark.

Although computational reading makes engagement with the already existing studies of preaching difficult, its emphasis on chronological, geographical and social aspects offers us an opportunity to put them into a larger context. Although the sum of existing studies of the *waʿz* does not constitute the history of this preaching form in medieval Islamic world, together and on its own they convey a confusing message about this preaching practice even for Islamicists, not to mention non-specialists who might try to build upon their research.<sup>190</sup> In and of itself this hardly invalidates any of these studies in particular, but the lack of chronological, geographical and social<sup>191</sup> perspectives does not allow the reader to get the sense of historical importance of this practice in respective regions, leaving one with an impression that the *waʿz* was equally

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<sup>190</sup>Although neither Berkey, nor Jones claim to offer histories of medieval Islamic preaching, the titles of their works—*Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* and *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World*, respectively—speak louder than disclaimers buried in introductions and one often finds scholars from different fields treating these studies in more general terms. For example, in his review, Hirschkind represents Berkey’s book as “a rich and nuanced account of medieval Islamic preaching” (in *History of Religions*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (February 2003), 252-255); see also: HIRSCHKIND (2006), *The ethical soundscape*, 221, n.13; similarly, FATMA TÜTÜNCÜ, ‘The Women Preachers of the Secular State: The Politics of Preaching at the Intersection of Gender, Ethnicity and Sovereignty in Turkey’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 46:4 (July 2010), 595; KABIR TAMBAR, ‘Iterations of lament: Anachronism and affect in a Shi’i Islamic revival in Turkey’, *American Ethnologist*, 38:3 (2011), 498; LOREN D. LYBARGER, ‘The demise of Adam in the Qışaş al-Anbiyā: the symbolic politics of death and re-burials in the Islamic ‘Stories of the prophets’’, *Numen*, 55:5 (January 2008), passim. Swartz’ studies that revolve essentially around Ibn al-Jawzī and his preaching career are often treated in the same manner: see, e.g., DOUGLAS C. YOUNG, ‘Preachers and poets: the popular sermon in the Andalusī maqāma’, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 34 (2003).

<sup>191</sup>Talmon-Heller and Jones offer “profiles” of *wuʿāz*, but they are limited to discussions of a small number of biographies of famous preachers. See, TALMON-HELLER (2007a), *Islamic piety in medieval Syria: mosques, cemeteries and sermons under the Zangids and Ayyūbids (1146-1260)*, 128-140, JONES (2012), *The Power of Oratory*, 218-230.

prominent in the eastern and the western provinces of the Islamic world. The data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* clearly shows that the prominence of this preaching practice goes down as one moves westward; showing no chronological clustering, extremely low numbers of *wuʿāz* in North Africa and al-Andalus make any discussion of *waʿz* as a practice in this region practically impossible.<sup>192</sup>

The analysis of the geographical connections of regional clusters<sup>193</sup> shows that the geography of the *waʿz* is consistent with the extents of the commonwealths of Iranian regional clusters: the *waʿz* is present only where Iranian connections are strong. My analysis shows that the highest number of *wuʿāz* is found in Iran. This is where it originates and flourishes;<sup>194</sup> it is from here that it spreads to Iraq, where it strikes deep roots. As Iranian regions go into decline, we find the Iranian *wuʿāz* traveling and migrating to Iraq.<sup>195</sup> Later, when Iraq suffers the same fate, we find Iraqi *wuʿāz* traveling and migrating to Syria and Egypt, where the number of visiting *wuʿāz* significantly exceeds that of the local ones. These connections never really reach North Africa and al-Andalus, perhaps because Iraq and al-Andalus go in decline roughly at the same period and their geographical orientation almost simultaneously shifts toward Egypt and Syria.

The question, nonetheless, remains: why does the practice of *waʿz* strike

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<sup>192</sup>At the same time it is Jones in her latest book who discusses more *wuʿāz*, than Berkey, Talmon-Heller, or Swartz (provided that we leave his translation of the *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn* aside); at the same time, the number of preachers that she discusses is still lower than what my corpus provides.

<sup>193</sup>See, Appendix A for the detailed overviews of all regional cluster.

<sup>194</sup>It is very likely that its appearance is connected with the Karrāmiyya movement (and probably other populist religious movements), but the data from *Taʾrīkh al-islām* do not allow us to trace this connection. By incorporating Iranian biographical collections and local histories, we should be able to shed more light on this issue.

<sup>195</sup>Please, refer to the graphs in the relevant section above.

such deep roots in Iraq, but not in Syria and Egypt? The answer may be in the process of institutionalization that eventually made the social structure of the learned community utterly rigid through the introduction of *waqf* institutions with their paid positions. When the Iranian *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* started traveling to Iraq, the learned community was still in formation;<sup>196</sup> besides, communities of Iranian migrants could have offered a welcoming climate to the Iranian *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz*.<sup>197</sup> These two factors should have allowed the Iranian *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* to blend into the Iraqi learned community and become an essential segment of society at large. Later, when *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz* started traveling and migrating to Syria and Egypt, they found themselves under quite different circumstances. By this period, the process of institutionalization had almost completed the transformation of the learned community. Religious scholars were now increasingly identified through *waqf* positions that they hold and for which they rival with each other. This should have made it very difficult for the newcomers to fit in—especially for those of them who represented a practice that was not popular here in the first place.<sup>198</sup> By the end of the period covered in *Ta<sup>ṣ</sup>riḥ al-islām*, the *wa<sup>ṣ</sup>z* and its practitioners practically disappear from the regions of its coverage. Since by the end of the period *Ta<sup>ṣ</sup>riḥ al-islām* covers almost exclusively the Arab lands (other collections do not offer much either), there is no way to know at the moment whether the *wa<sup>ṣ</sup>z* managed to take roots in

<sup>196</sup>See Section 2.3.2.4 on professionalization and institutionalization.

<sup>197</sup>For more details, see sections on Iranian clusters in Appendix A.

<sup>198</sup>In the chapter on the *wa<sup>ṣ</sup>z* in Syria, Talmon-Heller provided of local *wu<sup>ṣ</sup>āz*, which are essentially limited to the biography of the famous Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, a Baghdādī who moved to Damascus. He was an exceptional preacher and managed to fit in; yet, it is worth noting that he gave up his affiliation with the Ḥanbalī school of law and converted to Ḥanafism—no doubt to improve his chances.

India or Anatolia, where the Iranian élites also emigrated.

The overall chronology of *waʿz* as a preaching practice roughly corresponds to the one offered by Swartz.<sup>199</sup> However, his idea that even as it disappeared, the *waʿz* becomes a part of the *khutba* is difficult to test. My current corpus offers no evidence to support this view, but it definitely shows that the overlap between the *waʿz* and the *khutba* was utterly insignificant over the entire period: in other words, there were very few preachers who were involved in both forms of preaching.

Institutionalization may also explain why the numbers of *khutabāʾ* keep on growing throughout the period.<sup>200</sup> As a role/position that was sanctioned by the Prophet himself, it was a better fit for the new world of salaried positions in which the learned found themselves by the end of the period covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. Although some Islamic scholars considered the office of a *khaṭīb* to be the grandest office that a scholar might hope to fill, particularly because the Prophet himself was a *khaṭīb*,<sup>201</sup> biographical data from the corpus strongly suggests that the status of this office differed significantly depending on the region, at least in the eyes of the authors who put together these biographical collections. The overall disregard for *khutabāʾ* in Iran and Central Asia is rather difficult to explain. An insight to this issue may be found in a Ḥanafī biographical collection that mentions “the custom of the Bukharans” (*ʿādat ahl Bukhārā*), according to which a *khaṭīb* and an *imām* of the Friday

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<sup>199</sup>See, SWARTZ (1982), ‘Preaching, Islamic’; this is the only academic treatment of the *waʿz* that offers its chronology.

<sup>200</sup>Their numbers go down only in regions that themselves go in decline.

<sup>201</sup>BERKEY (2001), *Popular preaching and religious authority in the medieval Islamic Near East*, 12.



service are roles for two different individuals, of which the latter—i.e., the role of *imām*—is reserved for a more knowledgeable and pious individual.<sup>202</sup> Extrapolating from one piece of anecdotal evidence is rather dangerous,<sup>203</sup> but if such an attitude toward *khutabā* was common in Central Asia and the Iranian provinces, it may explain why we find so few *khutabā* in these dense regions, where people seem to have had more respect for, or interest in the *wuṣṣāz*. Ultimately, however, whether this was because the office was more respected in the western part of the Islamic world than it was in the east, or because authors in the west were more concerned about positions than their counterparts in the east, or, perhaps, for some other reasons, remains unclear for now.

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Computational reading has allowed me to trace chronological, geographical and some social patterns of major preaching forms that other scholars of Islamic preaching have overlooked. The overall analysis of such a vast collection as *Taʾrīkh al-islām* has also allowed me to create a background that helps to contextualize findings about preachers. The further study of these preaching forms will rely on more conventional reading of biographies combined with more elaborate computational reading that should help compare patterns related to preaching and preachers with the patterns related to the entire learned class.

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<sup>202</sup>*bal man huwa aṣlam min-hu wa-aḥsan ṭarīqa*; see, **TS**, 1, 263.

<sup>203</sup>Although, on the other hand, this is the only hint in the *entire* corpus.

# Further Prospects

After less than two years of development, the method of computational reading allows us to get almost instantaneous insights into a great number of historical issues. Although technologically the approach has been developed practically from scratch, in spirit it follows in the footsteps of the quantitative method that scholars of Islam have used since the 1970s. In its current state the method is best suited for analyzing biographical data from social, chronological and geographical perspectives, yet the complexity of analytical tasks can be increased *ad infinitum*. Computational reading is flexible, scalable and fast, beyond comparison with conventional methods. By dwelling on these properties, we should obtain a glimpse into the prospects of its further implementation.

The flexibility of computational reading allows us to ask various historical questions by designing analytical algorithms of any complexity.<sup>204</sup> Although the emphasis in this dissertation has been primarily on analysis of biographical data (dates, names and toponyms), computational reading also allows for the

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<sup>204</sup>It should be stressed that even though the method puts a lot of emphasis on the use of technology, its effectiveness implementation requires traditional training in Near Eastern studies.

analysis of complex textual. For example, we can get a glimpse into the age structure of Islamic élites through the computational analysis of age statements that often occur in biographies. Through analysis of the most frequent types of such statements in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*, my experimental algorithm yields ages for over 5,100 individuals and shows that during the period of almost seven centuries the average lifespan fluctuated between 67 and 80 lunar years (Figure 3.36, *left*), clearly decreasing as age statements become more and more frequent, after *c.* 350/962 CE (Figure 3.36, *right*). Onomastic and toponymic **synsets** that allow re-grouping data using social, religious and geographical parameters may shed light on the age structure of different social groups and local communities. With minor modifications, this analytical algorithm can be applied to other sources as well. For example, the *Hadīyat al-ʿārifīn* offers age data on about 1,650 Islamic authors (out of approximately 8,800) and a very cursory glance at the results shows that longevity was indeed characteristic of religious scholars,<sup>205</sup> while most of the short-lived authors are usually found in the field of poetry and fine literature, where talent and audacity seem to have been more important than networks and perseverance. Our ability to collect such data from numerous biographical collections will help us to advance the study of the demography of the Islamic world.

In a similar manner, algorithms can be devised for a more complex analy-

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<sup>205</sup>Bulliet determines an average lifespan of 78 lunar years (BULLIET (1970), ‘A Quantitative Approach to Medieval Muslim Biographical Dictionaries’, 200); Nawas gives 80 lunar years (JOHN NAWAS, ‘Development of the Islamic religious sciences’ 11 (1999), 161, also see fn. 8 for more references.), and Şentürk—79.82 (ŞENTÜRK (2005), *Narrative social structure: anatomy of the Hadīth transmission network, 610-1505*, 65). In all three cases the emphasis is strongly on the religious élites, and even more so on the transmitters of *ḥadīth*, for whom longevity was one of the most important characteristics; the coverage of *Taʾrīkh al-islām* is, of course, not limited to any specific group.

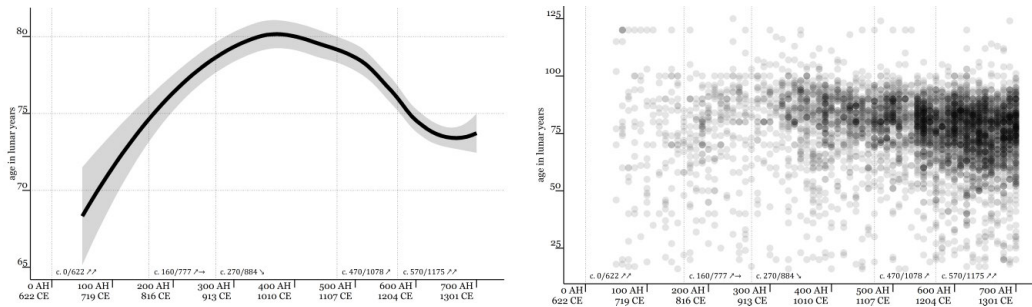


Figure 3.36: Age statements from *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*. The left image shows the chronological fluctuation of the average lifespan, while the image on the right shows the chronological distribution of age statements (darker areas mean more age statements).

sis of onomastic data that would allow us, for example, to reproduce Bulliet’s study of conversion.<sup>206</sup> The very fact that this study is still being criticized<sup>207</sup> more than three decades from its publication shows that Bulliet’s model of conversion cannot be discarded through a critique of where it fails, if otherwise it still remains plausible and coherent. The old model will remain standing until an equally plausible alternative can be offered. The flexibility of computational reading will allow re-testing the original model of conversion on new biographical collections, while experimenting with its variations and developing a new one.

The emphasis in this dissertation has been primarily on biographical collections. However, computational reading can be applied to texts of any genre, although it does work best for texts that show structural regularities of some kind. For example, one can design algorithms that will allow tracing the usage

<sup>206</sup>BULLIET (1979), *Conversion to Islam in the medieval period: an essay in quantitative history*.

<sup>207</sup>Most recently: DAVID J. WASSERSTEIN, ‘Where have all the converts gone? Difficulties in the study of conversion to Islam in al-Andalus’, *Al-Qanṭara*, 33:2 (February 2013).

of Qurʾānic verses over the entire digital corpus of Islamic sources. Such a large-scale study of how the Qurʾān was quoted and interpreted by different authors will improve our understanding of how different aspects of the Islamic scripture were coming to prominence depending on historical circumstances. The same can be done for the Prophetic traditions (sing. *ḥadīth*), where computational reading will be particularly helpful for the analysis of chains of transmitters. Compendia of legal decisions (sing. *fatwá*) can also be analyzed in the same manner and the exploratory analysis of possible correlations between the topics of legal decisions, locales and periods will most likely reveal unexpected commonalities and differences among regional communities of Muslims, while offering a unique perspective on the long-term regional development of Islamic law. Likewise, interesting experiments can be designed for the study of classical Arabic poetry. Considering that meters can be identified computationally,<sup>208</sup> scholars of Arabic poetry can look for correlations between meters and themes, and, of course, put their discoveries in geographical and chronological perspective.<sup>209</sup>

The scalability of computational reading makes it possible to test whether the same historical questions yield similar results when asked of new sources: this is done by applying existing analytical algorithms to new sources. For example, the already-devised complex means of identifying preachers and pas-

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<sup>208</sup>For one such tool see, *The Encyclopaedia of Arabic Poetry by Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi (UAE)*, reviewed in details by Michael Bonner and Maxim Romanov at: [alraqmiyyat.org/2013/02/arabicpoetryencyclopaedia](http://alraqmiyyat.org/2013/02/arabicpoetryencyclopaedia).

<sup>209</sup>Similar studies in the history of English fiction have already yielded a number of interesting and unexpected discoveries (In addition to the already cited studies of Franco Moretti, see also MATTHEW L. JOCKERS, *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*, 1st edition (University of Illinois Press, April 2013).

sages relevant to preaching can be effectively applied to local biographical collections and local histories, which will allow us to get a more detailed idea of the chronology of different preaching practices in particular regions of the Islamic world, while simultaneously testing whether regional representation in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* corresponds to that of local sources.

Computational reading is fast. It does take a great deal of time to put together the essentials—devise algorithms, compile **synsets**, reformat sources—but when they are ready, the results can be produced almost instantaneously. The results can be easily regenerated if analytical algorithms require adjustments or new sources added to the corpus; and it does not matter whether analytical algorithms are applied to a single text or to the entire digital corpus of classical Arabic that already exceeds 400 million words. In most cases the results come in volumes that are significant enough to trace historical patterns.

The volume of structured data that has been generated so far from *Taʿrīkh al-islām* alone is sufficient for dozens of studies that will allow us to advance our understanding of the social history of the pre-modern Islamic world. Most of these data have remained outside this dissertation project, but to give the reader an idea of these “byproducts,” we can take a quick look at the results for the major Sunnī legal schools. Figure 3.37 shows that each school had a distinct geographical network. In and of themselves, these geographies are hardly surprising and largely agree with what the students of Islam have already discovered over the last century or so. (It is worth highlighting, however, that these maps are a circumstantial result of two years’ research by a graduate student). At the same time, once they have been reformatted into graphs

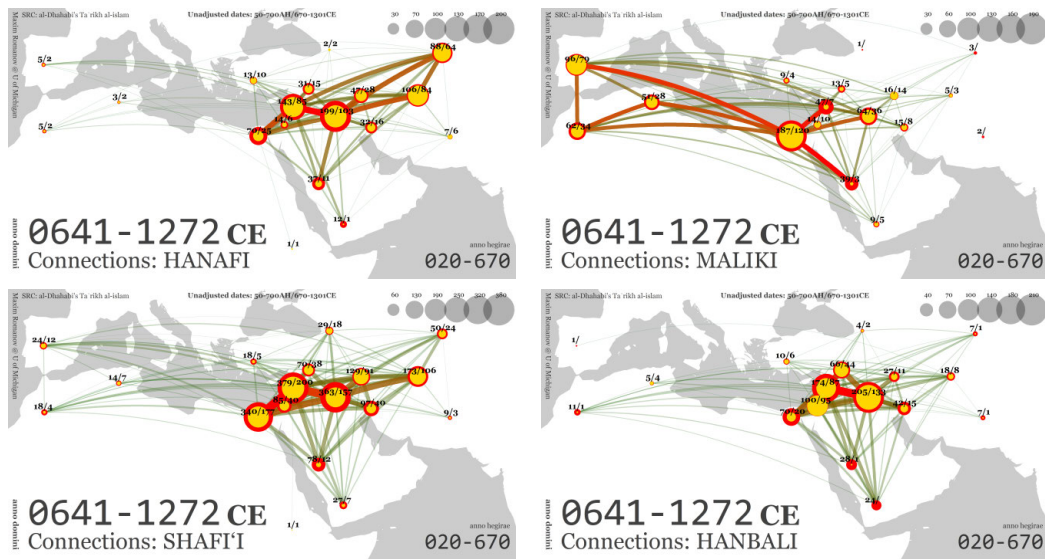


Figure 3.37: Geographical Networks of the Legal Schools. **NB:** each maps has its own scale.

and chronological maps—similar to the ones that were used in the part on preaching and preachers—these data can give scholars of Islam a much more subtle picture of how these geographical networks were changing over time, where and when they flourished, stagnated, and declined. The use of hierarchical lists of geographical entities—toponymic **synsets**—allows us to take a more detailed view of these geographical networks and analyze connections, not only among provinces, but also among urban centers and even city quarters. By putting data on all four legal schools on the same chronological maps we can get a glimpse into how these schools coexisted in different regional clusters. Figure 3.38 should give an idea of how the “relative weights” of the schools were changing over time in major regional clusters during the period of 470–670 AH/1078–1272 CE.

In the same manner one can trace the chronology and geography of any

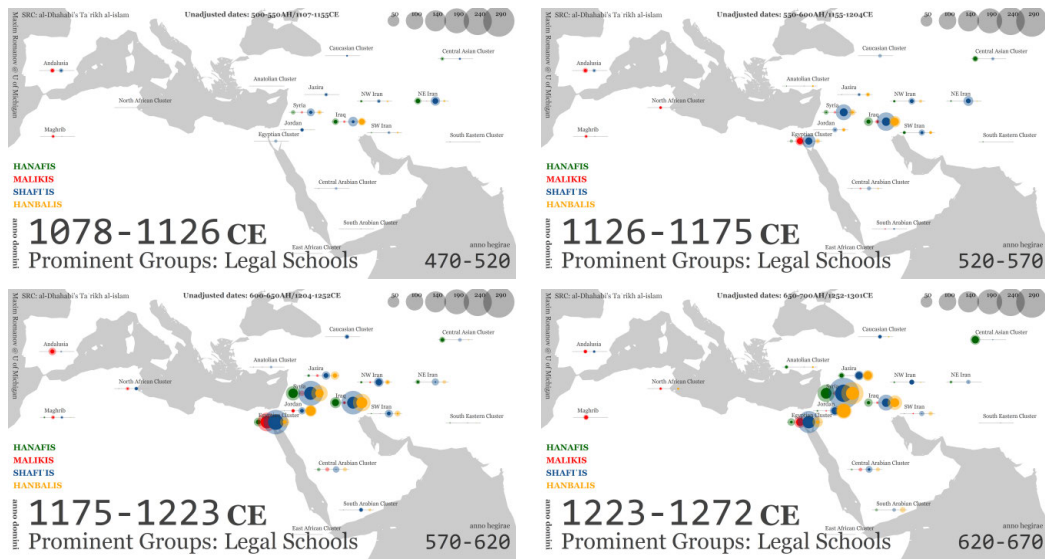


Figure 3.38: “Relative Weights” of the Legal Schools in Regional Clusters.

social group that can be identified in the sources through relevant onomastic elements or more complex textual descriptions. One of the major advantages of the computational approach is that instead of artificially imposing chronological and geographical boundaries, it allows us to discover periods and regions that are important to specific phenomena, practices, or social groups.

Somewhat ironically, the advantages of computational reading also pose problems. The volume of results generated with this method is overwhelming. The visualization of data with tables, graphs, and maps is helpful for getting meaningful insights into findings, but comprehension and interpretation of these data will require collaborative efforts and decades of more traditional research. Fortunately, computational reading also allows us to marshal all relevant textual evidence for close reading.

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The appearance of historical sources in digital format has already made a significant impact on historical studies in general. The 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (Chicago, 2012) featured a series of nearly two dozen sessions on digital history. Titled “The Future is Here,” this series particularly emphasized the value of text-mining and geographical information systems (GIS) for working with “big data.” It would be logical to expect that the digital corpora of Islamic texts will sooner or later make a similar impact on our field as well. This will affect the way we study these sources, what research questions we ask of them, and how we train new generations of scholars. The ability to work with “big data,” so amply supplied by generations of Muslim authors, will be crucial for the future of Islamic studies as a discipline.

# Appendix A

## Transregional Connections

By studying regional maps and histograms of connections, we can get a more nuanced idea of how each cluster was integrated into the Islamic world. Numbers that I will be using refer to individuals who come from a specific cluster (based on their toponymic *nisbas*) and whose biographies mention one and more locations in the same (local connections on Figure A.1)<sup>1</sup> or other clusters (transregional connections on Figure A.2). Individuals with toponymic *nisbas* that refer to different regional clusters are considered as transregional migrants, although determining the starting and end points methodologically is not yet possible (Figure A.3).

Since the most probable routes are not taken into consideration at the moment, interpreting connections might be somewhat complicated: the count of connections with transitional regions—i.e. those between the home clus-

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<sup>1</sup>The number of local connections within a regional cluster might be an indicator of how well this cluster is represented in the source, or how well the literary tradition developed in that region.

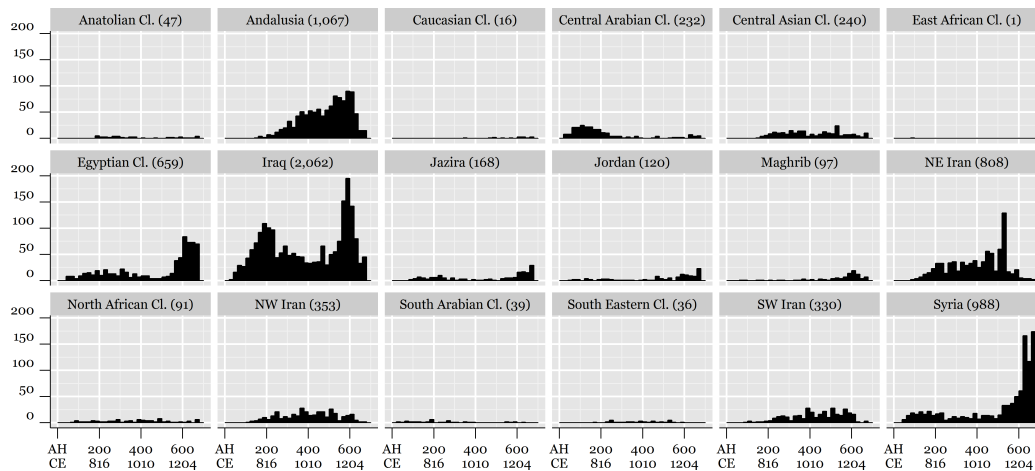


Figure A.1: Local Connections in *Ta'rikh al-islām*.

ter of an individual and the final destination—might be significantly higher than what straightforward statistics allow us to see. For example, if Egypt is mentioned in the biography of a certain person from Andalusia, this means he must have traveled via the Maghrib and the North African cluster. At the same time, if such transitional regions are not mentioned, this may imply that at certain periods these regions were not particularly interesting—no notable authorities to study with, for example—and therefore there was nothing to mention. One cannot infer this from single connections, but a more or less significant number of connections in combination with their chronological distribution should point to that direction.

The rest of this chapter will offer accounts on each major cluster. The maps of connections for each regional cluster will be slightly different: they visualize connections for the entire period covered in *Ta'rikh al-islām* and provide some basic statistics for each cluster: visitors, migrants, natives/residents, and

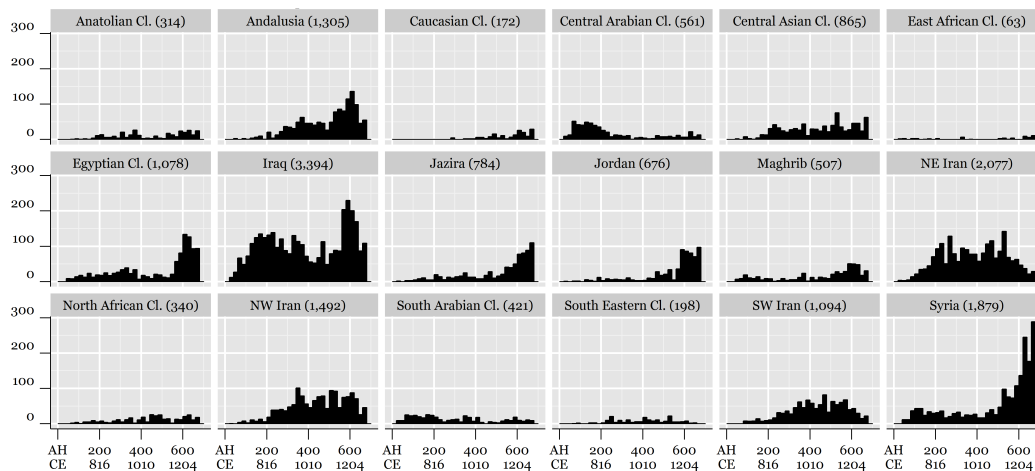


Figure A.2: Transregional Connections in *Ta'rikh al-islām*.

connections. Some explanations are in order.

“Visitors” are those whose biographies mention toponyms that belong to the cluster in question (primary cluster), but whose toponymic *nisbas* associate them with other regional clusters (secondary clusters). This category also includes individuals without toponymic *nisbas*.

“Migrants” are those who, in addition to a toponymic *nisba* that belongs to the primary cluster, also have toponymic *nisbas* that associate them with other regional clusters.

“Natives/residents” of the cluster are those with toponymic *nisbas* that belong to the primary cluster. Those “with local connections” are individuals whose biographies mention more than one location within the primary cluster; those “with transregional connections” are individuals whose biographies mention locations outside the primary cluster. Connections on these maps are plotted according to the model on Subfigure (iii) of Figure 2.7, discussed

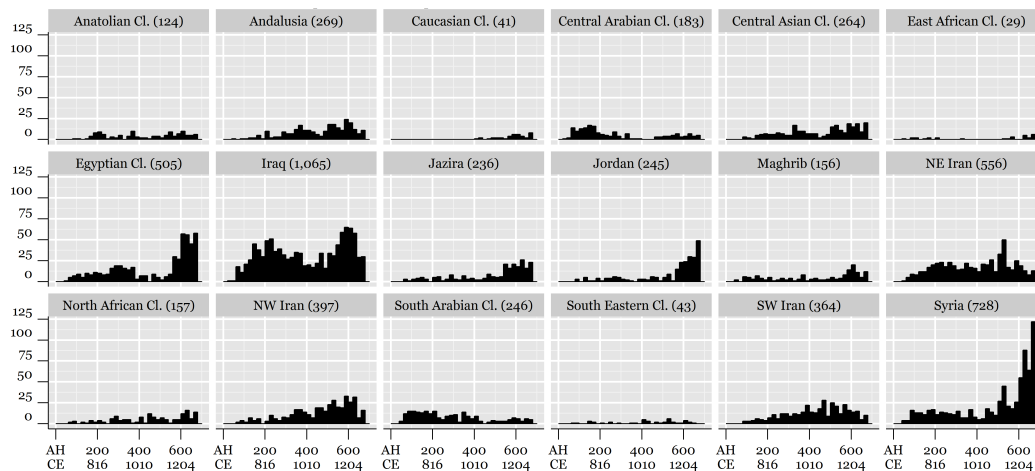


Figure A.3: Transregional Migrants in *Ta'rikh al-Islām*.

above: here we are plotting biographical data of only those individuals whose geographical affiliations are known. Each secondary cluster also has two accompanying numbers separated by a slash. The first number shows numbers of natives/residents of the primary cluster who visited this secondary cluster. These numbers represent *only* direct connections between the primary and secondary clusters (but not between secondary clusters: see the model shown on Subfigure (i) of Figure 2.7). The second number shows numbers of migrants between the primary and secondary clusters.

The “Total number of transregional connections” shows the cumulative number of transregional connections, which is always higher than the number of natives/residents “with transregional connections.”<sup>2</sup> Natives/residents with transregional connections show the extent to which the élites of the primary cluster actively maintained connections with other regions, while transregional

<sup>2</sup>For example, an individual who visited three secondary clusters equals to three transregional connections, but to one native/resident with transregional connections.

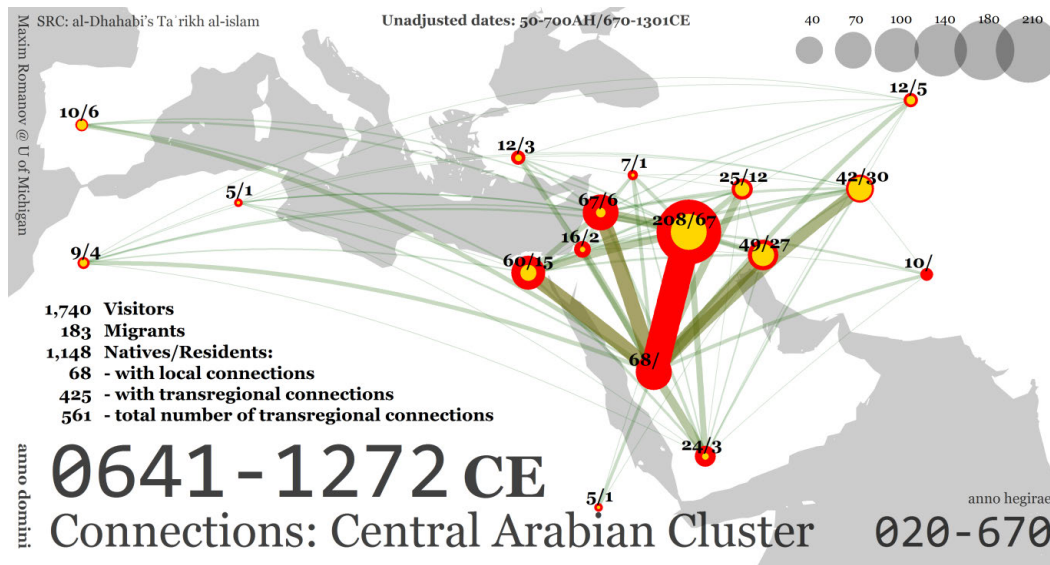


Figure A.4: Connections: Central Arabian Cluster.

connections help to determine the overall orientation of the primary cluster within the Islamic world.

Additionally, the histograms of transregional connections and transregional migrants are often included to show how these connections are distributed over time. Series of chronological maps of connections for each regional cluster (similar to those shown on Figures 2.9–2.12) are included into the DISSERTATION APPENDICES. Animated series of these maps are available online at [www.alraqmiyyat.org](http://www.alraqmiyyat.org).

## A.1 Central and South Arabia

Most of the connections between the Central Arabian Cluster (Figure A.4) and the rest of the Islamic world are north and northeast bound: mainly with Iraq (208), Iran (116 total: 49 with southwestern Iran, 49 with northeastern

Iran, and 25 with northwestern Iran), Syria (67) and Egypt (60). Peaks of connections with practically all clusters fall in the first 300 lunar years, with steady decline beginning between 150/768 CE and 200/816 CE, depending on the cluster in question. Transregional connections after 300/913 CE mostly remain with the closest clusters: Iraq, southwestern Iran, Egypt and Syria, shifting in volume toward Syria and Egypt by the end of the main period. The low number of recurring connections with most of the other clusters must reflect traffic to the sacred cities of Mecca and Medina.

Considering that Arabia steadily disappears from the social map of the Islamic world starting around 100/719 CE, connections during this period seem to reflect the migrations of Arabians to the conquered provinces: most notably to Iraq (68) and northeastern Iran/Khurāsān (30)—in both cases the absolute majority of migrants fall onto the period before 200/816 CE. Migrations between central Arabia and southwestern Iran (27) and Egypt (15) are rather sporadic, although two minor peaks can be identified: based on the density curves, for both clusters they occur around 250/865 CE and 550/1156 CE.

Connections between the South Arabian Cluster and the rest of the Islamic world are oriented north and northwest: Egypt (101), Syria (81), Iraq (70), Andalusia (49), Central Arabia (29), North Africa (17) and the Maghrib (12). The majority of these connections fall in early periods: 50–400 AH/671–1010 CE with Egypt; 50–200 AH/671–816 CE with Syria and Iraq; connections with Andalusia are later: 300–600 AH/913–1204 CE. Transregional migrations are oriented in a similar manner and fall in the same periods: Egypt (75), Syria (54), Iraq (41), Andalusia (44), Central Arabia (3), North Africa (7)

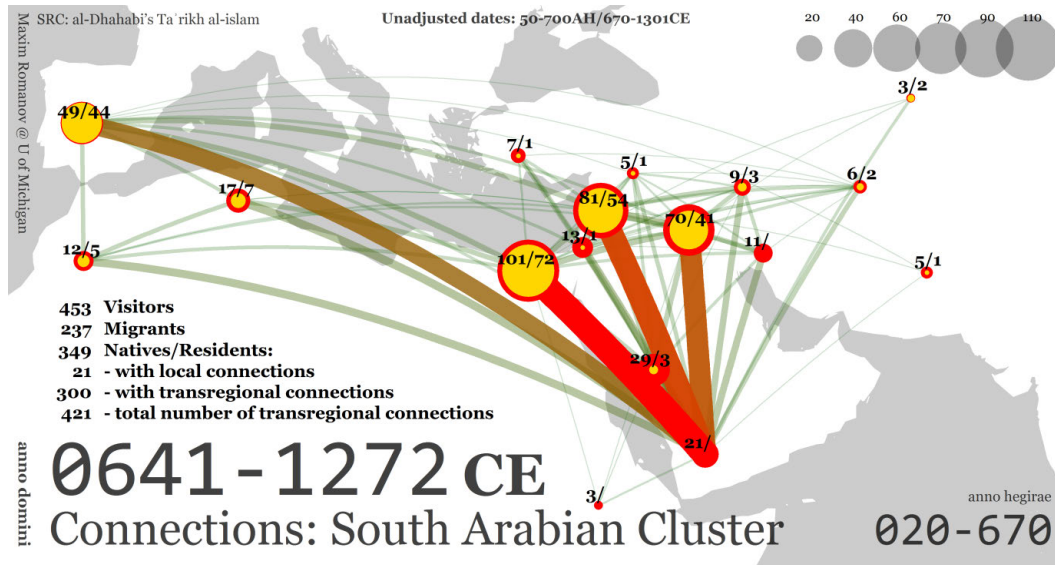


Figure A.5: Connections: South Arabian Cluster.

and the Maghrib (5).

Major urban centers in Arabia are Mecca (268), Medina (794),<sup>3</sup> al-Ṭāʾif (21) and Ṣanʿāʾ (51)—all peaking in 100–200 AH/719–816 CE. The majority of individuals from the South Arabian clusters are referred to by their regional *nisbas* al-Yamanī (166) and al-Ḥaḍramī (134), peaking at the same period.

## A.2 Iraq

Iraq is by far the most important region for the most part of the period covered in *Taʾrikh al-Islām*. Judging by the data from *Taʾrikh al-Islām*, Iraq maintained thorough connections with most regional clusters. In part, such high numbers might come from the fact that al-Dhahabī relied heavily on sources written

<sup>3</sup>This number includes some false positives, since *nisba* al-Madanī may occasionally refer to cities other than Medina; this, however, does not affect the curve.



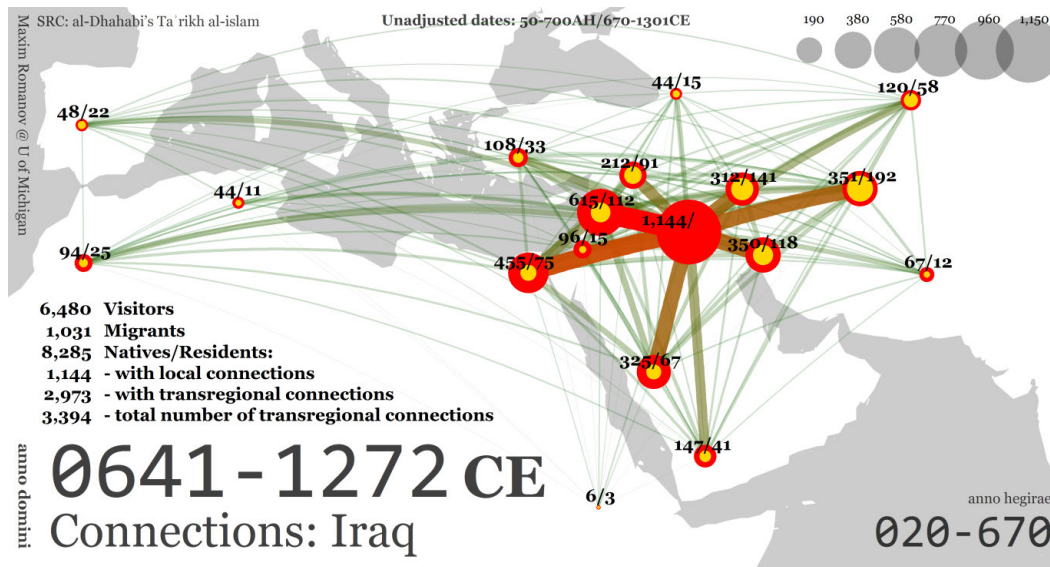


Figure A.6: Connections: Iraq.

from the Irāqī/Baghdādī perspective (such as, for example, the multi-volume *Ta'rikh Baghdād* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī); at the same time, however, such a tremendous presence of the Irāqī/Baghdādī perspective in al-Dhahabī's sources indicates that it was in Iraq where the learned community was developed the most.

The most dense connections are with Iran (1017 in total, rather evenly distributed between three main Iranian regions: 351 with northeastern Iran, 350 with southwestern Iran and 312 with northwestern Iran), Syria (615, plus 108 with the Anatolian cluster, and 96 with Jordan), Egypt (455), the Central Arabian cluster (325) and the Jazīra (212).

Connections with more remote regions are rather substantial as well: 147 with the South Arabian cluster, 120 with the Central Asian cluster, 94 with the Maghrib, 67 with the South Eastern cluster, 48 with Andalusia, 44 with

the Caucasian cluster, and 44 with the North African cluster.

The patterns of these connections differ, but often—particularly when it comes to well-represented clusters—they mirror the main double-peak curve of Iraq or of respective regional clusters. The curve of Iraq reaches its first peak around 200/816 CE, then goes into decline, levels out around 440/1049 CE, starts recovering around 480/1088 CE and reaches its second peak around 590/1195 CE, and then plunges again.<sup>4</sup> The curve of Iraq follows political developments rather closely: the first rise corresponds to the growth of the garrison cities of Kufa and Basra and the rise of the ʿAbbāsīd dynasty. It reaches its first peak slightly before the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate plunges into a turmoil of military conflicts, followed by the coming of the Būyids, who will be “protecting” the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs for almost a century. The pro-Shīʿite climate created by the Būyids was not welcoming for the Sunnī religious scholars—during this period of decline the numbers of the Sunnī scholars drop, while those with various Shīʿite affiliations rise quite noticeably. Their recovery begins shortly after the coming of the Saljūqs, who posed as the saviors of Sunnism and the protectors of the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs. Saljūq support of Ḥanafism, Niẓām al-mulk’s support of Shāfiʿism—particularly through his network of *madrasas*—and the Ḥanbalī movement that rallied to support the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs created a different religio-political climate: it led to the second peak that follows the restoration of the independent ʿAbbāsīd caliphate under the Ḥanbalī *wazīr* Ibn Hubayra after 550/1156 CE that will last until the end of the reign of al-Nāṣir li-dīn Allāh (r. 575–622 AH/1180–1226 CE), the last powerful caliph of the ʿAbbāsīd

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<sup>4</sup>Although the first peak is more significant, it is difficult to refer to the second one as minor. See Figure 2.5

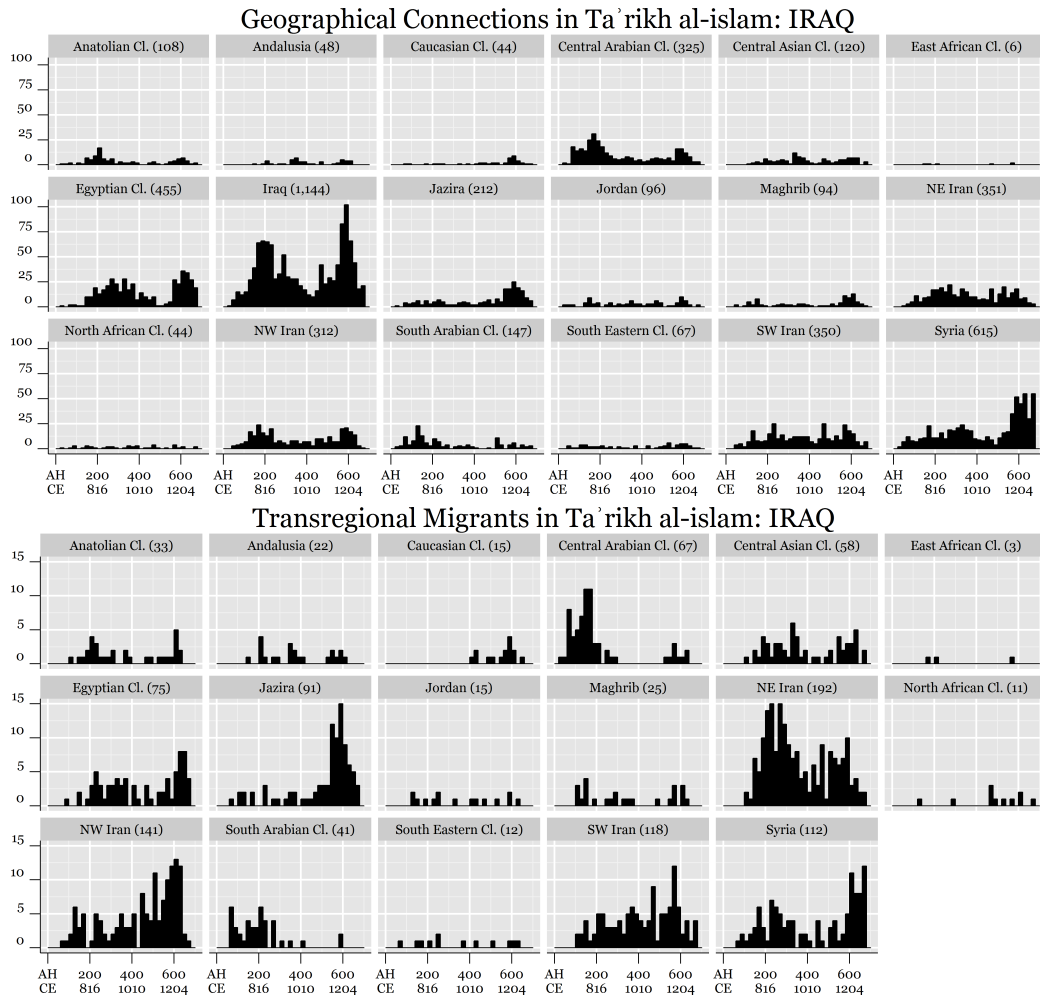


Figure A.7: Iraq: Connections with Other Regions.

dynasty.

Throughout the period, connections with Iran are quite even and continuous: with all three Iranian regions they reach the first peak roughly around 200/816 CE and the second one around 600/1204 CE. Both peaks are quite similar, although connections with northeastern and northwestern Iran seem to be more dense around the first peak, while those with southwestern Iran

around the second one. The pattern of Central Asian connections is very similar, although the first peak happens somewhat later—around 300/913 CE.

Egyptian connections peak for the first time around 300/913 CE, after which they go into decline and practically come to naught during 480–520 AH/1088–1127 CE; then they peak again around 600/1204 CE.

Connections with Syria also peak twice: first around 300/913 CE, then they go down reaching their lowest point around 500/1107 CE, after which they skyrocket and remain at their highest for the rest of the period covered in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*. Only connections with Syria display this trend.

Connections with Arabia—both Central and South—first peak between 160–180 AH/778–797 CE and then, to a much lesser extent, around 600/1204 CE. However, only connections with the Central Arabian cluster remain uninterrupted during the entire period.

Connections with the Jazīra are evenly low until about 450/1059 CE when they begin to grow, reaching their peak around 600/1204 CE.

Most transregional migrants (1031 total) also come from/go to the closest regions. Migrant connections are most dense with Iran (451 total). Almost half of Iranian connections are with northeastern Iran/Khurāsān (192) peaking around 250/865 CE—undeniably the trail of the Khurāsānī roots of the ʿAbbāsīd movement. Migrations between Iraq and northwestern and southwestern Iran peak around 550/1156 CE (141 and 118 migrants respectively).

The pattern of migration between Iraq and Syria (112) is similar to the that of transregional connections between these regions, although migrant connections reach first minor peak somewhat earlier—around 200/816 CE. They

begin their second climb after 450/1059 CE and keep on growing through the end of our period, with the major peak lying after 700/1301 CE.

Most migrations between Iraq and the Jazīra (91) are after 500/1107 CE. Migrations between Iraq and Egypt (75) mirror the pattern of their transregional connections, peaking around 300/913 CE and slightly after 600/1204 CE.

All migrants between Iraq and Arabia are during the early period: migrations from Central Arabia (67) end rather abruptly around 200/816 CE, while those from South Arabia (41) linger until around 300/913 CE.

Iraq has a significant number of urban centers, practically all of them are situated on either the Tigris or the Euphrates, the two great rivers that define Mesopotamia. The most prominent centers are Baghdād (3895), Basra/al-Baṣra (1665), Kufa/al-Kūfa (1515), Wāsiṭ (401), Mosul/al-Mawṣil (313) and al-Anbār (93).

On the geographical map the urban centers of Iraq form three distinct clusters: the south—with Basra/al-Baṣra (1665, peaking around 140/758 CE) and Abadan/ʿAbbādān (10, peaking around 220/836 CE); the north with Mosul/al-Mawṣil (313, peaking around 610/1214 CE) and Irbīl (67, peaking around 650/1253 CE), and a rather large center, located where the two great rivers come closest to each other. This cluster includes most of the urban centers of Iraq: Baghdad (3,895, peaking around 585/1190 CE), Kufa/al-Kūfa (1515, peaking around 120/739 CE), Wāsiṭ (401, peaking around 580/1185 CE), al-Anbār (93, peaking around 560/1166 CE), ʿUqbarā (64, peaking around 435/1044 CE), al-Madāʿin (44, peaking around 180/797 CE), Samarrāʾ (43, peaking around 290/904 CE), al-Ḥilla (41, peaking around 590/1195 CE), Tikrīt (28,

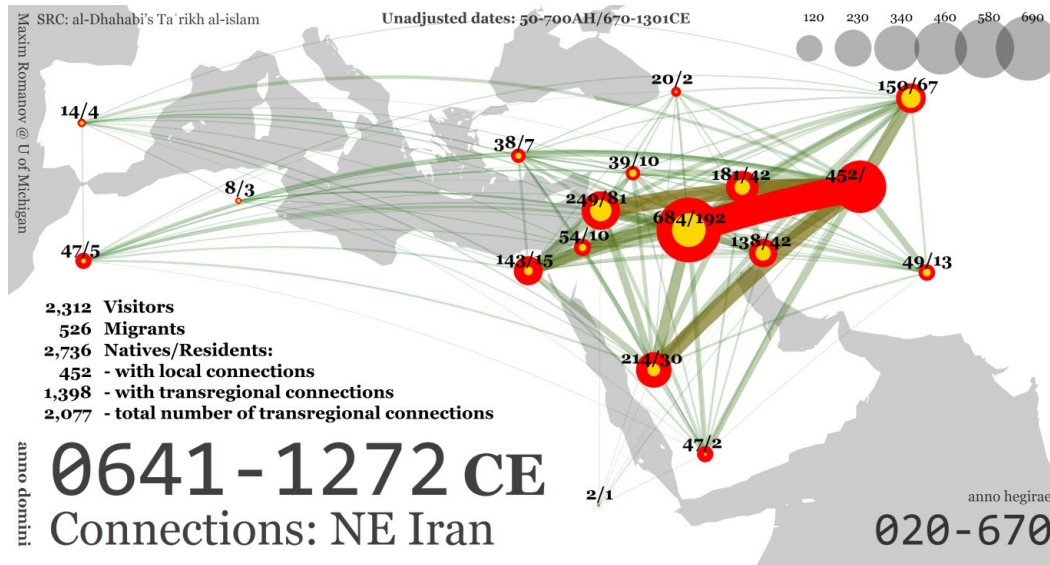


Figure A.8: Connections: Northeastern Iran (Khurāsān).

peaking around 590/1195 CE), al-Ḥīra (24, peaking around 320/933 CE) and Jarjarāya (14, peaking around 220/836 CE).

The general pattern of urban growth appears to be gradual shift northward: the south peaks during the first 200 lunar years, most of the cities of the center peak during 501–600 AH/1108–1204 CE, while the north peaks during 601–700 AH/1205–1301 CE.

### A.3 Northeastern Iran (Khurāsān)

The geographical connections of northeastern Iran are oriented firmly toward Iraq (684). These connections peak twice: first around 230/846 CE, and then, to a lesser extent, around 520/1127 CE. The highest number of northeast-

ern Iranian migrants is also with Iraq (192).<sup>5</sup> The peak of migrations happens slightly later, around 250/865 CE. This illustrates the important role that the *abnāʾ al-dawla* (“sons of the dynasty), the Khurāsānī backbone of the ʿAbbāsīd military, played in bringing the second great Islamic dynasty to power. Although both transregional connections and migrations go down after the peak of 250/865 CE, they stabilize around 400/1010 CE and grow slightly until their second peak: around 520/1127 CE for transregional connections and 550/1156 CE for migrations. After this both go down, coming to naught by the end of the period.

The volume of connections with other regional clusters is noticeably lower: 249 with Syria, 214 with the Central Arabian cluster, 181 with northwestern Iran, 150 with the Central Asian cluster, 143 with Egypt, and 138 with southwestern Iran.

The minor peak of Syrian connections is around 240/855 CE, while the major one comes around 520/1127 CE. The major peak of Egyptian connections is, on the other hand, around 250/865 CE and the minor—around 600/1204 CE. Central Arabian connections remain uninterrupted and relatively even until about 450/1059 CE, after which they go down. Connections with northwestern Iran are distributed in a rather similar manner. Connections with southwestern Iran, on the other hand, pick up around 200/816 CE and reach their peak around 500/1107 CE. Central Asian connections peak around 350/962 CE and visibly go down after 500/1107 CE.

As was noted above, the highest number of transregional migrants is with

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<sup>5</sup>Which is twice as much compared with the second largest number of migrants with Syria (81) and the highest number of migrants between two different regions in *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.

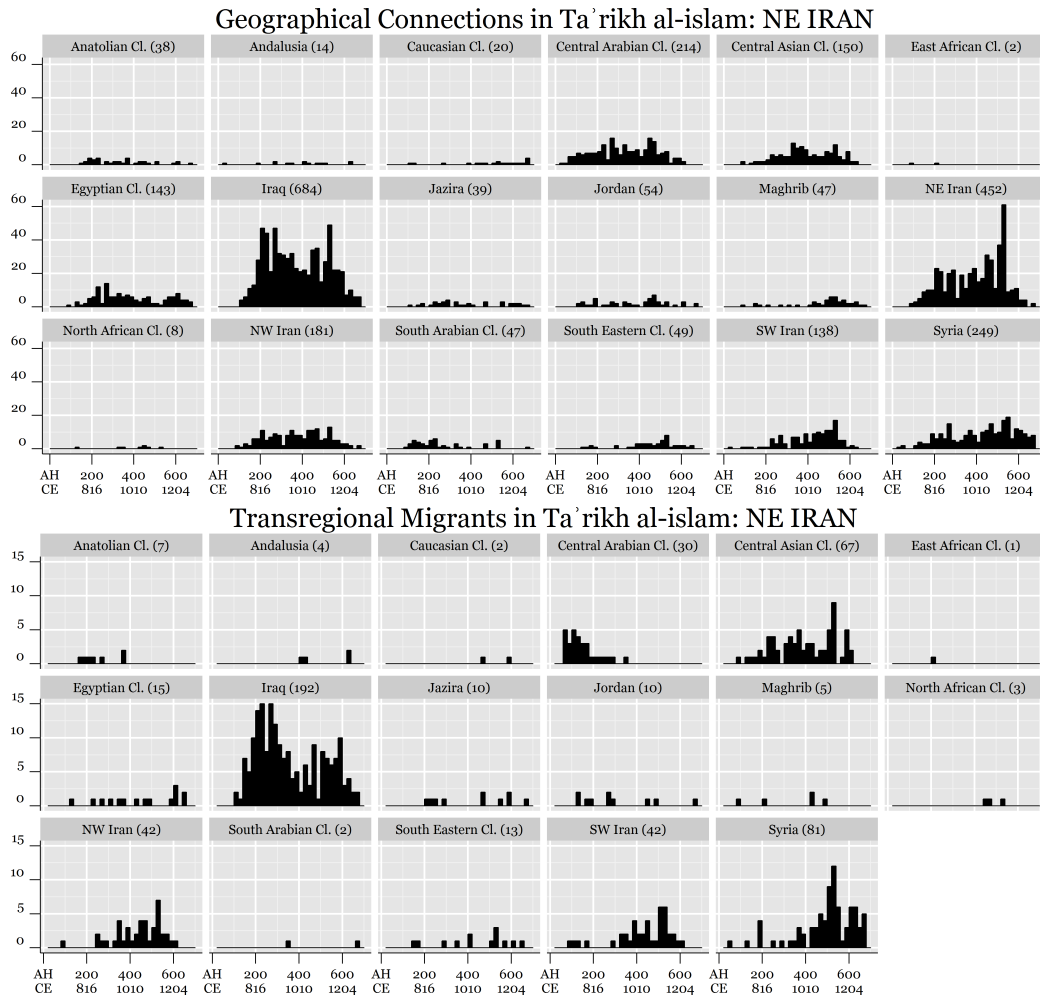


Figure A.9: Northeastern Iran: Connections with Other Regions.

Iraq (192). Syria comes next (81); however, there very few migrations until 400/1010 CE when their numbers begin to grow rapidly, peaking around 500/1107 CE, but still continuing through the end of the period. Migrations between northeastern Iran and the Central Asian Cluster (67) continue with minor interruptions from 120/739 CE till 620/1224 CE, with the most dense period 450–520 AH/1059–1127 CE. Migrations with northwestern Iran and



southwestern Iran are the same in volume (42) and follow roughly the same pattern: mostly between 250/865 CE and 600/1204 CE, peaking around 510/1117 CE. Migrations between the Central Arabian cluster and northeastern Iran are lower in numbers (30), but very dense with most of them happening before 200/816 CE. Migrations to/from other clusters very sporadic.

The largest urban center of northeastern Iran is Nishapur/Naysābūr (1,105). The importance of this center begins to grow rapidly around 170/787 CE. The density curve reaches its peak around 290/904 CE and remains there, fluctuating only slightly, until about 360/972 CE. Then, the curve goes into fluctuating decline until about 520/1127 CE, after which it plummets. Naysābūrīs practically disappear by the end of the period. Other centers of this region are: Merv/Marw [al-shāhijān] (425, peaking around 215/831 CE), Herat/Harāt (424, peaking around 390/1001 CE), Balkh (171, peaking 220/836 CE), Ṭūs (136, peaking around 525/1132 CE), Nasā (70, peaking 240/855 CE), Isfarāyīn (58, peaking around 400/1010 CE), Sarakhs (49, peaking around 500/1107 CE), Miana/Mayhana (31 peaking 520/1127 CE), Fushanj/Būshanj (28, peaking 500/1107 CE), Marw al-rūdh<sup>6</sup> (22, peaking 490/1098 CE), Abīward (21, peaking 485/1093 CE).

In the earliest period a number of individuals from this region are described with their regional *nisba* al-Khurāsānī (170, peaking around 185/802 CE), but with the growth of the importance of this region a shift to urban *nisbas* takes place.

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<sup>6</sup>Modern Bālā Murghāb in Afghanistan.

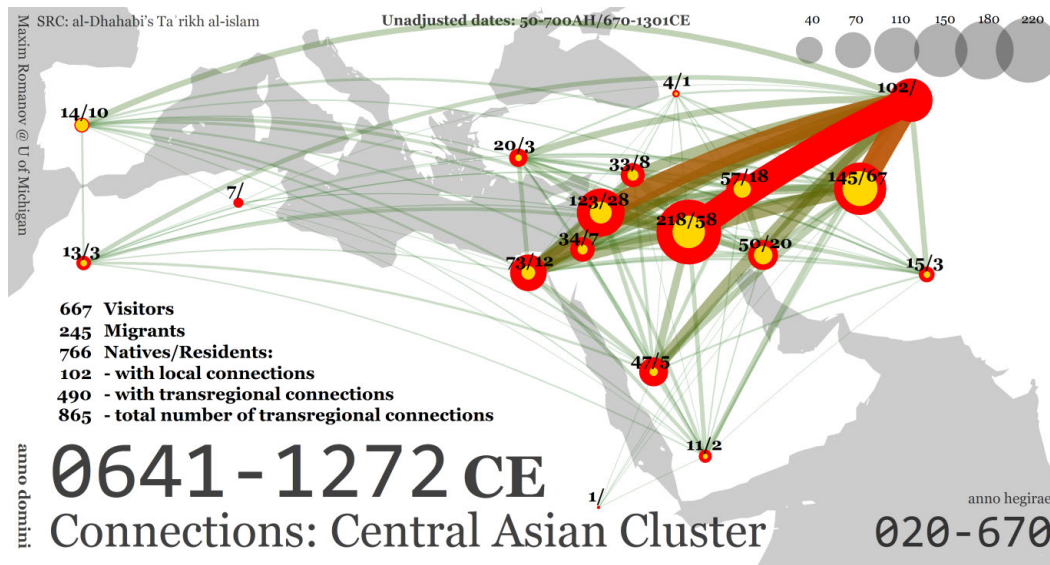


Figure A.10: Connections: The Central Asian Cluster.

## A.4 The Central Asian Cluster

Since it is very difficult to separate the Central Asian cluster from northeastern Iran, it makes sense to review them in conjunction. Most transregional connections are with Iran (252 total: 145 with northeastern Iran, 57 with northwestern Iran, and 50 with southwestern Iran), Iraq (218), Syria (123), and Egypt (73). Unlike in case with Andalusia, where travelers could get to Egypt using sea routes skipping the Maghrib and the North African sector, the Central Asians could hardly skip northeastern Iran, since it was their main gateway to the core of the Islamic world.

Connections with Iraq peak twice: around 300/913 CE and, to a slightly lesser degree, around 550/1156 CE. Connections with northeastern Iran have a similar pattern, although the second peak is around 520/1127 CE and it is clearly the major peak. Connections with Egypt mirror the Egyptian curve:

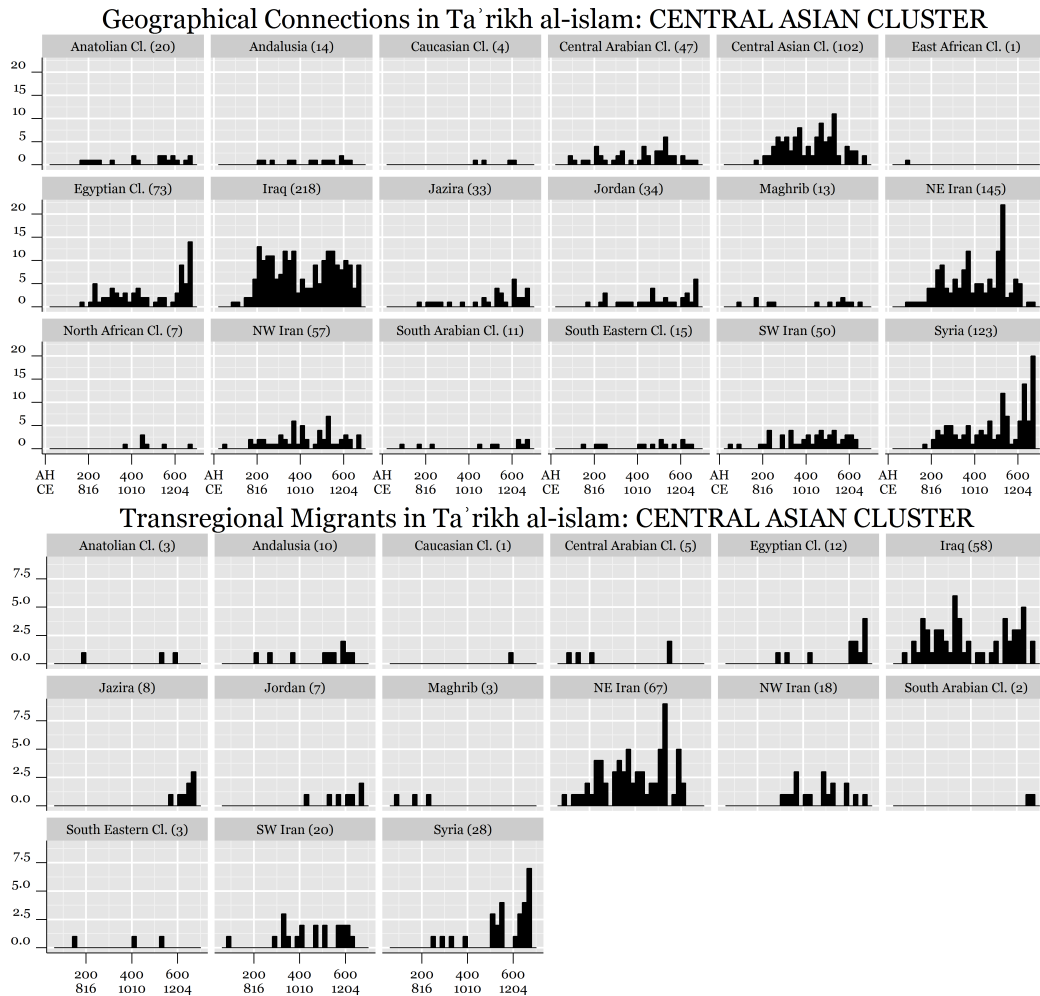


Figure A.11: The Central Asian Cluster: Connections with Other Regions.

they peak around 300/913 CE, get interrupted around 500/1107 CE, but begin to grow rapidly around 600/1204 CE. The Syrian connections also have two peaks: the minor one around 200/816 CE, and the major one—after 600/1204 CE. Syrian connections, however, remain uninterrupted from 200/816 CE on.

The main urban centers of the Central Asian Cluster are Bukhārā (343)

and Samarqand (112)—both peak around the same time (300/913 CE and 285/899 CE respectively). A number of individuals also come from the province of Khorezm/Khwārizm and are referred to by their regional *nisba* al-Khwārizmī (59).

## A.5 Southwestern Iran

Southwestern Iran is also clearly oriented toward Iraq, with which it shares the highest number of transregional connections (376) and transregional migrants (118). Connections with Iraq begin to grow around 100/719 CE and keep on growing quite steadily. They reach their peak around 550/1156 CE and then, rather rapidly, go down. The pattern of transregional migrations with Iraq is rather similar. Others dense transregional connections are with the neighbors—northeastern Iran (124), Syria (121), northwestern Iran (92), the Central Arabian cluster (90) and Egypt (79).

Connections with northeastern Iran begin to grow about 250/865 CE and peak around 380/991 CE; then they are in decline, but peak for the second time—this is a minor peak—around 530/1136 CE and then go down again. Syrian connections do not have a distinct peak; they begin about 220/836 CE and grow slowly but steadily with some minor fluctuations. Between 500/1107 CE and 620/1224 CE they are roughly on the same level, after which they decline slightly, but still remain uninterrupted by the end of the period. Uninterrupted connections with northwestern Iran begin around 200/816 CE, peak around 400/1010 CE and then decline, coming to naught by the end of

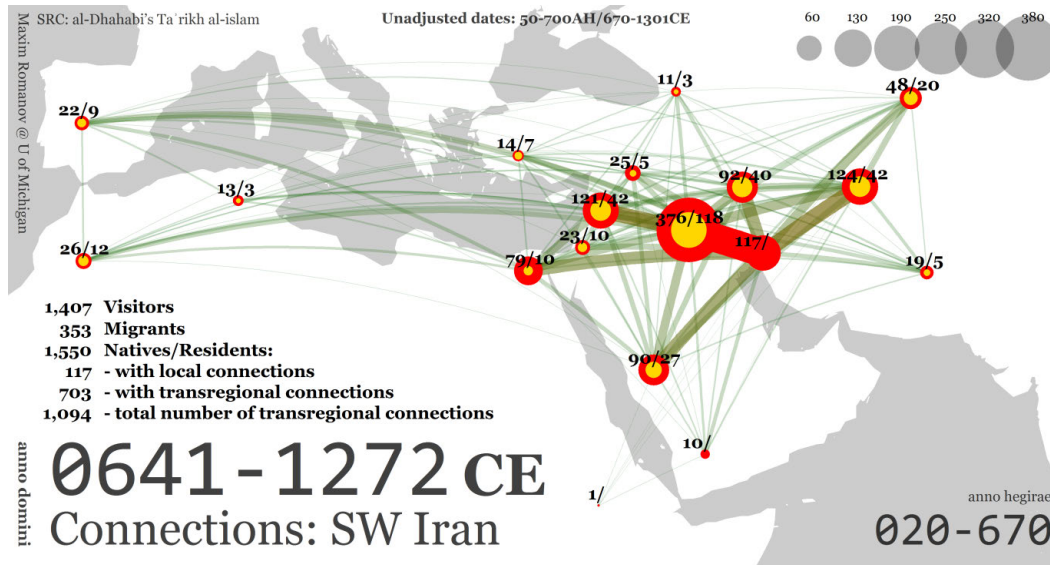


Figure A.12: Connections: Southwestern Iran.

the period. Connections with central Arabia are rather evenly distributed over the entire period. Connections with Egypt begin around 150/768 CE and peak around 300/913 CE, then—as with many other clusters—they get interrupted around 500/1107 CE, after which they begin rising again, reaching their second minor peak around 620/1224 CE.

The orientation of transregional migrations is somewhat different: southwestern Iran shares almost the same amount of migrants with northeastern Iran (42), northwestern Iran (40), and Syria (42); two other noticeable regions are the Central Asian and Central Arabian clusters (20 and 27 respectively). In most cases migrations mirror the patterns of transregional connections, with the exception of northeastern Iran with which migrations peak around 500/1107 CE.

The most significant urban centers of this region are Isfahan/Iṣbāhān (1,124,

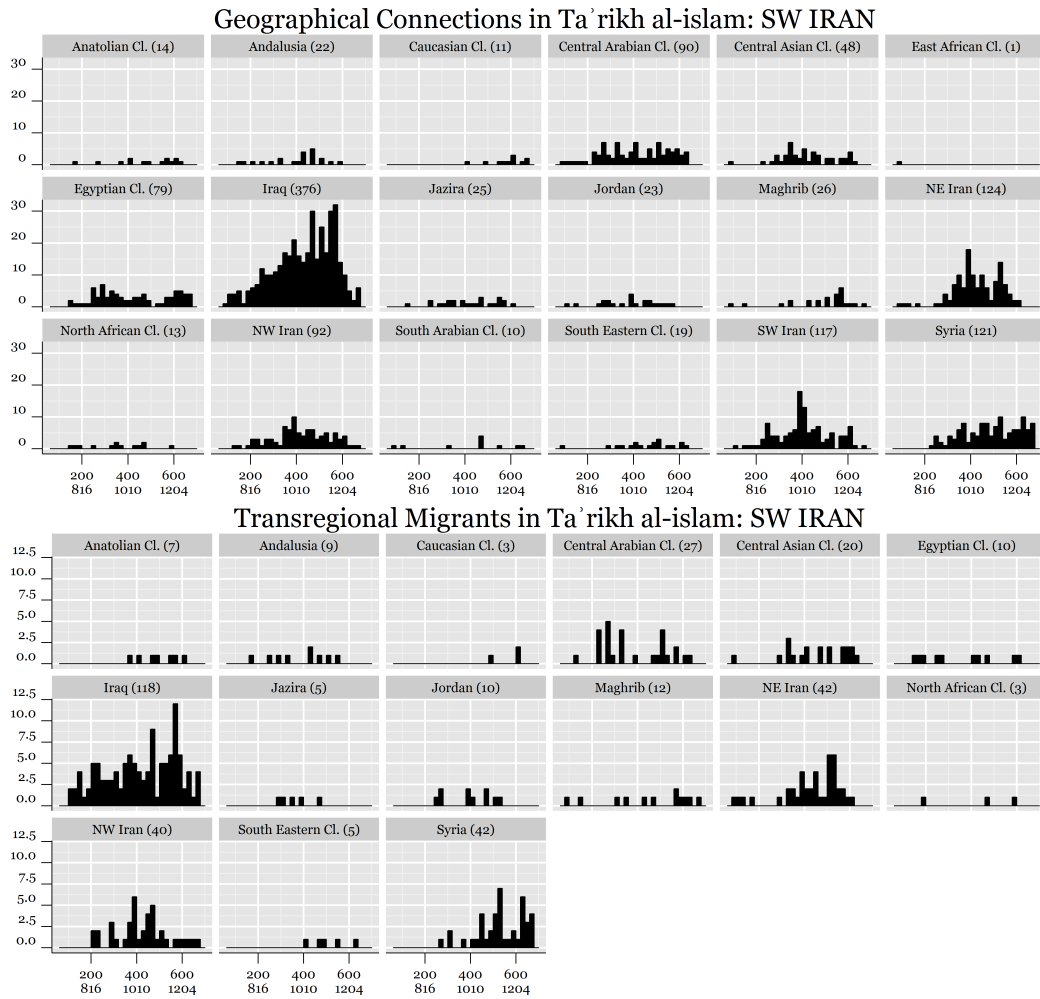


Figure A.13: Southwestern Iran: Connections with Other Regions.

peaking around 460/1069 CE) and Shīrāz (100); other urban centers are represented only marginally. Most urban centers peak after 250/865 CE and before 470/1078 CE.

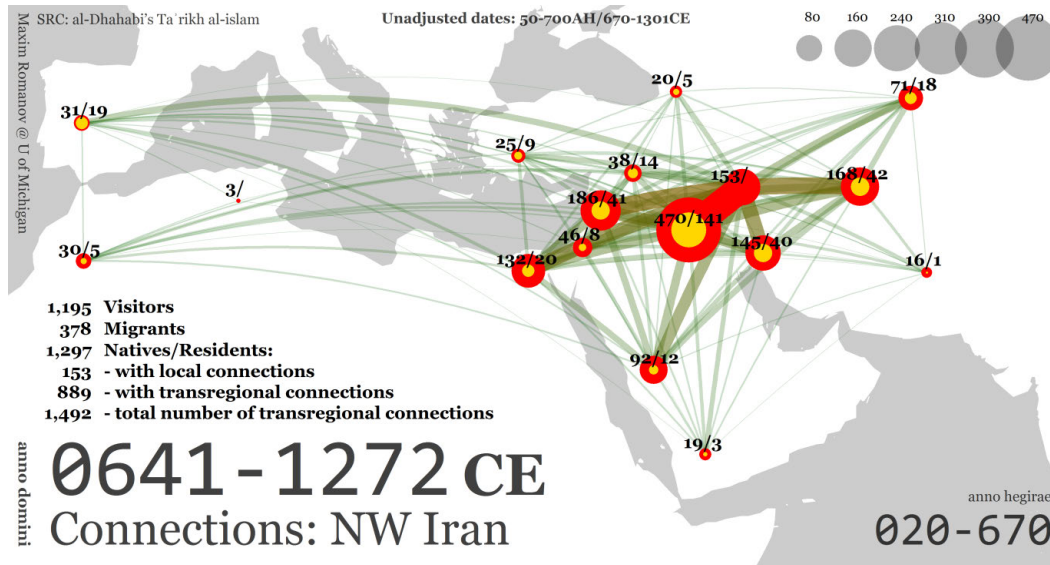


Figure A.14: Connections: Northwestern Iran.

## A.6 Northwestern Iran

Connections of northwestern Iran are also firmly oriented toward Iraq (470); its other strong connections are west/southwest bound—with Syria (186, plus 48 with Jordan) and Egypt (132), and east/southeast bound—with northeastern Iran (168) and southwestern Iran (145).

Connections with Iraq begin to grow quite steadily around 100/719 CE and reach their peak about 550/1156 CE, after which their connections go down rather quickly. Connections with Syria begin around 220/836 CE, grow until around 350/962 CE and then hold rather steady—with only minor fluctuations—until the end of the main period. Connections with Egypt have their major peak around 300/913 CE, a short interruption around 500/1107 CE, and their minor peak around 620/1224 CE. Most connections with southwestern Iran are roughly between 200/816 CE and 600/1204 CE, peaking quite noticeably

around 400/1010 CE. Connections with northeastern Iran also peak around 400/1010 CE, but most connections with this region are between 300/913 CE and 560/1166 CE.

Northwestern Iran shares most of its transregional migrants with Iraq (141) and the distribution of migrations is very similar to that of transregional connections between these two regions. Most of migrations between northwestern Iran and Syria (41) occur after 400/1010 CE, peaking sharply around 500/1107 CE and then growing again after 600/1204 CE. Most migrations to/from northeastern Iran (41) fall onto the period of 300–600 AH/913–1204 CE, peaking around 500/1107 CE. The most dense period of migrations to/from southwestern Iran (41) is 300–550 AH/913–1156 CE.

Both transregional connections and transregional migrations between northwestern Iran and other regional clusters are sporadic.

Most prominent urban centers of this regions are al-Rayy (280, peaking around 225/841 CE), Hamadhān (254, peaking around 495/1102 CE), Qazwīn (118, peaking around 350/962 CE), and Astarabād (56, peaking around 335/947 CE). All other urban centers are relatively minor (less than 30) and more individuals from northwestern Iran are referred to by *nisbas* that associate them with the provinces of the cluster, such as Gorgan/Jurjān (al-Jurjānī, 181), Ṭabaristān (al-Ṭabarī, 92), Gilan/Jīlān (al-Jīl[ān]ī, 49),<sup>7</sup> and Deylem/al-Daylam (al-Daylamī, 33).

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<sup>7</sup>Most of these *nisbas*, however, are likely to describe the descendants of a famous Baghdādī Ṣūfī ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīl[ān]ī (d. 561/1166 CE): numbers of individuals with this *nisba* begin to grow after 520/1127 CE and peak around 600/1204 CE. Something similar happens with *nisba* al-Suhrawardī—it also refers to a location in northwestern Iran and a famous Baghdādī Ṣūfī *shaykh* Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1235 CE).



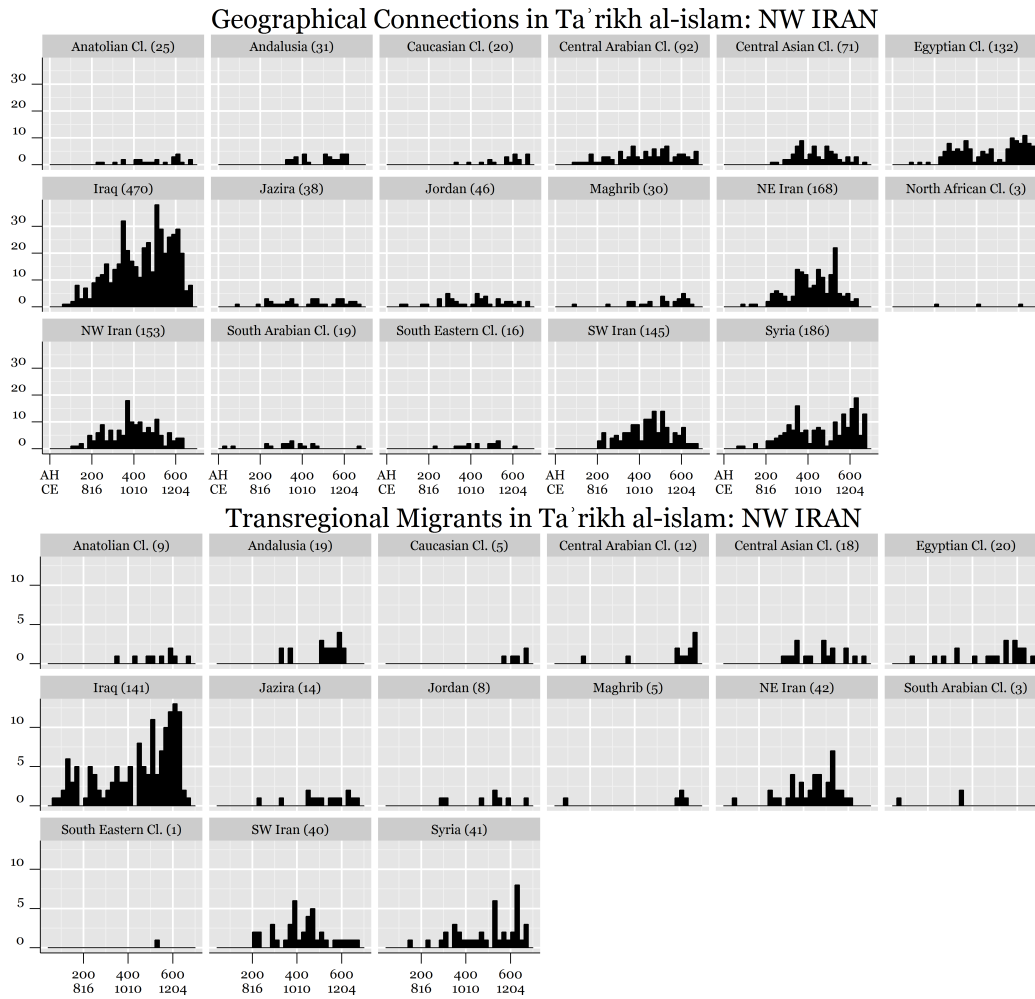


Figure A.15: Northwestern Iran: Connections with Other Regions.

Most urban centers peak during 300–600 AH/913–1204 CE.

## A.7 Andalusia and North Africa

Figure A.16 shows that Andalusia was rather strongly connected with the North Africa (328 total: 190 with the Maghrib, and 138 with the North African

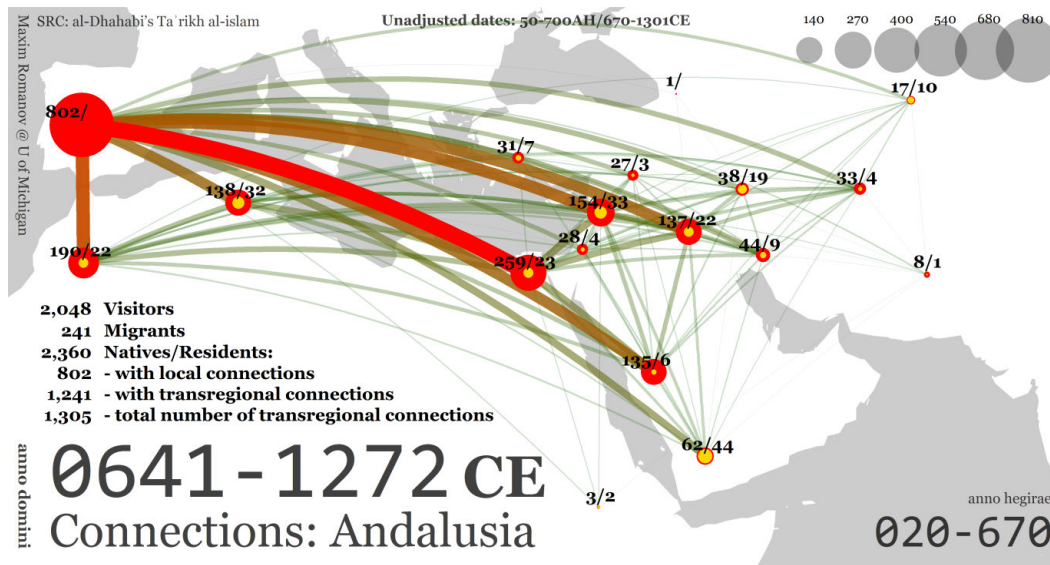


Figure A.16: Connections: Andalusia.

Cluster), Egypt (259), Syria (154), Iraq (137), the Central Arabian Cluster (135), Iran (total 115: 44 with southwestern Iran, 38 with northwestern Iran, 33 with northeastern Iran), the Jazīra (27) and Jordan (28).

Distributions of these connections—Figure A.17 (top)—tend to mirror that of Andalusia itself (see, Figure 2.5): the two-peaked curve with high points around 250/865 CE and 600/1204 CE and the low point between 450–500 AH/1059–1107 CE. Strong, uninterrupted Andalusian connections with Egypt begin around 200–240 AH/816–855 CE and continue until the end of the main period, with the highest peak around 600/1204 CE. The pattern of connections with Iraq and Central Arabia is rather similar. Andalusian connections with the Maghrib begin to grow rapidly around 400/1010 CE and remain particularly strong during 540–640 AH/1146–1243 CE, reaching their highest point around 600/1204 CE; during this period Andalusia is most strongly connected

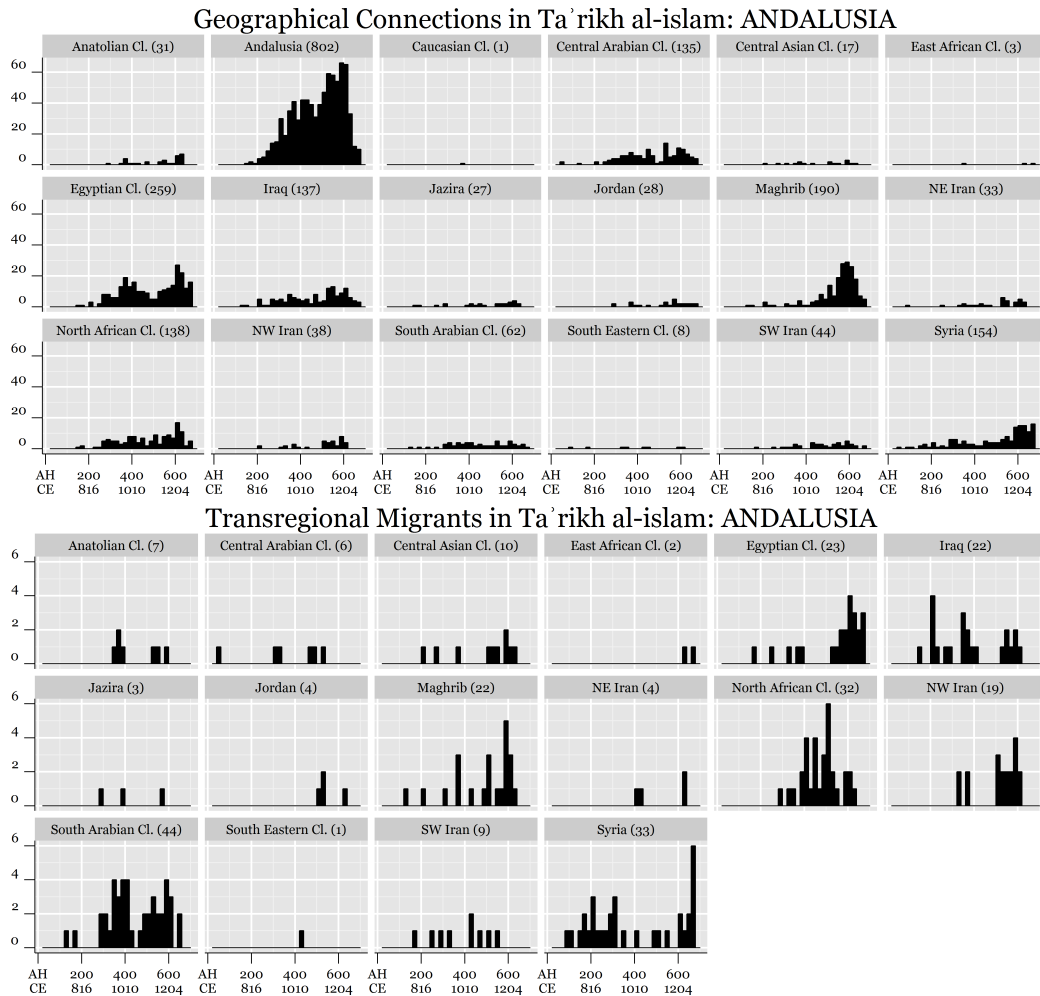


Figure A.17: Andalusia: Connections with Other Regions.

with the Maghrib and the North African cluster.

Andalusia also seems to have remained relatively well connected with the South Arabian cluster (62): even though the number of connections per 20 lunar year period is rather low—between two and five—they remain uninterrupted during 280–680 AH/894–1282 CE. In a rather similar manner Andalusia is connected with southwestern Iran (44), although the period of uninterrupted

connections is shorter, from 420/1030 CE until 640/1243 CE.

Connections with other clusters are rather sporadic and frequently interrupted. After 600/1204 CE connections with all clusters decline, except for Egypt, Syria, the Jazīra and Jordan—as was noted above, at this period these regions seem to form one continuous macro-region.

A large volume of local connections—significantly larger than the volume of connections with any other regional cluster—might be interpreted as a sign of cultural self-sufficiency of the region, to which geographical isolation must have contributed greatly.

A closer look at transregional migrants (241 total; Figure A.17 (bottom)) shows somewhat different patterns: the highest number of migrants (44) is between Andalusia and the South Arabian cluster—almost uninterruptedly between 280/894 CE and 660/1262 CE. The general direction must have been toward Andalusia, particularly if we take into account that the number of connections decline during 600–660 AH/1204–1262 CE, which corresponds with the general decline of Andalusia. The number of transregional migrants during this period grows only with Egypt beginning from 520/1127 CE (23 total), and Syria beginning about 500/1107 CE (33 total)—in both cases from Andalusia.<sup>8</sup>

The North African cluster (32) and the Maghrib (22) also share a noticeable number of transregional migrants: the former almost uninterruptedly during 300–640 AH/913–1243 CE, peaking around 500/1107 CE, and the latter mostly during 480–640 AH/1088–1243 CE.

Iraq (22) and northwestern Iran (19) are also visible in this regard, although

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<sup>8</sup>And most likely from Syria to Andalusia during 100–320 AH/719–933 CE.

the periods are different: mostly 200–400 AH/816–1010 CE for the former and 500–620 AH/1107–1224 CE for the latter.

The peaks of urban centers—periods when the majority of individuals from these urban centers flourish—split into two major periods (Figure 2.16). During the first period of roughly 300–400 AH/913–1010 CE which falls mostly on the Spanish Umayyad caliphate (138–422 AH/756–1032 CE), the first group of urban centers reaches a zenith: Córdoba/Qurṭuba (633), Badajoz/Baṭalyaws (24), Elvira/Ilbīra (21), Pechina/Bajjāna (21), Ecija/Istija (12), Huesca/Washqa (11).

A century of urban decline<sup>9</sup> is followed by the second period of urban growth: roughly 500–600 AH/1107–1204 CE. It falls on the second half of the reign of the Almoravids (al-Murābiṭūn, 448–541 AH/1057–1147 CE) and the reign of the Almohads (al-Muwaḥḥidūn, 524–667 AH/1131–1269 CE) and here we witness the most significant urban boom: Seville/Ishbiliyya (248), Valencia/Balansiyya (141), Murcia/Mursiya (85), Granada/Gharnāṭa (82), Xàtiva/Shāṭiba (71), Dénia/Dāniya (61), Zaragoza/Saraqusṭa (44), Jaén/Jayyān (33), Sidonia/Shadhūna (18), Tortosa/Ṭurṭūsha (13), Niebla/Labla (11); peaking at 610/1214 CE, Málaga/Mālaqa (55) may also be added to this list.<sup>10</sup>

The Maghrib is almost equally connected with Egypt (79), Andalusia (77) and Syria (78); and to a lesser extent with Iraq (67), Iran (total 53: 23 with

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<sup>9</sup>During the period of 400–500 AH/1010–1107 CE that was marked by the fall of the Spanish Umayyads, the reign of “the petty kings” (*mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*, 11<sup>th</sup> century CE) and then the coming of the Almoravids (al-Murābiṭūn, 448–541 AH/1057–1147 CE), does not show any significant urban peaking, with only two urban centers reaching their highest: Toledo/Ṭulayṭila (89) around 430/1039 CE and Almería/al-Mariyya (91) around 490/1098 CE. The peak of Toledo might very well belong to the end of first period, while that of Almería to the beginning of the second one.

<sup>10</sup>The peak of Mallorca/Mayūrqa (16) also falls into this period.

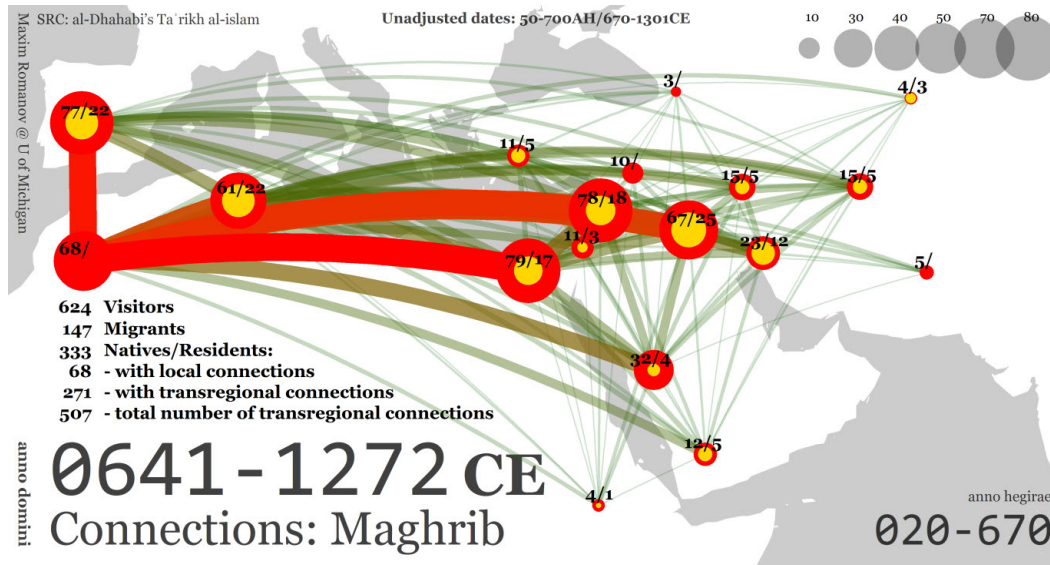


Figure A.18: Connections: The Maghrib.

southwestern Iran, 15 with northwestern Iran, 15 with northeastern Iran) and the Central Arabian Cluster (32). Most of connections with all these regions fall onto the period of 500–700 AH/1107–1301 CE, which is the peak period for the Maghrib itself.

The Maghrib shares transregional migrants with the North African cluster (22), Andalusia (22), Iraq (25), Syria (18), Egypt (17) and southwestern Iran (12). In most cases migrations peak during the period of 500–700 AH/1107–1301 CE, although the major peak for Iraq is around 200/816 CE, which is also the minor peak for Syria and the North African cluster.

Major connections of the North African Cluster are with Egypt (85, the primary peak is around 300/913 CE, and the secondary one—600/1204 CE), Andalusia (61, peaking around 500/1107 CE) and the Maghrib (59); and to a lesser extent with Syria (40, peaking after 600/1204 CE), Iraq (29), Central

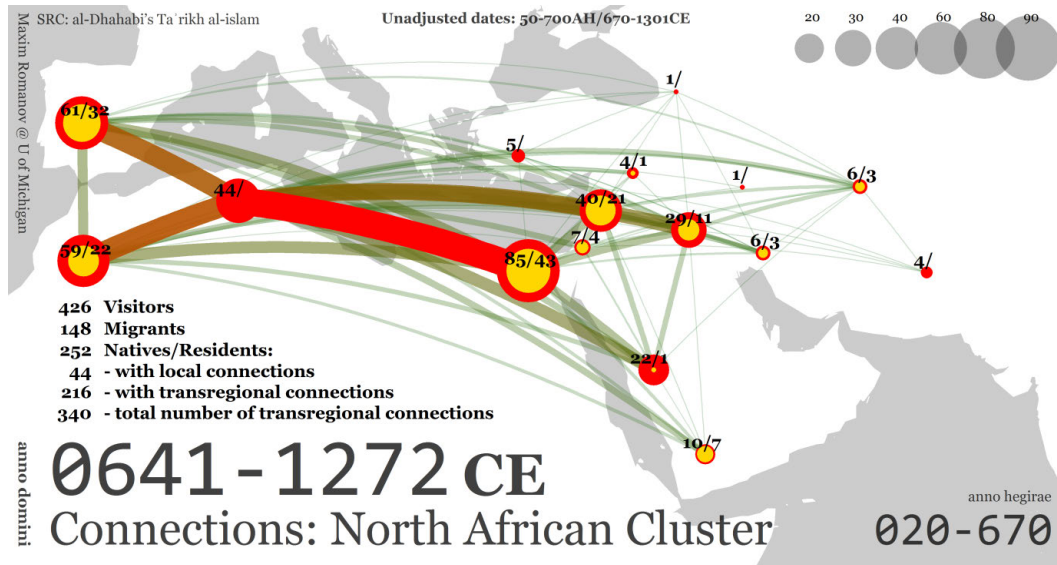


Figure A.19: Connections: The North African Cluster.

and South Arabia (22 and 10 respectively—peaking during 400–450 AH/1010–1059 CE). Major migrant connections are roughly with the same regions, with peaks during the same periods: with Egypt (43), Andalusia (32), Syria (40), Iraq (11) and South Arabia (7).

North African urban centers are not numerous during this period: al-Qayrawān (114, peaking around 320/933 CE), Ceuta/Sabta (63, peaking around 590/1195 CE), Fes/Fās (45, peaking around 580/1185 CE), Tlemcen/Tilimsān (19), and Marrakesh/Marrākish (15). Individuals from these regions are more often referred to by their regional *nisbas*: al-Maghribī (“Maghrebian”, 191), al-Ifrīqī (“African,” 78) and al-Ṣiqillī (“Sicilian,” 41)

### A.7.1 A Note on al-Dhahabī’s Coverage of Andalusia

Data collected by María Avila for her demographic study of Andalusia during the period 360–460 AH/972–1069 CE offer a valuable opportunity to assess al-Dhahabī’s representation of this important region. In her research Avila relied mostly on four major Andalusian biographical collections:<sup>11</sup> *Taʿrīkh ʿulamāʾ al-Andalus* of Ibn al-Faraḍī (d. 403/1013 CE), *al-Ṣila* of Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 578/1183 CE), *Tartīb al-madārik* of qāḍī ʿIyāḍ al-Yaḥsūbī (d. 544/1150 CE), and *al-Takmila li-kitāb al-ṣila* of Ibn al-Abbār (d. 595/1199 CE). al-Dhahabī used three of these four collections as his sources—only the *Tartīb al-madārik* is not found in his list.<sup>12</sup>

Avila’s data appear to be the most exhaustive biographical dataset on Andalusia now available, and comparison of her data with a similar subset from al-Dhahabī’s *Taʿrīkh al-islām* should give us a clue as to how thorough al-Dhahabī was in compiling his *magnum opus*. Figure A.20 shows two histograms and density curves for both subsets.

The absolute numbers are quite different: al-Dhahabī has 519 biographies for this period, while Avila was able to collect 1,132—which makes al-Dhahabī’s data about 45.8% of perhaps all available biographical records on Andalusian scholars. The curves<sup>13</sup> of both datasets, on the other hand, are quite similar. This shows that whatever criteria al-Dhahabī used for putting together his collection, his representation of Andalusia as a region is rather

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<sup>11</sup>MARÍA LUISA AVILA, *La sociedad hispanomusulmana al final del califato: (aproximación a un estudio demográfico)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: Instituto de Filología, Departamento de Estudios Arabes, 1985), 25-26.

<sup>12</sup>TI, 1, 11–17.

<sup>13</sup>On the importance of curves see Section 1.2.4 above.



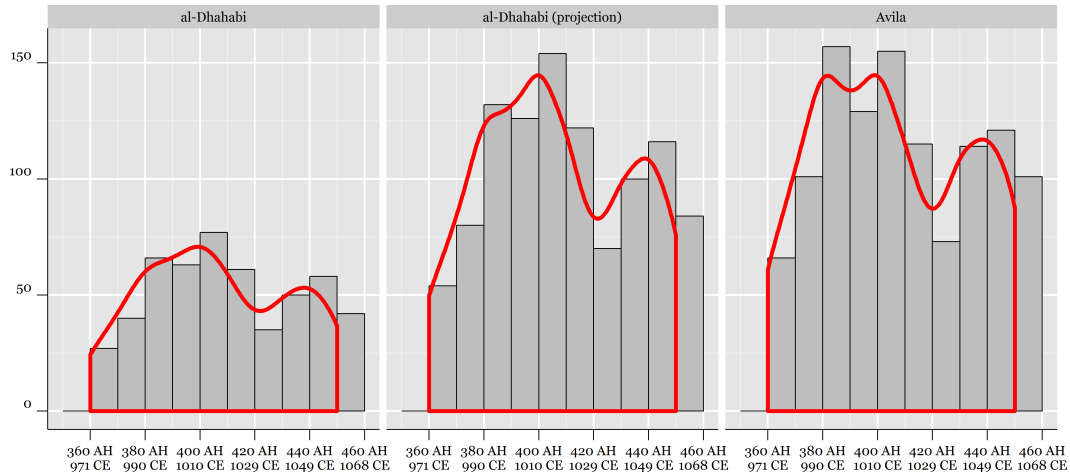


Figure A.20: Representation of Andalusia: al-Dhahabī Vs. Avila. The histograms show numbers of biographies of Andalusian scholars: the left histogram shows data from al-Dhahabī’s *Ta’rikh al-islām* (based on toponymic *nisbas*: 519 biographees), while the right one displays data collected by Maria Luisa Avila from four major biographical collections on Andalusia (1,132 biographees). Had al-Dhahabī written his book in 100 volumes—the possibility that he himself mentioned—his coverage of Andalusia could have looked as shown in the middle (projection).

fair, and while the ratio of biographies per each decade varies slightly, his curve does not contradict the exclusively Andalusian one.

The graph in the middle shows how al-Dhahabī’s coverage of Andalusia might have looked had he chosen to write his book in more than 100 volumes—the possibility he himself mentioned.<sup>14,15</sup>

## A.8 Syria

Transregional connections of Syria (Figure A.21) are primarily with Iraq (399), Egypt (366), Iran (374 total: 127 with northeastern Iran, 113 with southwestern Iran, and 79 with northwestern Iran), Arabia (248 total: 131 with the

<sup>14</sup>TI, 1, 12.

<sup>15</sup>The projection is crude: the numbers of biographies for each decade are simply doubled.

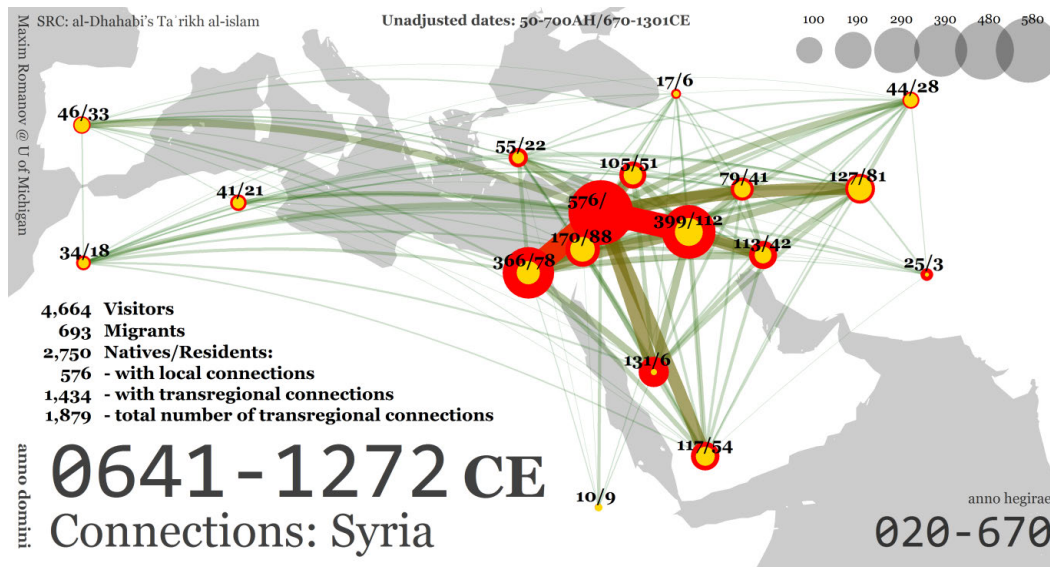


Figure A.21: Connections: Syria.

center and 117 with the south) and Jordan (170). The volume of connections with more distant clusters is lower: Andalusia (46), the North African cluster (41), the Maghrib (34), and the Central Asian cluster (44).

The peaks of connections with most regional clusters mirror the Syrian curve that peaks twice: first at the end of the Umayyad period, around 140/758 CE, and second—somewhere after 700/1301 CE, during the Mamlūk period. The peaks of connections with most regions are after 500/1107 CE, varying slightly from cluster to cluster. Syrian connections with Arabia, both central and south, and Iraq also have minor peaks—around 100/719 CE with Arabia, and around 200/816 CE with Iraq. Local Syrian connections, however, are most dense, particularly after 500/1107 CE (801 total).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup>There are 576 Syrian connections to which connections with Jordan (170) and the Anatolian Cluster (55) can be added as well, which brings the overall number of local connections to 801.

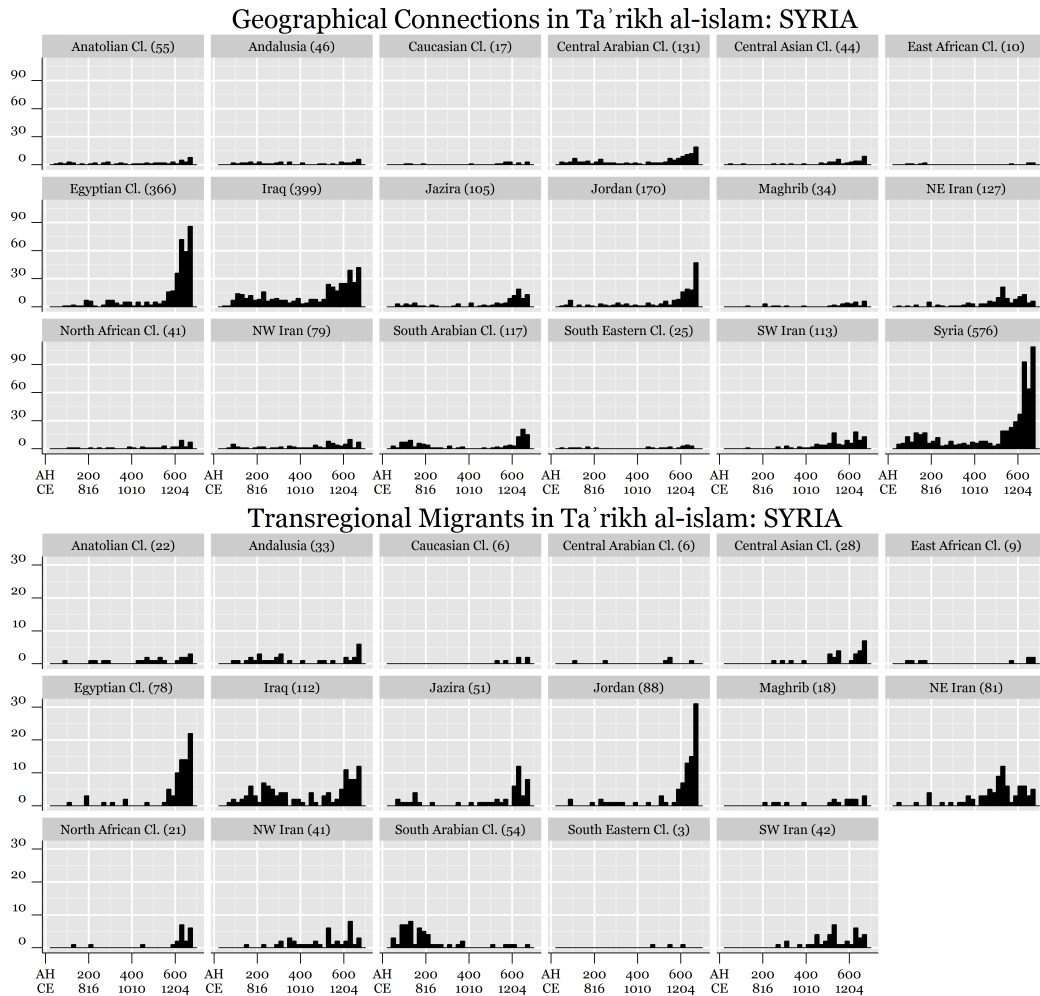


Figure A.22: Syria: Connections with Other Regions.

Syria shares most of its transregional migrants with Iran (164 total: 81 with northeastern Iran, 42 with southwestern Iran, and 41 with northwestern Iran), Iraq (112), Jordan (88), Egypt (78), South Arabia (54) and the Jazīra (51). The absolute majority of transregional migrations take place after 600/1204 CE. However, migrant connections with the South Arabian cluster peak around 100/719 CE and practically come to an end around 250/865 CE. Migra-

tions between Iraq and Syria peak twice: first around 220/836 CE, and then, around 620/1224 CE. Migrations between Syria and northeastern Iran reach their highest point around 500/1107 CE.

Some of the Syrian urban centers peak during the early period—between 100/719 CE and 300/913 CE: Homs/Ḥimṣ (268, peaking 130/749 CE), Darāyā (38, peaking 160/778 CE), Ḥawrān (28, peaking 245/860 CE). Some urban centers of neighboring Jordan and the Anatolian cluster (al-ʿAwāṣim) reach their peak during 201–300 AH/817–913 CE. In Jordan: al-Ramla (59) around 210/826 CE, and Tyre/Ṣūr (38) around 270/884 CE. In al-ʿAwāṣim: Antioch/Antākiyya (63) around 250/865 CE, Misis/al-Maṣṣīṣa (56) around 215/831 CE, and Ṭarṣūṣ (35) around 245/860 CE.

Most urban centers of Syria, however, peak in the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century, and together with the peaking urban centers of neighboring regions they form a crescent-shaped cluster (See Section 2.2.4 below).

## A.9 Egypt

Most of the Egyptian connections are with Syria (253, plus 96 with Jordan and 27 with the Anatolian cluster), Iraq (180), Iran (110 total: 49 with southwestern Iran, 31 with northeastern Iran, and 30 with northwestern Iran), the South Arabian cluster (98), the Central Arabian cluster (84), the North African cluster (70), the Jazīra (50), Andalusia (42).

Early peaks of Egyptian connections are with the South Arabian Cluster (around 200/816 CE), with the North African cluster (300/913 CE) and

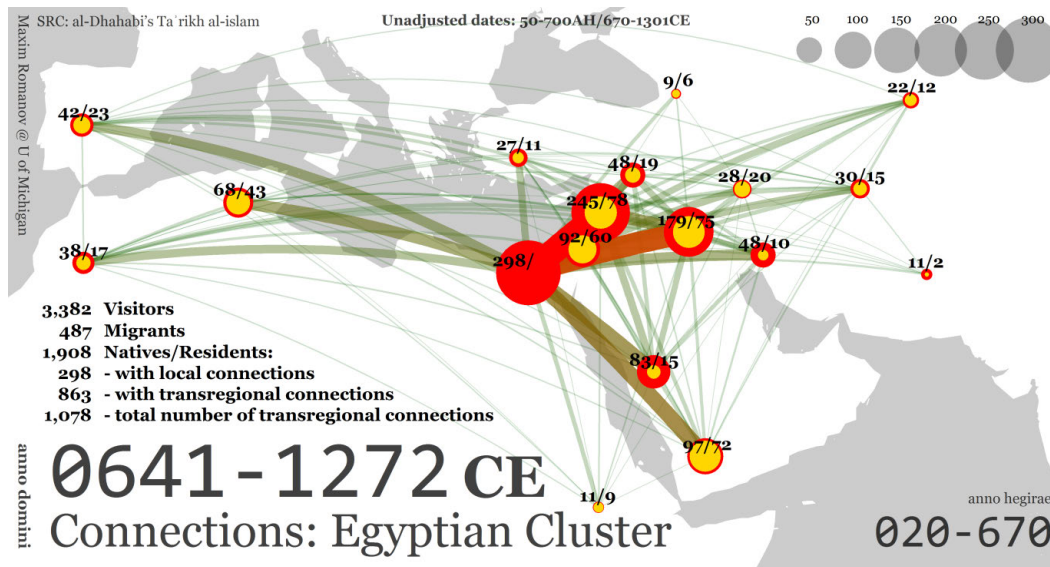


Figure A.23: Connections: Egypt.

northeastern Iran (also around 300/913 CE); the minor peak of connections with Iraq also occurs around 300/913 CE. Connections with all other clusters peak around 600/1204 CE: most strong connections are with Iraq, the Central Arabian cluster, Jordan, the Jazīra, the South Arabian cluster, and, most notably, with Syria—these connections begin rapid growth around 550/1156 CE and peak sometime after 700/1301 CE.

Migration patterns differ, but with the exception of the South Arabian cluster (75), most migrations are with the closest regions: Syria (82, plus 60 with Jordan), Iraq (78), Iran (51 total: 22 with northwestern Iran, 19 with northeastern Iran, and 10 with southeastern Iran), the North African Cluster (44), Andalusia (25) and the Jazīra (22). Until about 400/1010 CE the highest numbers of migrants are with the Southern Arabian Cluster, followed by those with Iraq. Around 600/1204 CE migrations peak between Egypt and Jordan,

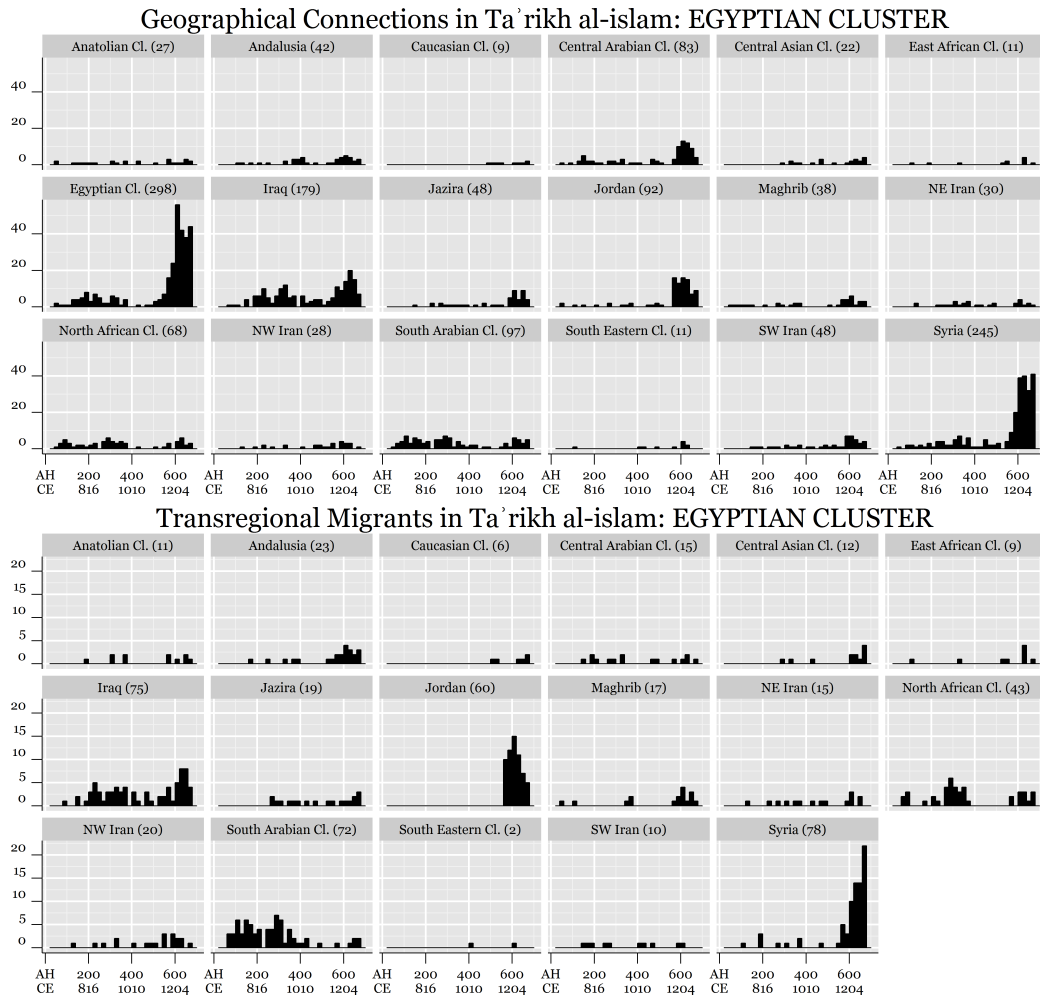


Figure A.24: Egypt: Connections with Other Regions.

Syria, Iraq and, to a much lesser extent, with Andalusia.

Major Egyptian urban centers during are Alexandria/al-Iskandariyya (211, peaking around 625/1229 CE), Damietta/Dimyāt (36, peaking around 625/1229 CE as well), Tinnīs (23, peaking around 290), and Sakhā (16, peaking around 650/1253 CE). Cairo/al-Qāhira becomes only marginally noticeable by the very end of the period covered in the *Ta'rikh al-islām* (less than 10).

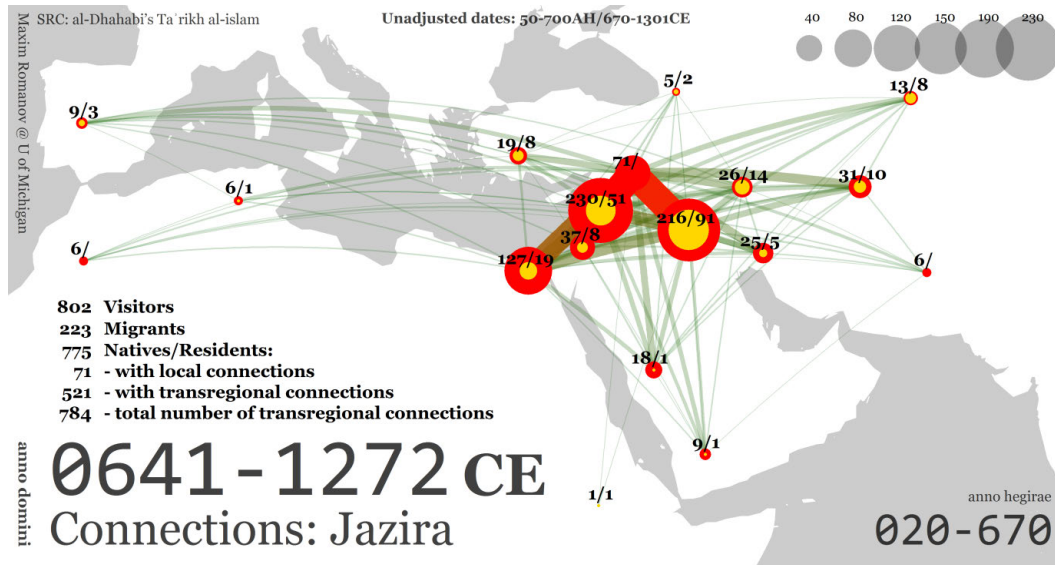


Figure A.25: Connections: The Jazīra.

Among the well-represented geographical clusters in *Ta'rikh al-islām*, Egypt is the least urbanized region. The absolute majority of people from this region are described with their regional *nisba* al-Miṣrī (“Egyptian,” 1,563).

East African connections are as minor as the cluster itself. They are directed toward Syria (15), Egypt (14), Central Arabia (9) and Iraq (9). The first phase of connections fall onto the early period of 50/671 CE–130: all between Syria and Central Arabia. The second phase of connections is in the late period, beginning around 470/1078 CE: first toward Iraq, then toward Egypt and Syria. Transregional migrants are almost exclusively with Syria and Egypt during the late period—Abyssinian slave-soldiers and eunuchs who make their way into the administrative and military élites.

## A.10 The Jazīra

Connections of the Jazīra are split almost evenly between Syria (230)<sup>17</sup> and Iraq (216)—two important regions that the Jazīra brings together.<sup>18</sup> Connections with these two regions remain uninterrupted through the entire period, but most of them fall on the late period—when the curve of the Jazīra itself begin to grow. During this earlier period connections are more dense with Iraq and they to grow around 500/1107 CE, reaching their peak around 600/1204 CE. Connections with Syria are weaker if compared to those with Iraq, they begin to grow around 550/1156 CE and skyrocket around 600/1204 CE—the peak lies after 700/1301 CE.

The Jazīra is also strongly connected with Egypt (127) and Iran in general (82 total), but not with any specific Iranian cluster in particular. The patterns of connections with Egypt and Jordan are similar to the Syrian connections, although they are not as dense, but begin to grow slightly earlier—around 500/1107 CE for Egypt and 450/1059 CE for Jordan. As to the Iranian clusters, only connections with northwestern Iran seem to display some regularity—they remain uninterrupted beginning 420/1030 CE and peak around 600/1204 CE. Connections with other clusters are rather irregular and frequently interrupted.

Transregional migrants are distributed differently. Here the emphasis is clearly toward Iraq (91) and then Syria (51). The number of migrants are much lower for Egypt (19), northwestern Iran (14) and northeastern Iran (10).

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<sup>17</sup>Although if the Jordanian connections (37) are added, the scale will be tipped in favor of Syria.

<sup>18</sup>These regions are so close to each other that it was incredibly difficult to find where one ends and another begins, particularly the boundary between Syria and the Jazīra.



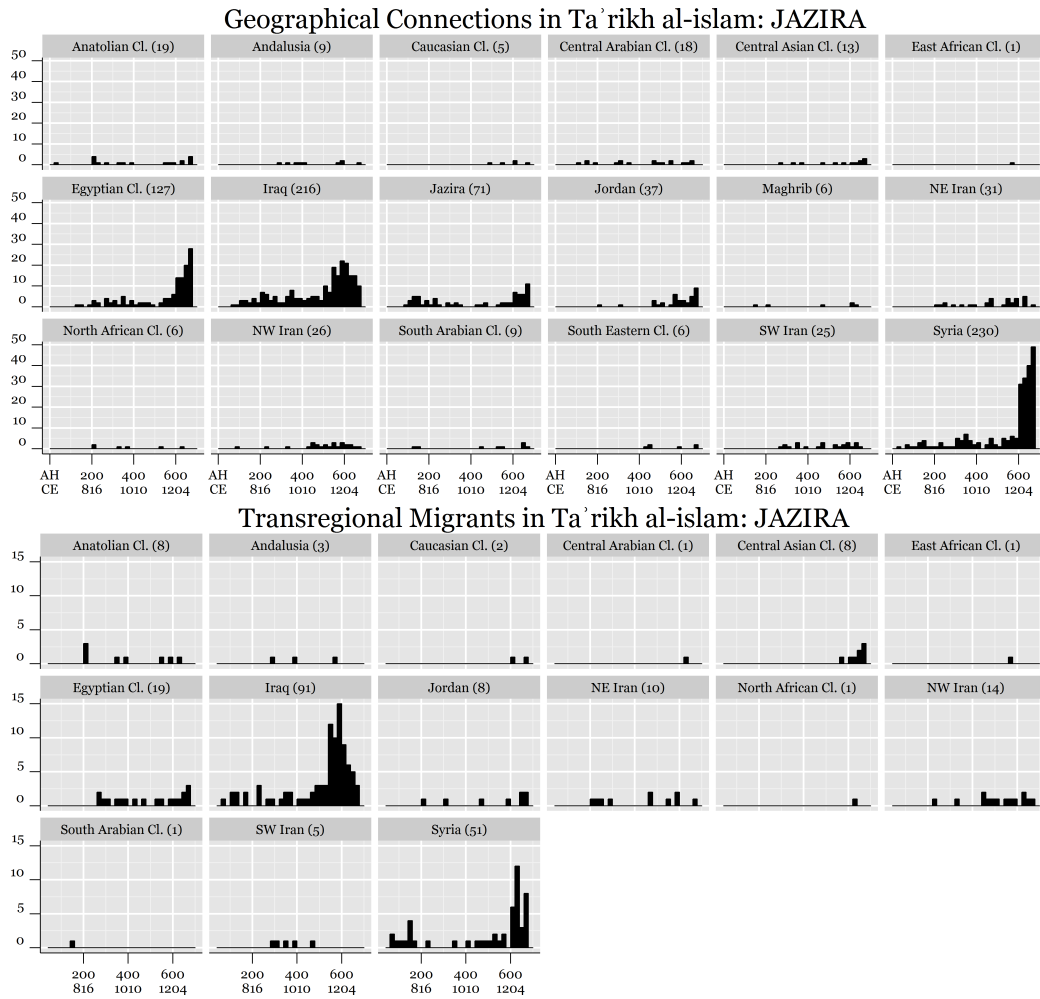


Figure A.26: The Jazāra: Connections with Other Regions.

Patterns of migrations are similar to those of transregional connections with respective regional clusters.

The major urban centers of the Jazāra are Ḥarrān (224, peaking around 230/846 CE), al-Raqqā (99, peaking around 220/836 CE), and Naṣībīn (34, peaking around 360/972 CE). Other urban centers of the Jazāra are minor (below 30), but they mushroom after 600/1204 CE.

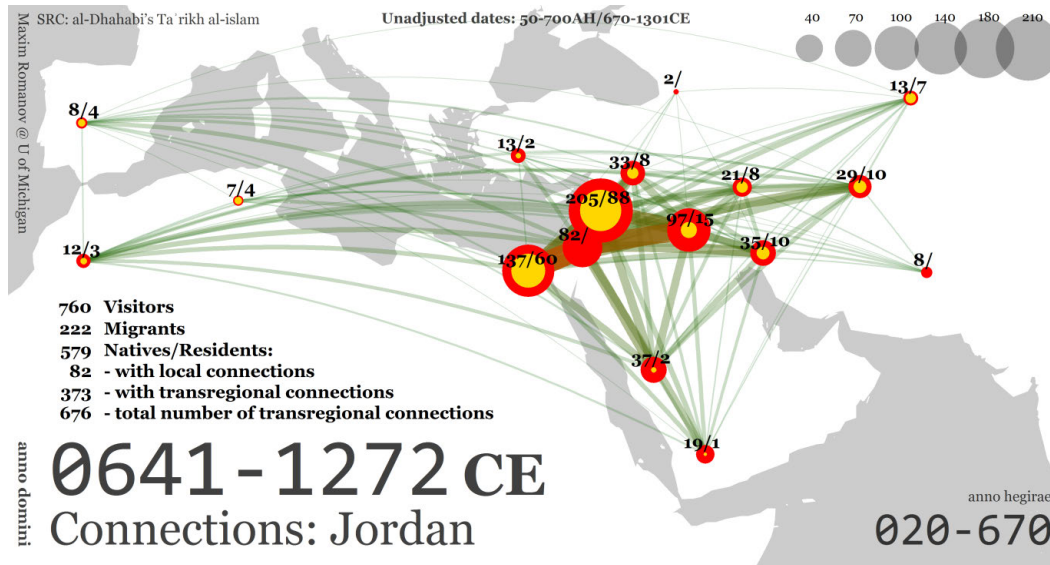


Figure A.27: Connections: Jordan.

## A.11 Jordan

Jordan (al-Urdunn & Filasṭīn) is firmly oriented toward Syria. With Syria Jordan also shares the highest number of transregional migrants, keeping in mind, of course, that “transregional” is something of an exaggeration, since together they constitute one region—Greater Syria/al-Shām. Other Jordanian connections are directed toward Egypt (137) and Iraq (97)—with the former it also shares a noticeable number of transregional migrants (60).

Jordan’s connections are almost equally divided between the Central Arabian cluster (37), the Jazīra (33), southwestern Iran (35), northeastern Iran (29), and northwestern Iran (21). Its orientation toward Iran in general is more significant (total 85).

The most dense Jordanian connections are after 400/1010 CE. Connections with Iraq and Egypt peak around 600/1204 CE and then begin to go down.

Connections with with Syria continue growing through the end of the period. Only transregional migrations to/from Syria and Egypt show some regularity, mirroring the patterns of transregional connections.

The major urban centers of Jordan are Jerusalem/al-Quds (315, peaking around 660/1262 CE), al-Ramla (59, peaking around 215/831 CE), Ashkelon/ʿAsqalān (59, peaking around 630/1233 CE), Nābulus (40, peaking around 650/1253 CE), and Tyre/Ṣūr (38, peaking around 270/884 CE).

# Appendix B

## Maps of Transregional Connections

What follows are the series of 21 mini-maps for each major regional cluster. Each figure focuses on a particular cluster. Yellow cores visualize the number of individuals strongly associated with a regional cluster through their *nisbas*, i.e. they were either born or spent a significant amount of time there. Smaller yellow cores visualize individuals with more than one toponymic *nisba*, thus associating them with more than one region. Red “husks” show the number of individuals who most likely visited a region—one or more locations belonging to a cluster are mentioned in biographies. Arcs visualize connections between regional clusters; depending on the number of individuals with connections between two particular clusters, arcs vary in their properties: transparency, thickness and color. Bleak thin arcs of green color stand for smaller numbers of individuals with particular connections, while bright thick arcs of red color stand for larger numbers of individuals with particular connections during a given 50 lunar year period. Together, these properties allow making single connections practically invisible, thus excluding irregularities that do not form patterns.

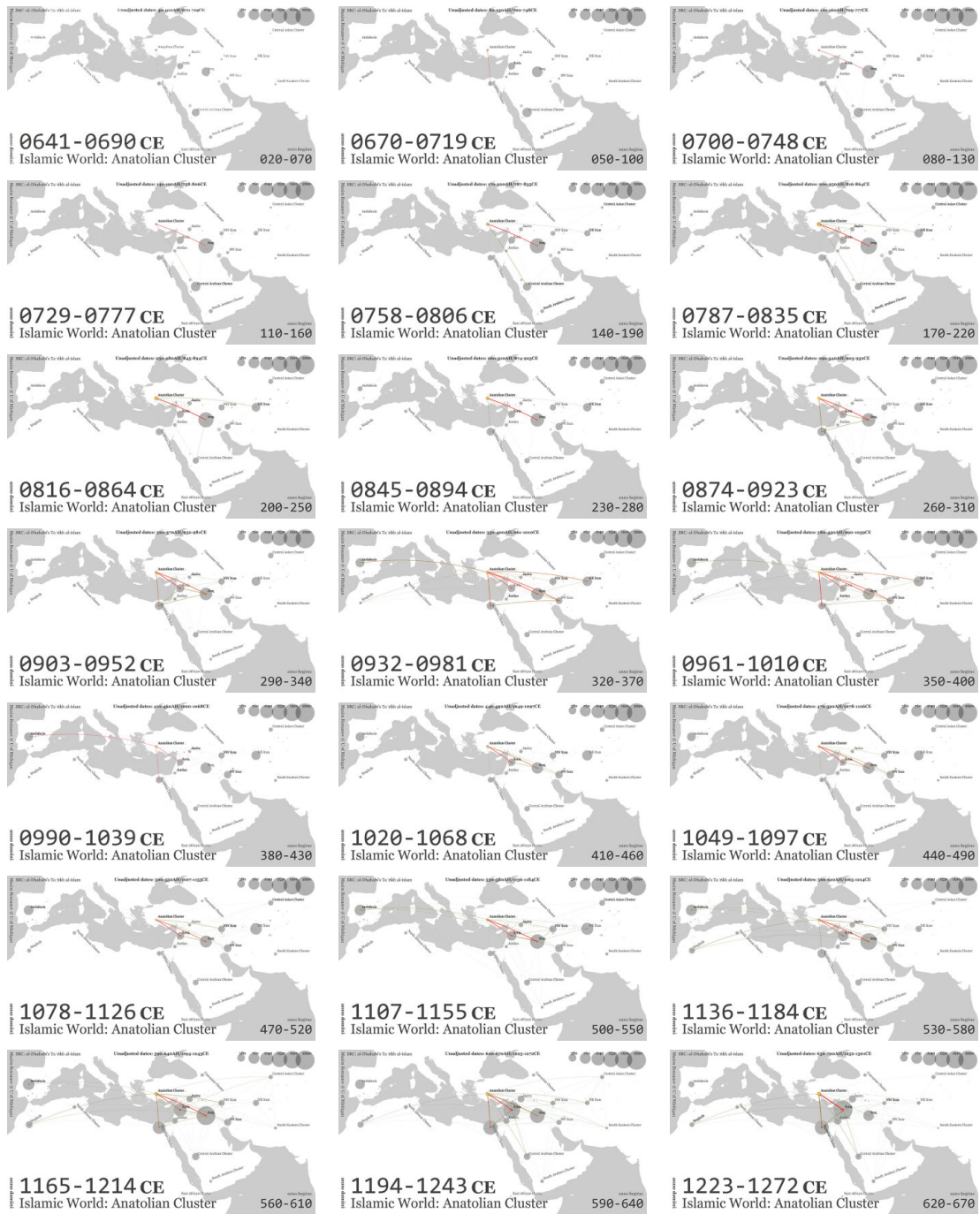


Figure B.1: Transregional Connections: Anatolian Cluster.

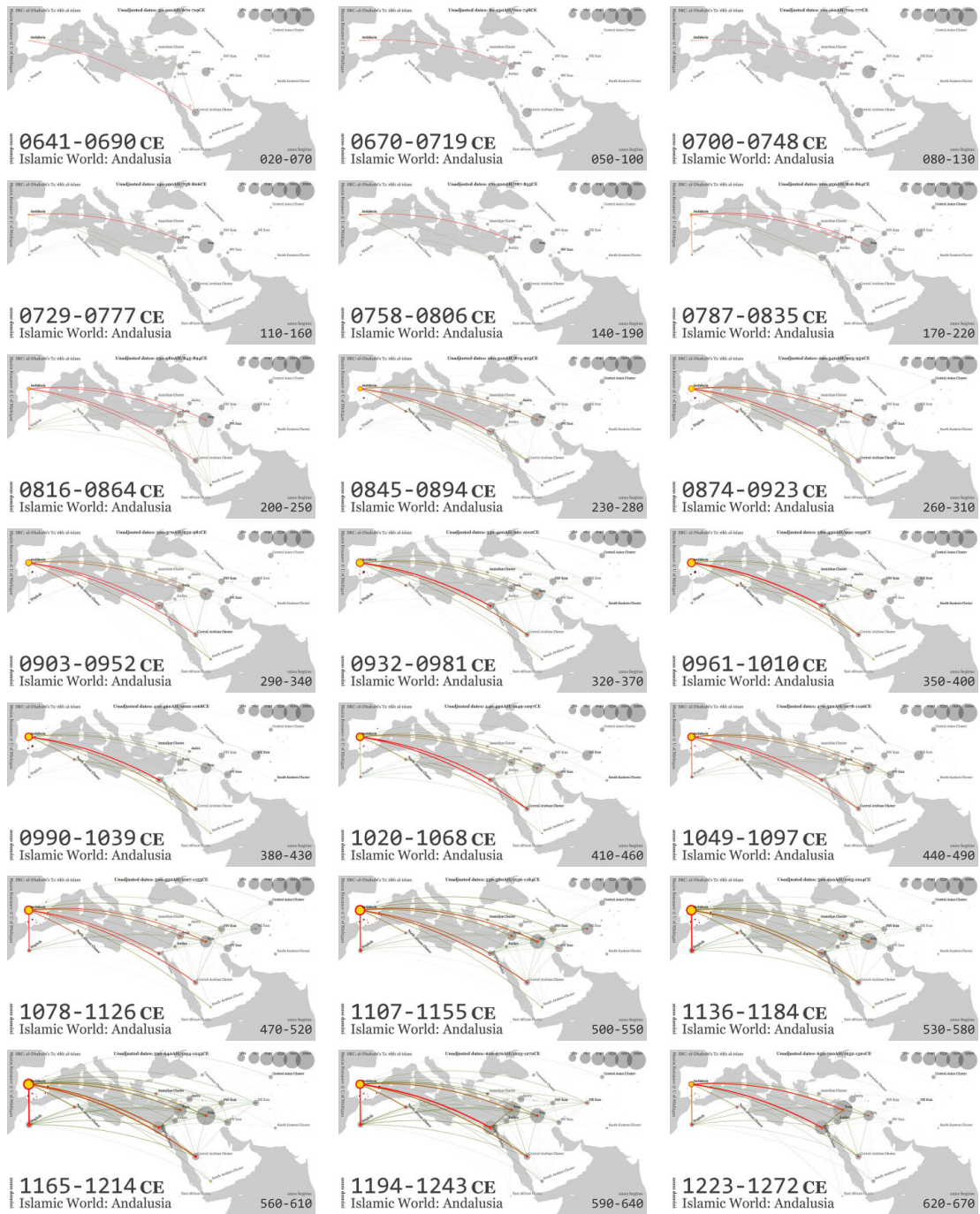


Figure B.2: Transregional Connections: Andalusia.



Figure B.3: Transregional Connections: Caucasian Cluster.

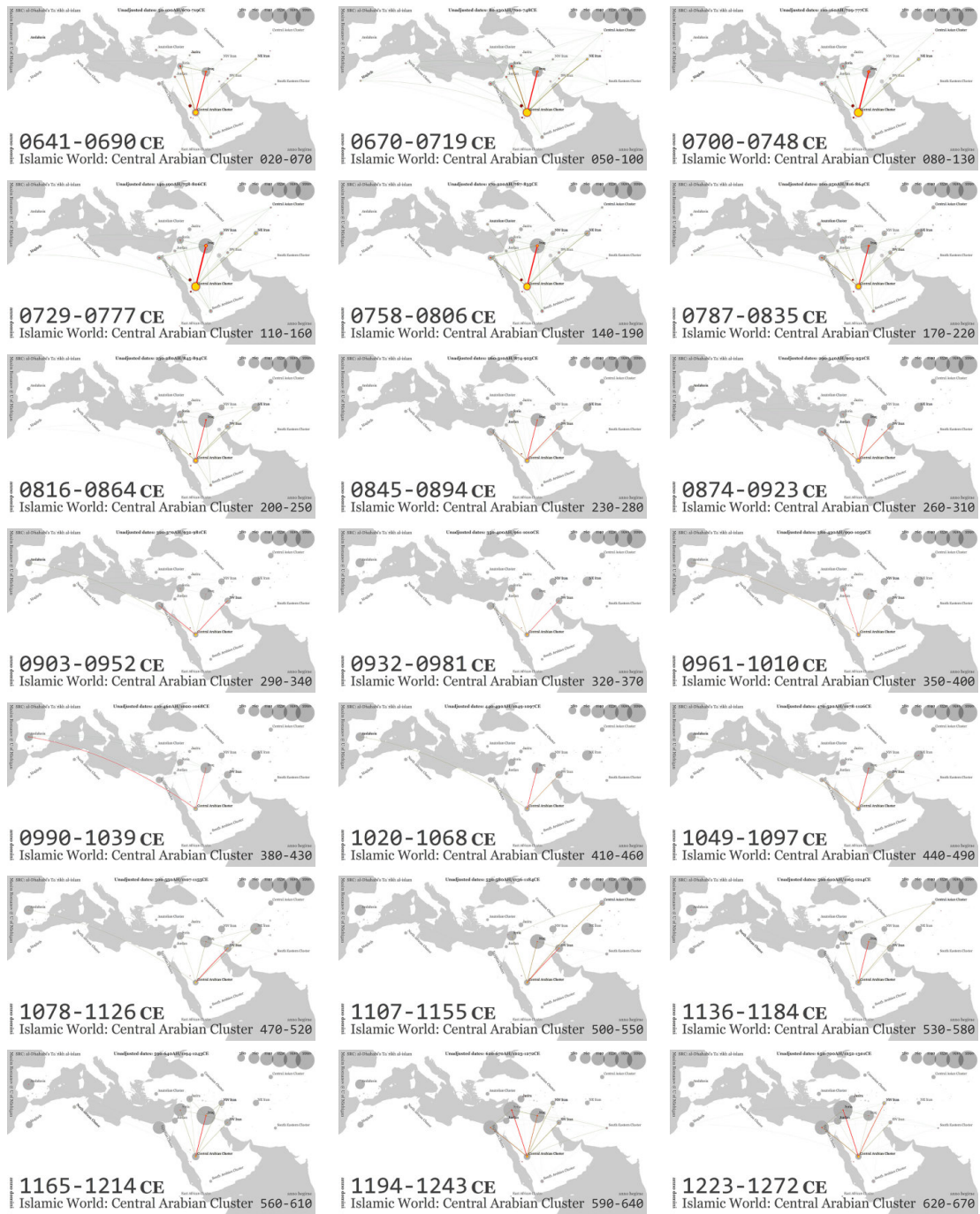


Figure B.4: Transregional Connections: Central Arabian Cluster.



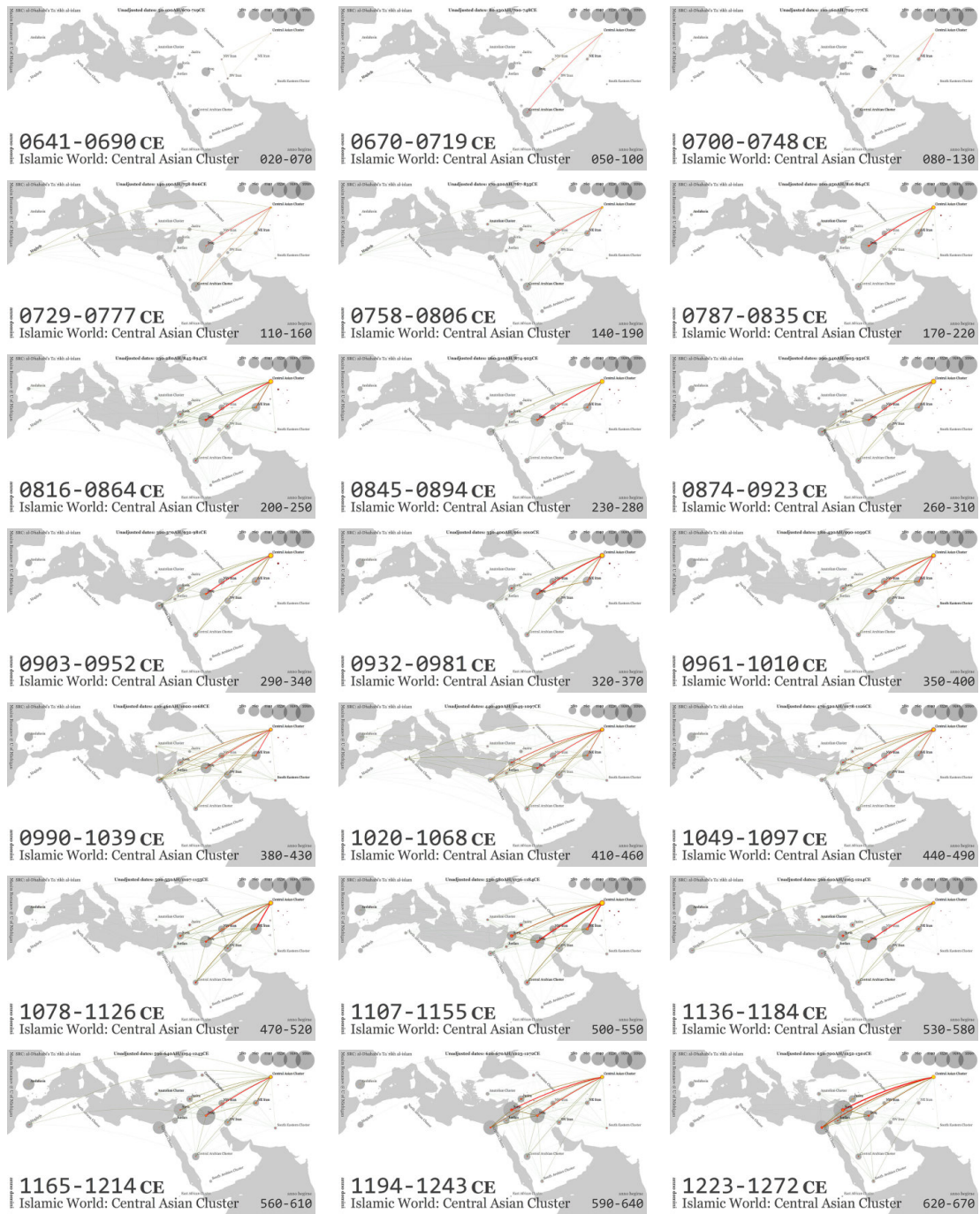


Figure B.5: Transregional Connections: Central Asian Cluster.



Figure B.6: Transregional Connections: East African Cluster.

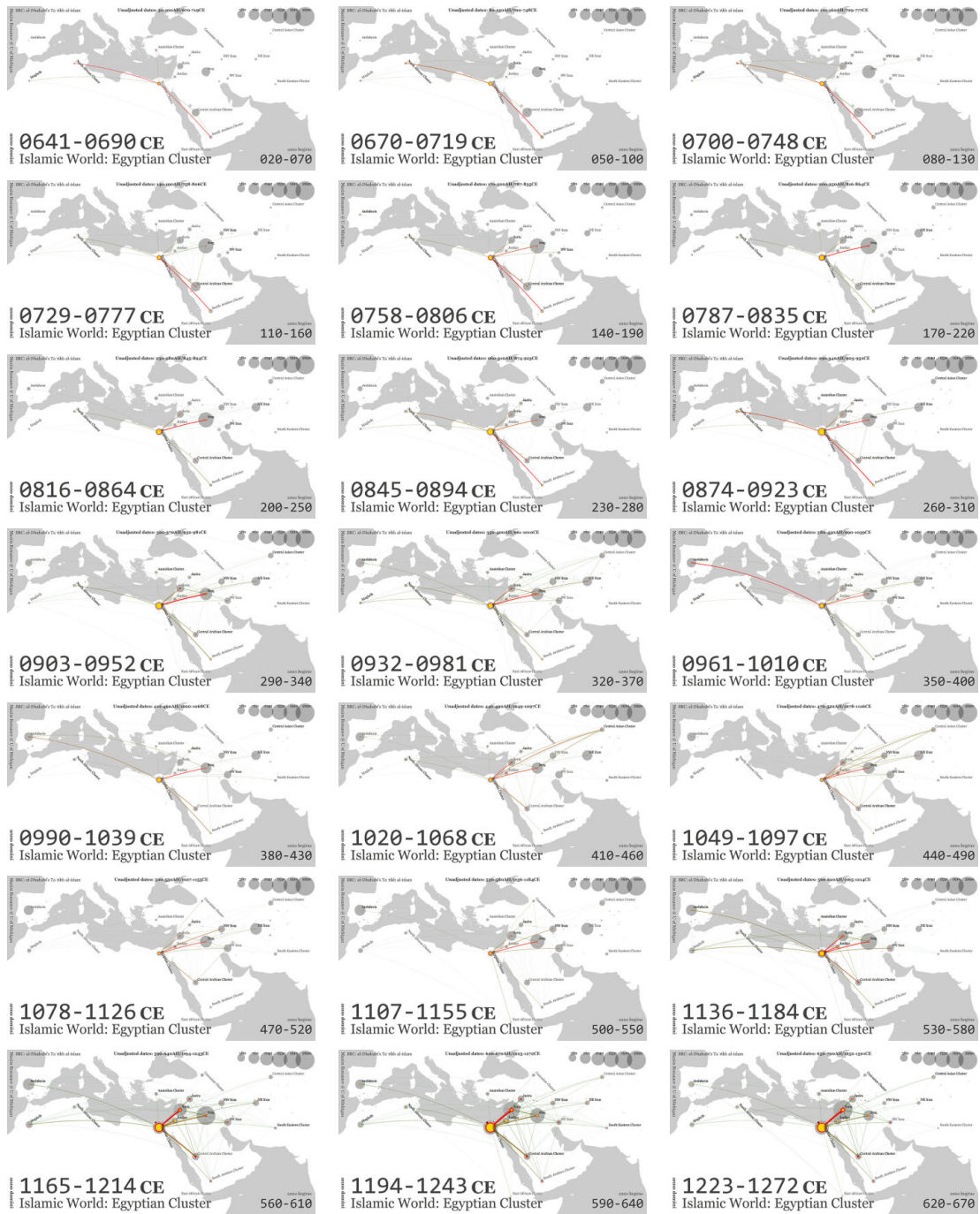


Figure B.7: Transregional Connections: Egyptian Cluster.

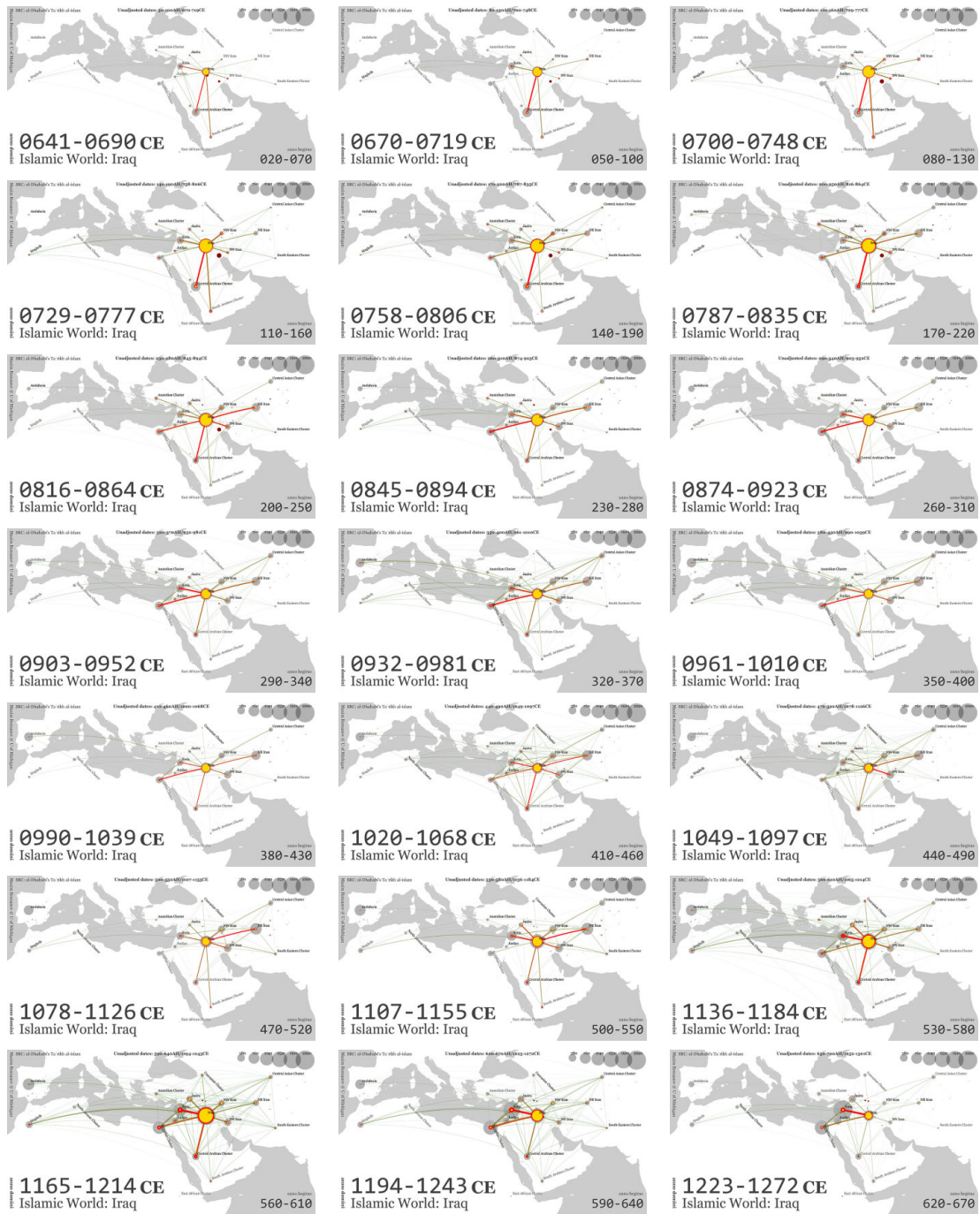


Figure B.8: Transregional Connections: Iraq.



Figure B.9: Transregional Connections: Jazira.

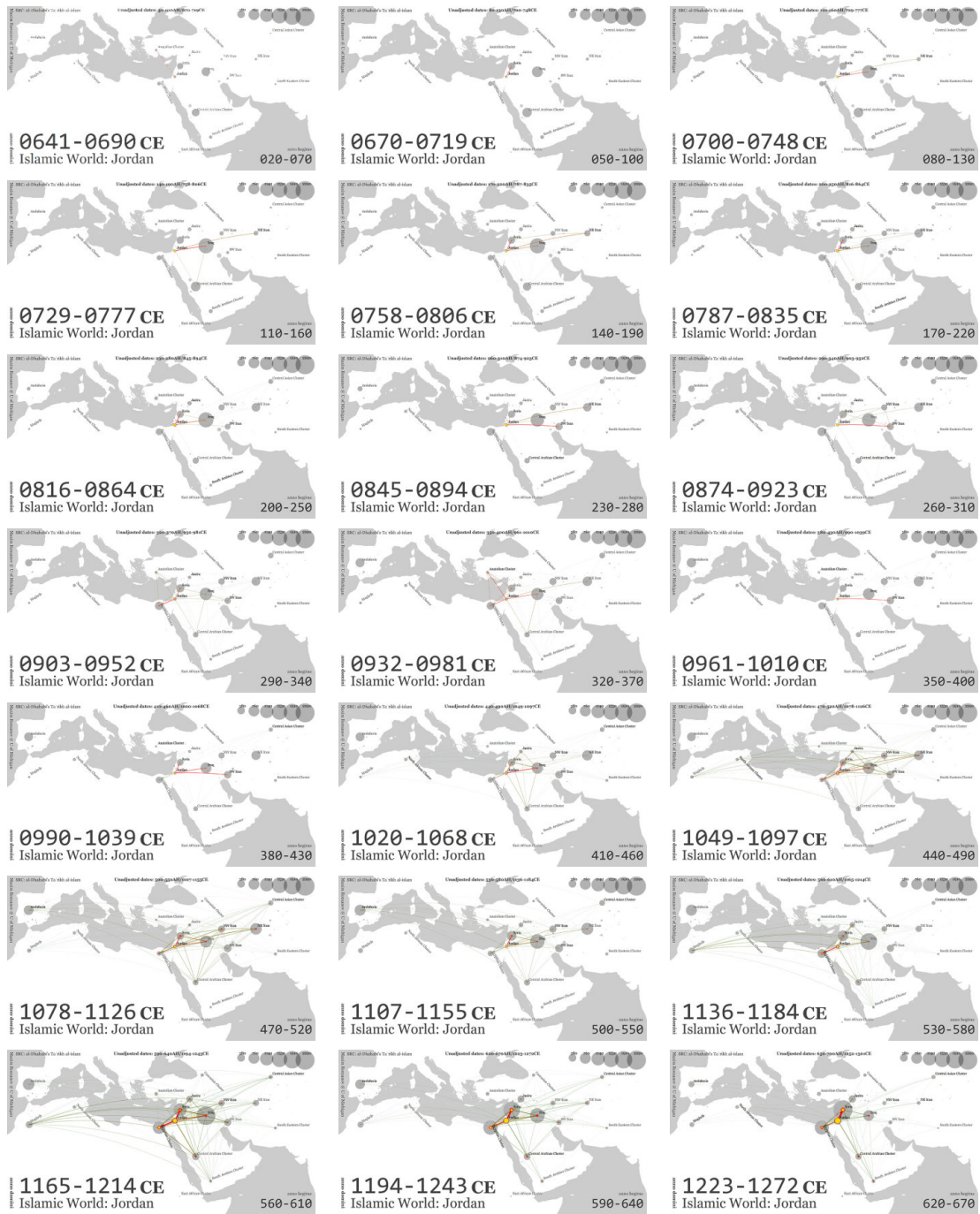


Figure B.10: Transregional Connections: Jordan.

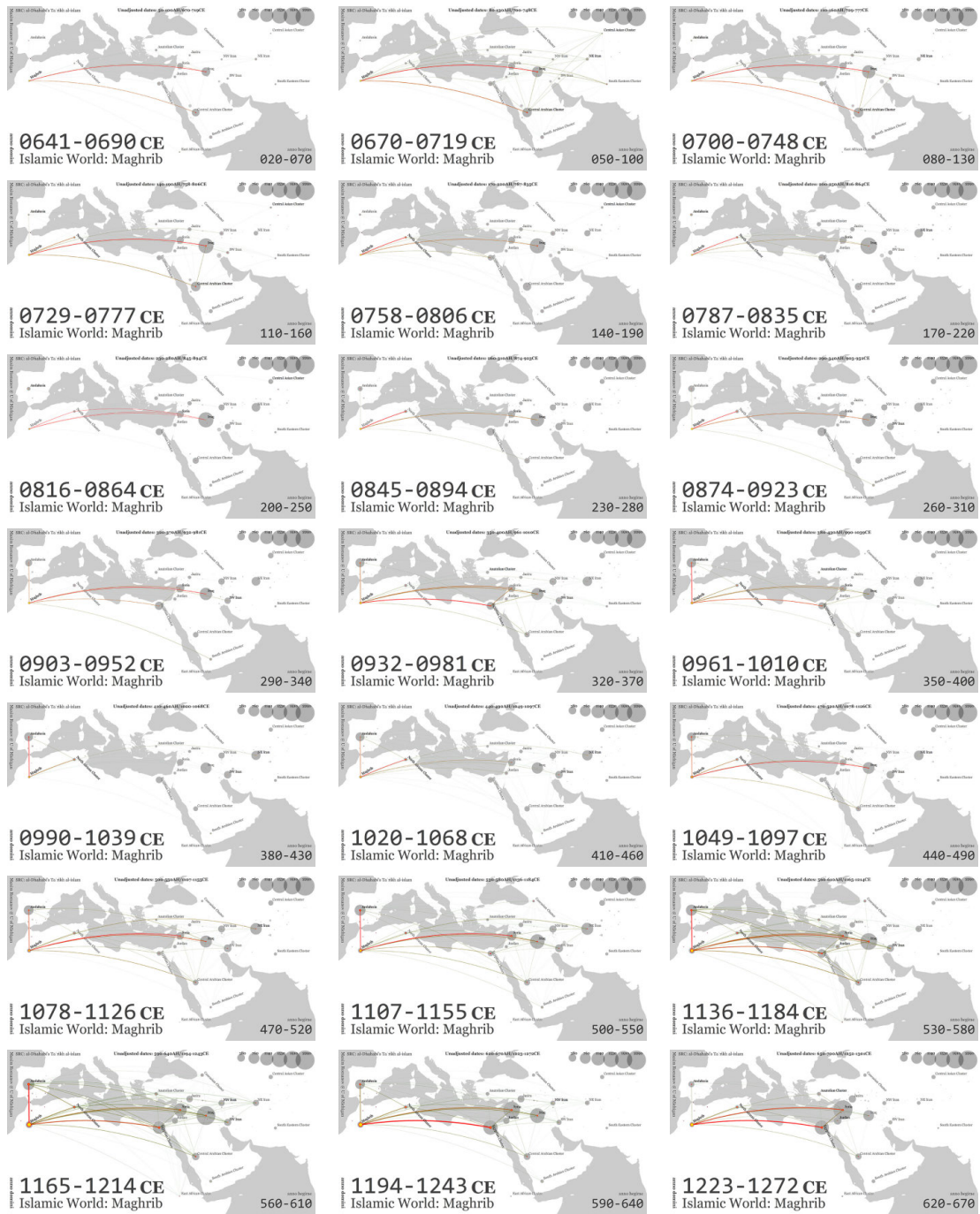


Figure B.11: Transregional Connections: Maghrib.

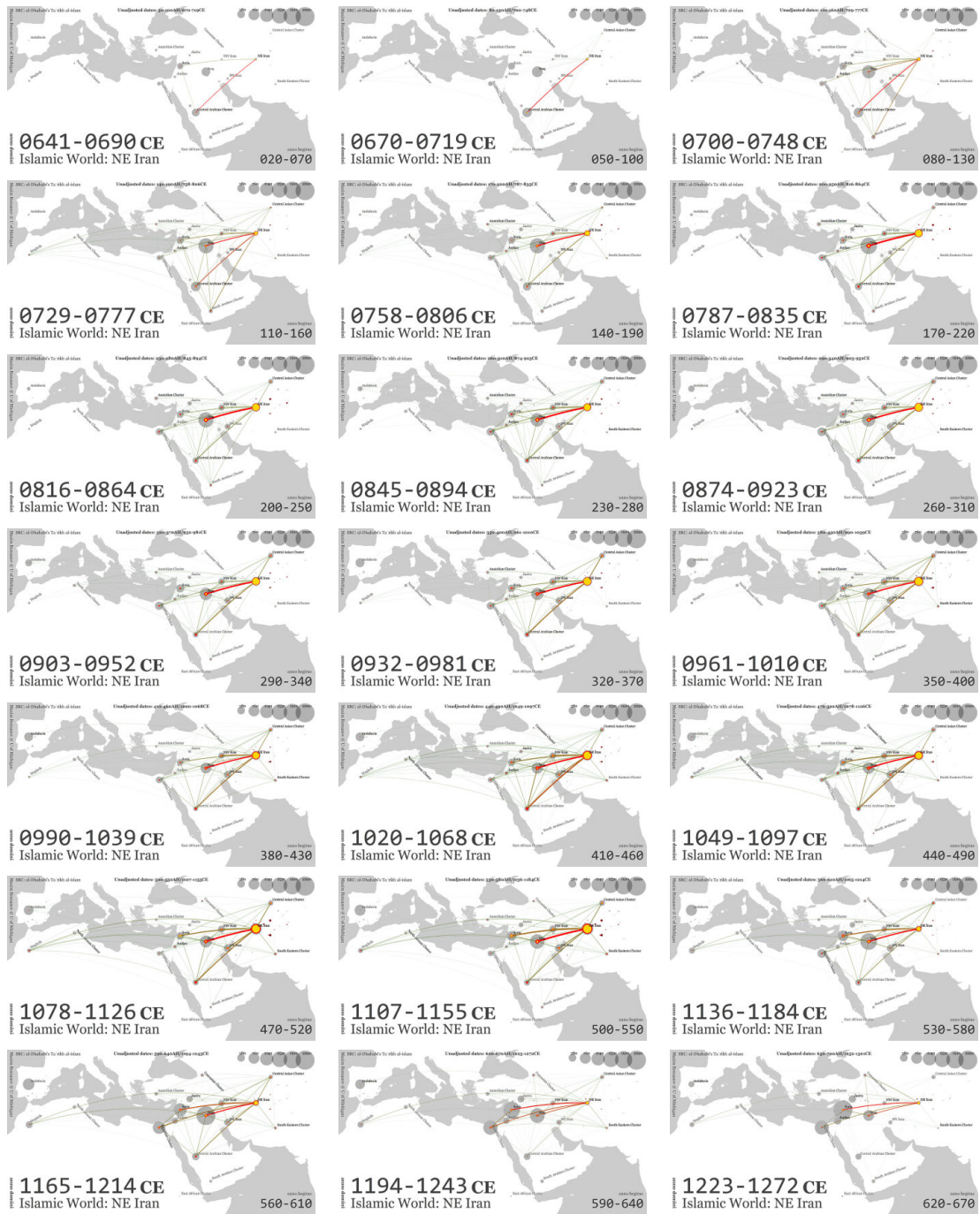


Figure B.12: Transregional Connections: NE Iran.



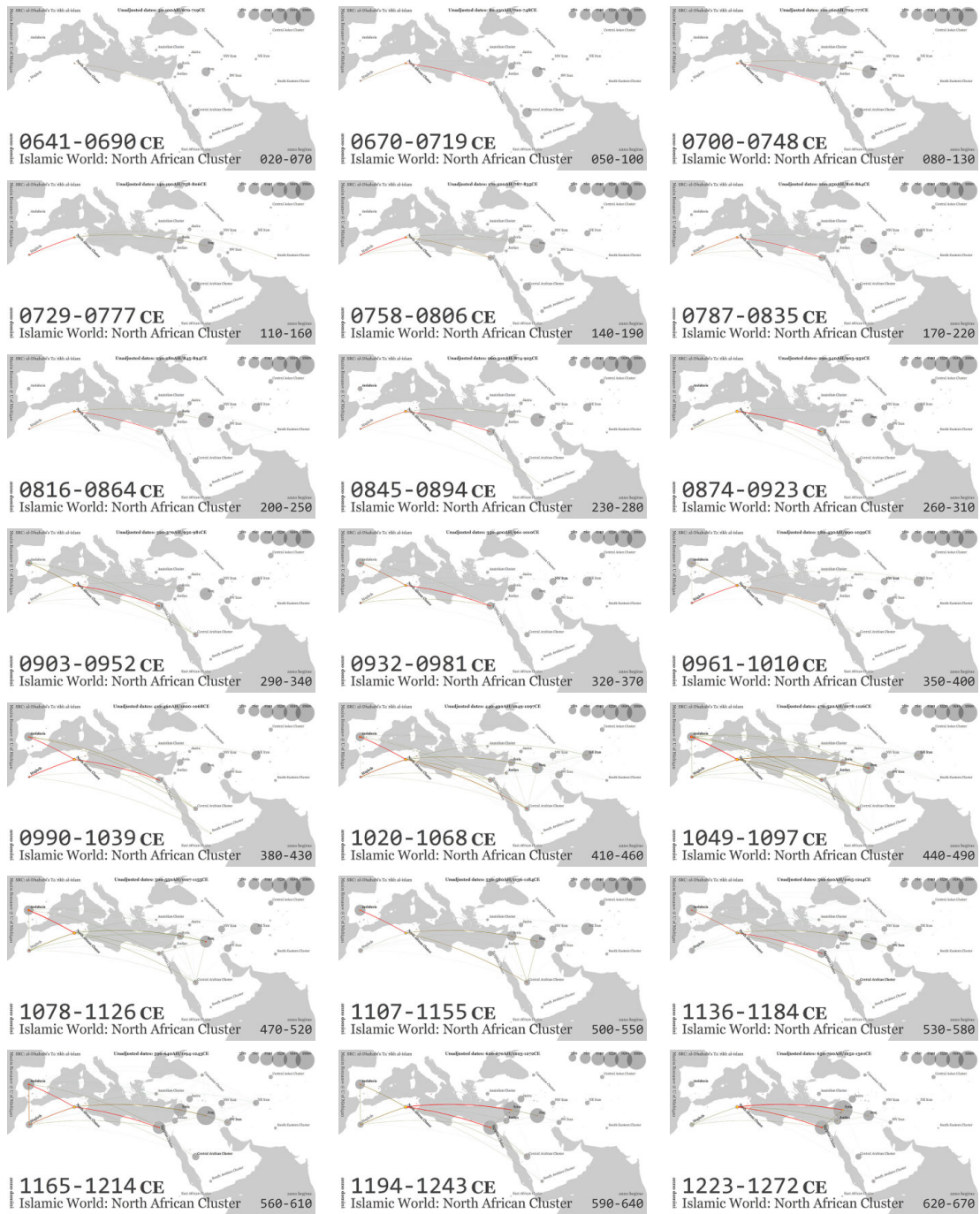


Figure B.13: Transregional Connections: North African Cluster.

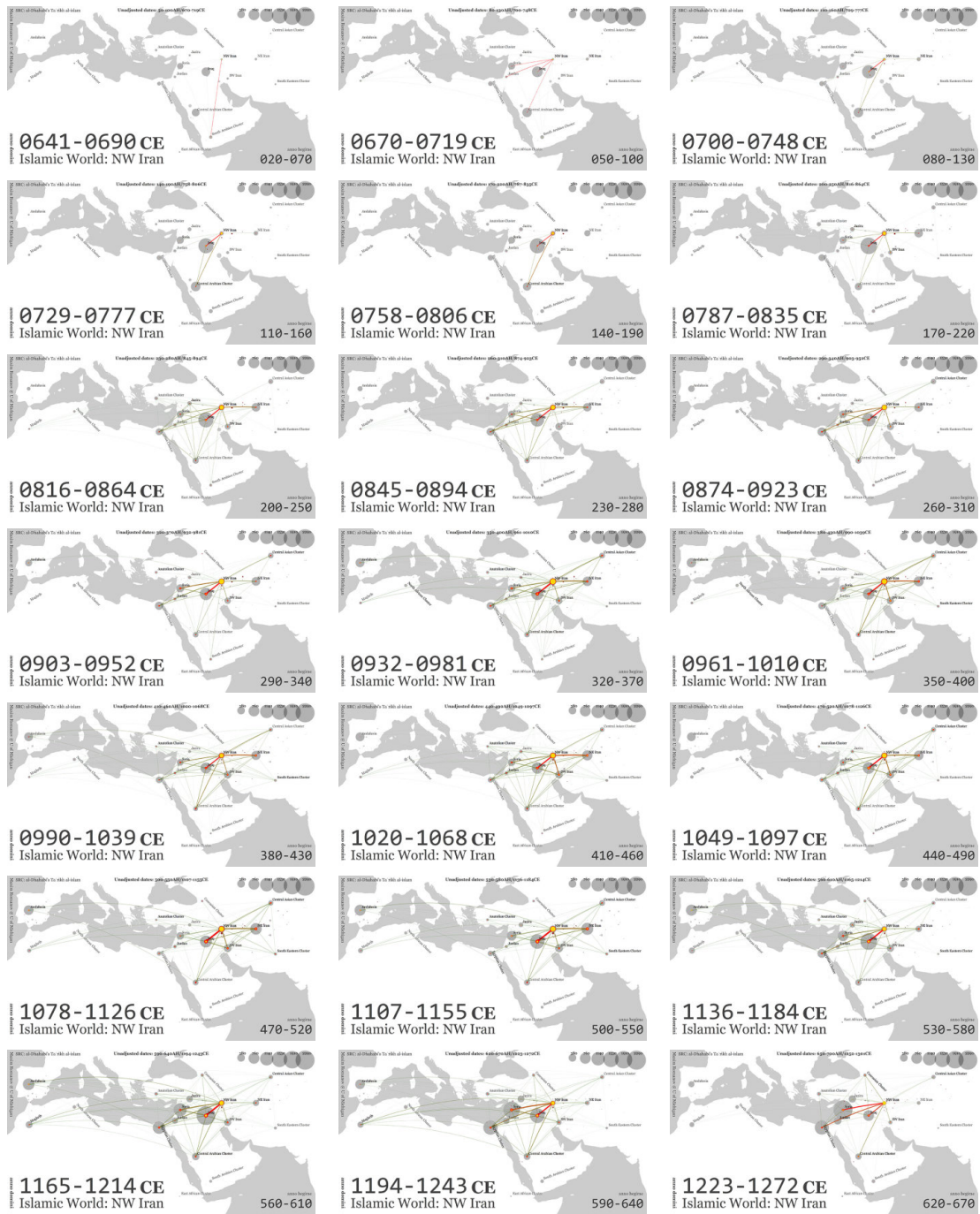


Figure B.14: Transregional Connections: NW Iran.

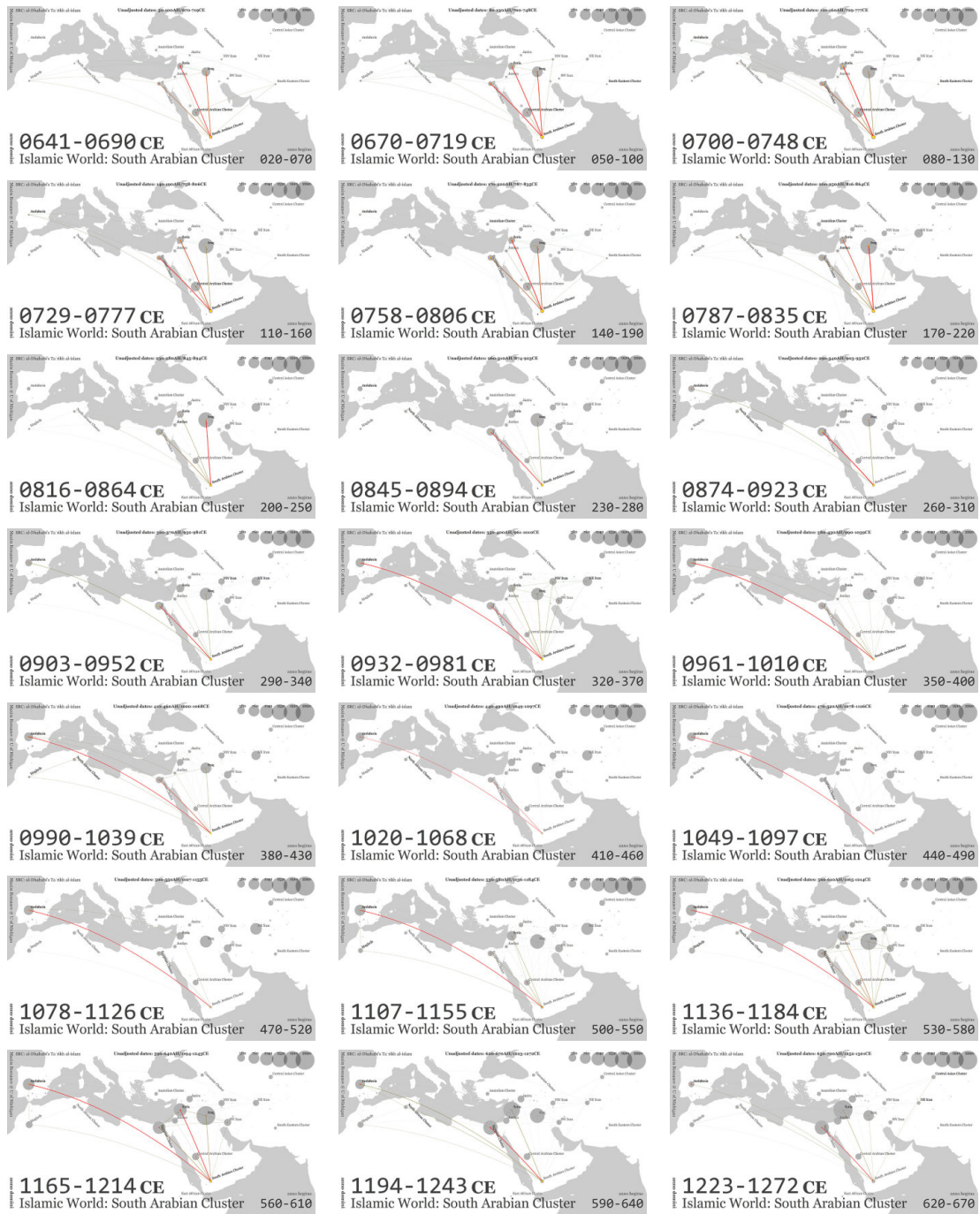


Figure B.15: Transregional Connections: South Arabian Cluster.

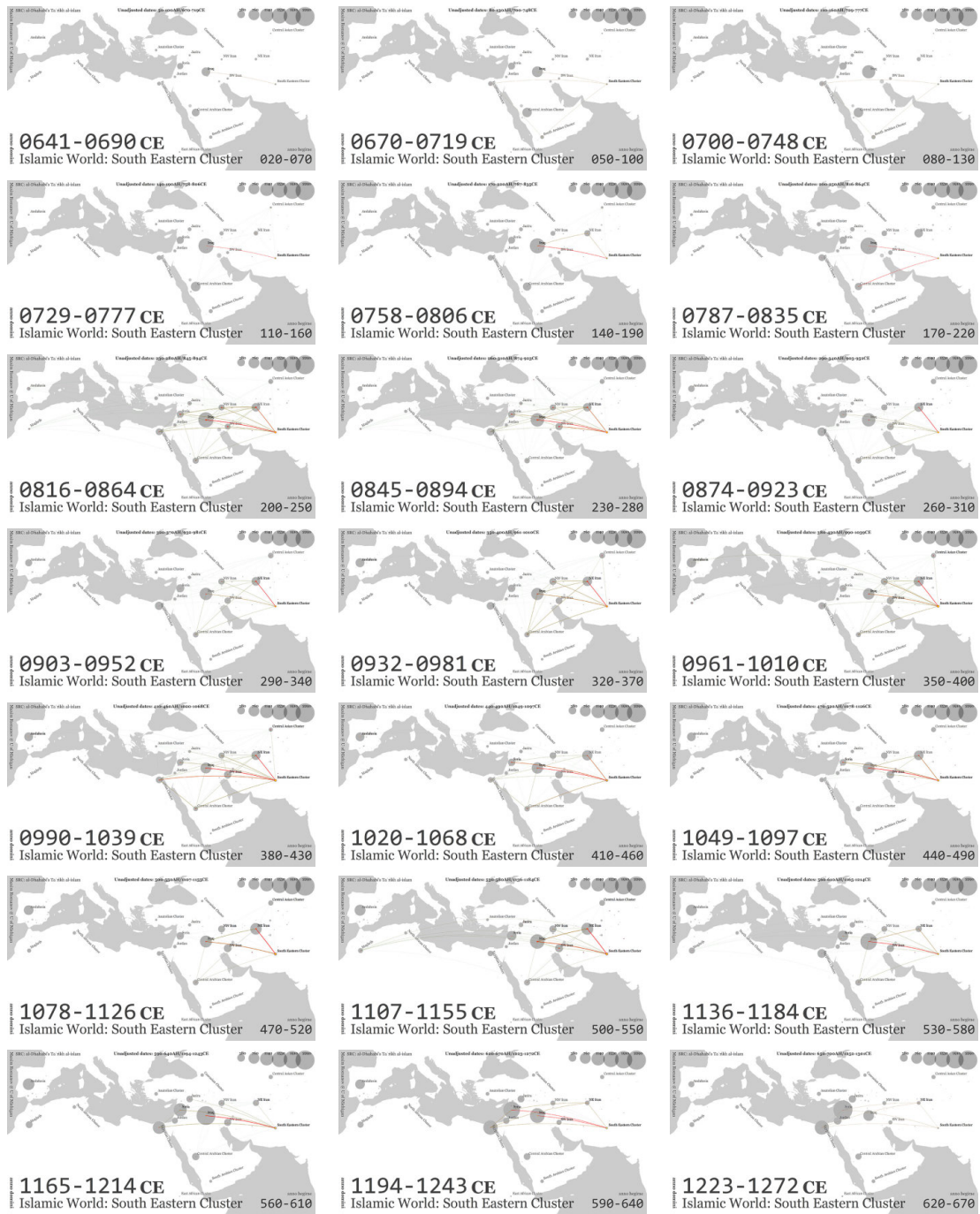


Figure B.16: Transregional Connections: South Eastern Cluster.

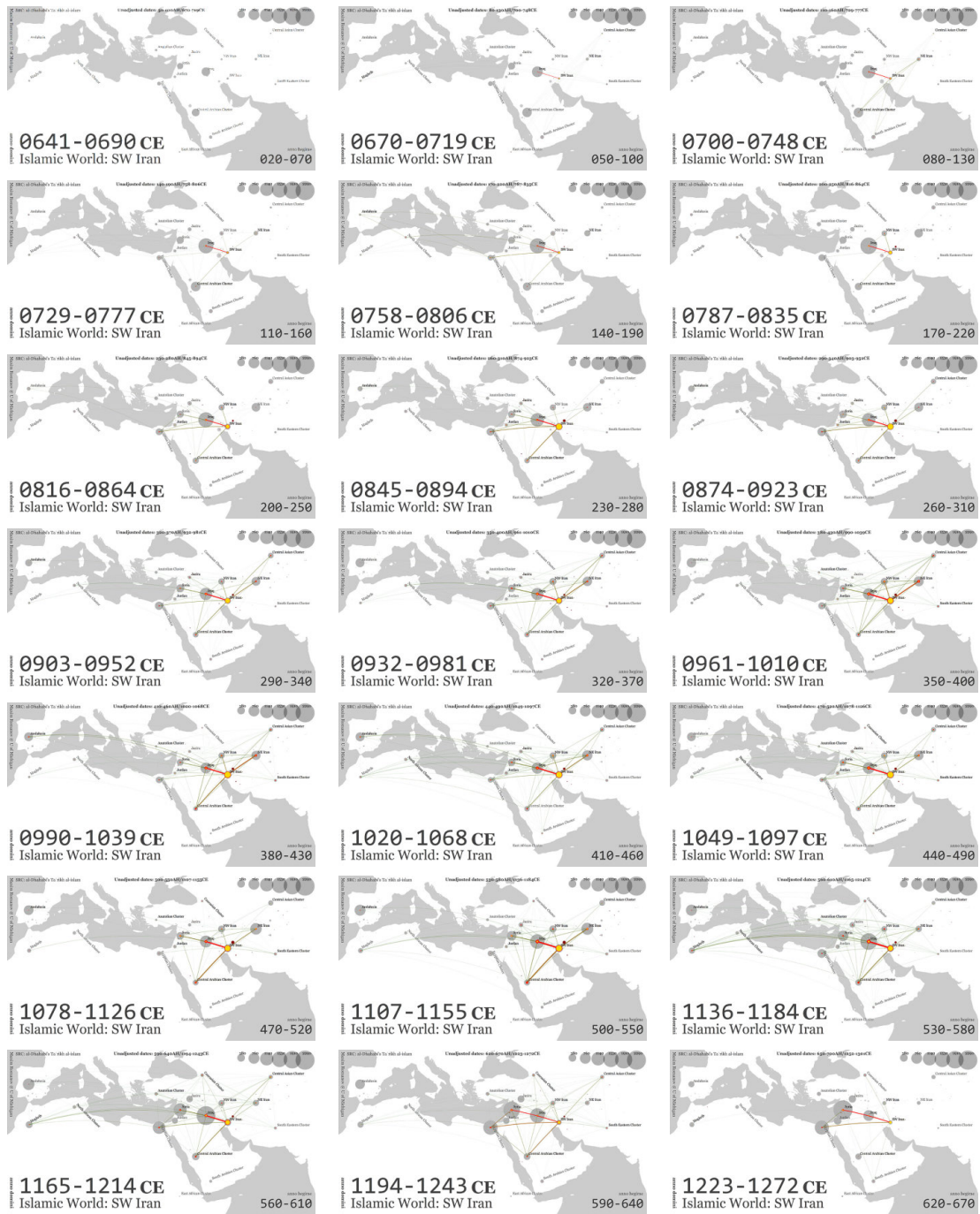


Figure B.17: Transregional Connections: SW Iran.

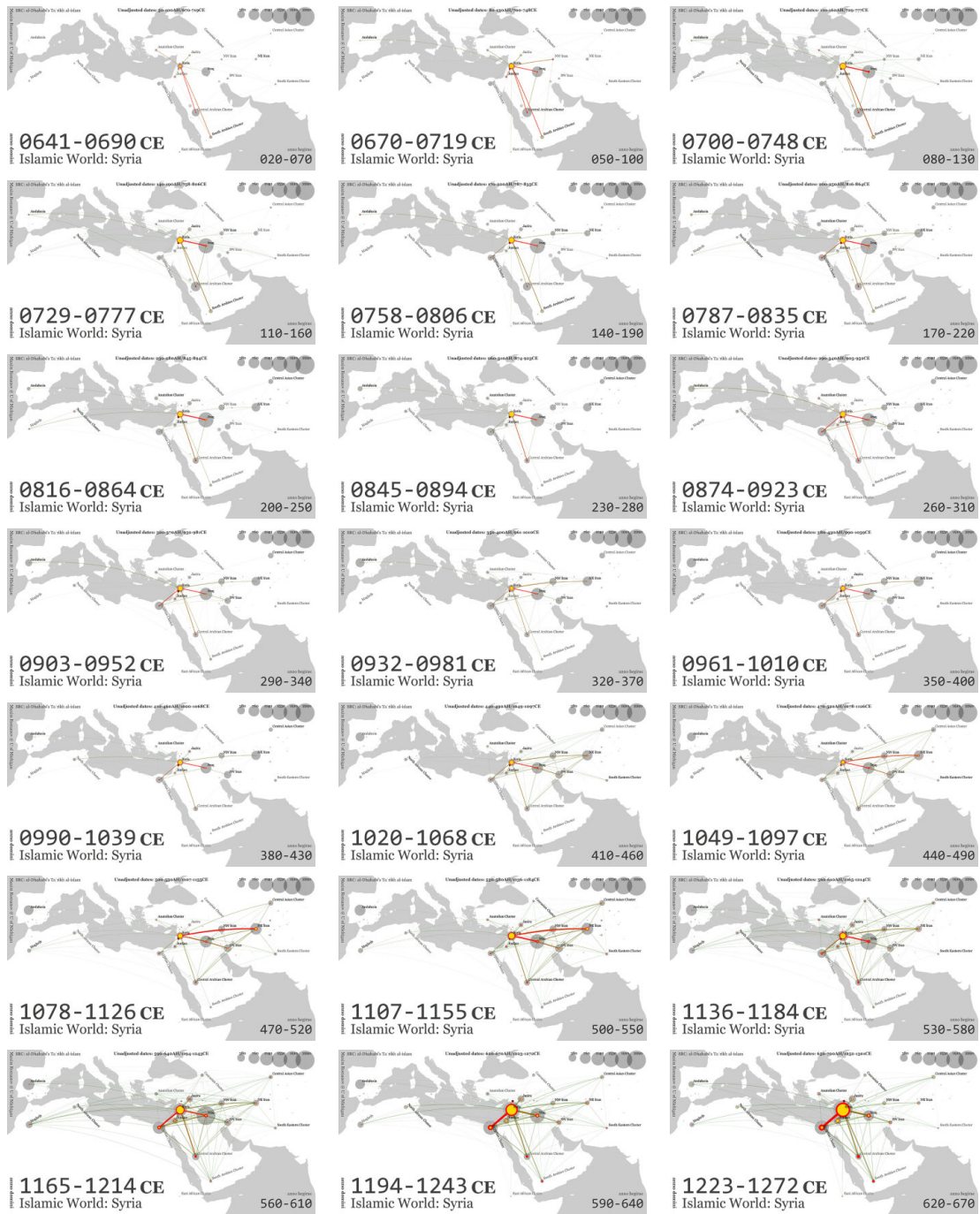


Figure B.18: Transregional Connections: Syria.

## Appendix C

*Nisbas* from *Taʿrīkh al-islām*  
(100 up)

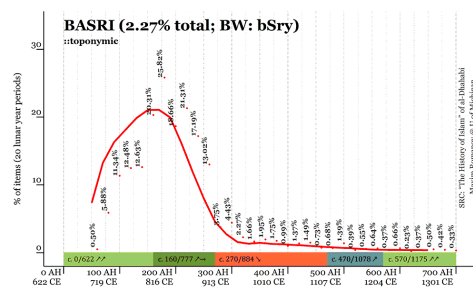
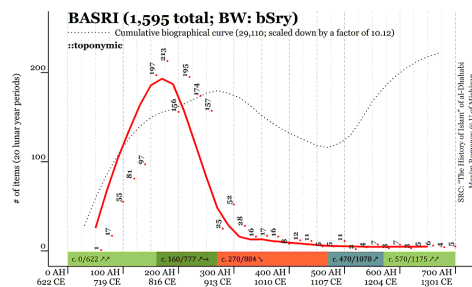
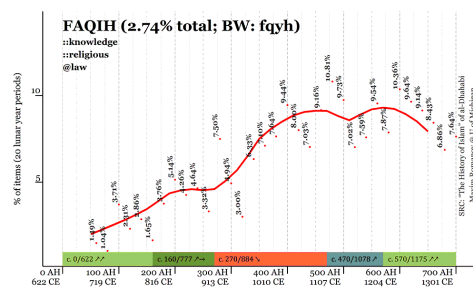
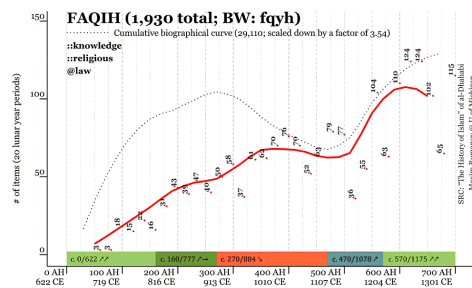
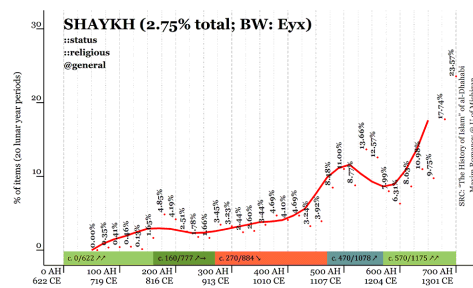
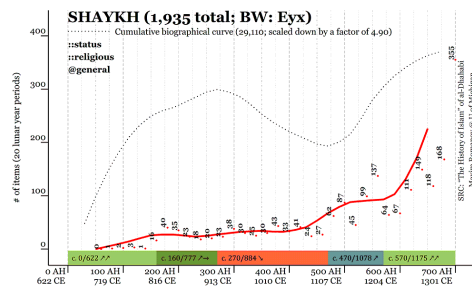
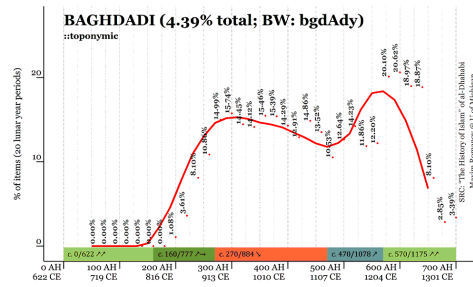
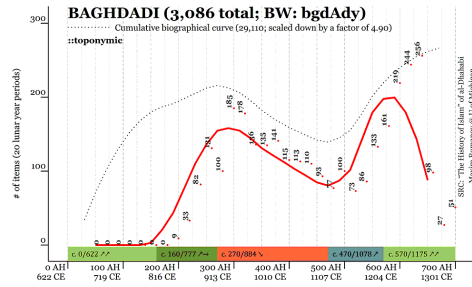


Figure C.1: Top *Nisbas*: BAGHDADI (BW: bgdAdy); SHAYKH (BW: Eyx); FAQIH (BW: fqyh); BASRI (BW: bSry).



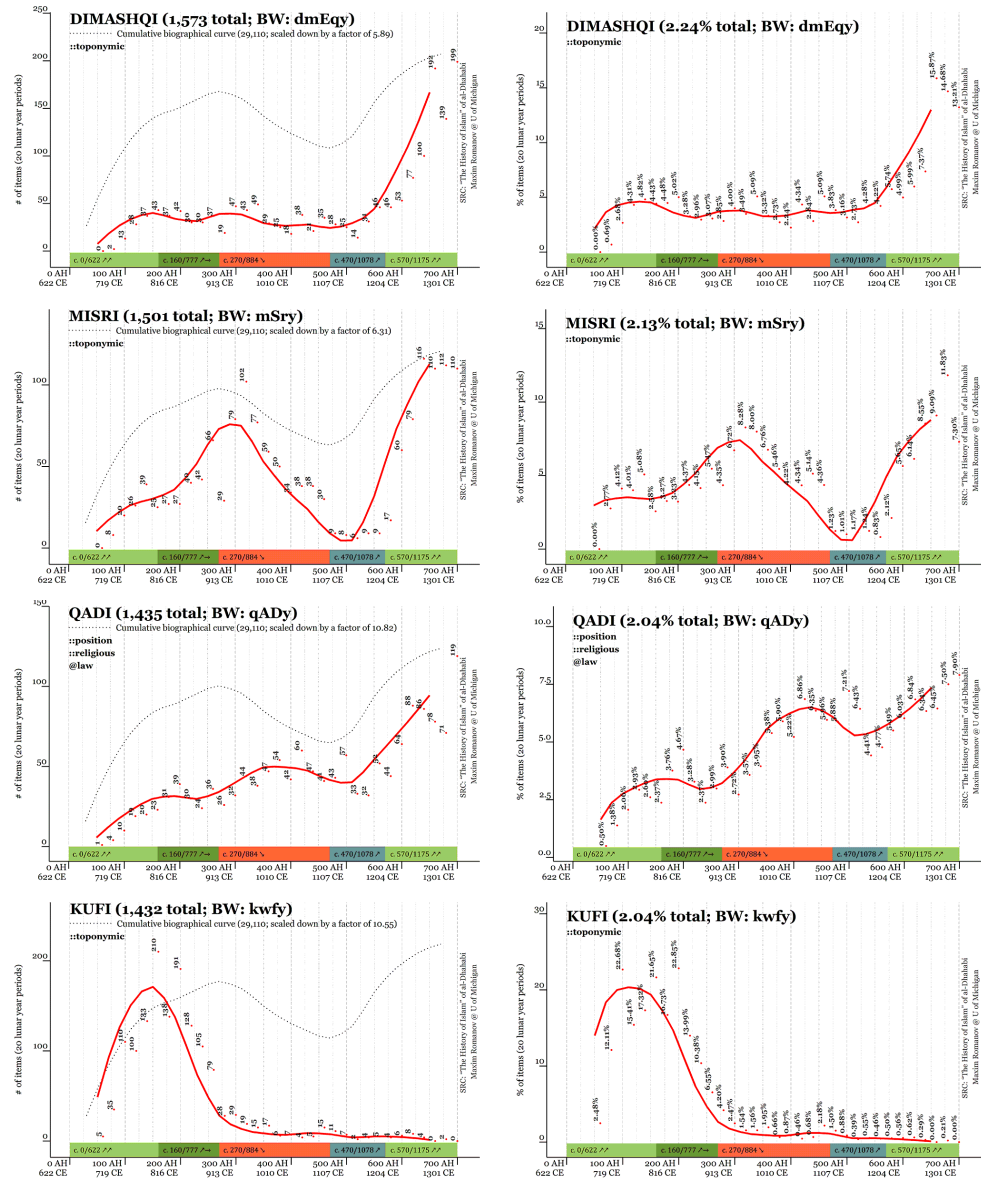


Figure C.2: Top *Nisbas*: DIMASHQI (BW: dmEqy); MISRI (BW: mSry); QADI (BW: qADy); KUFU (BW: kwfy).

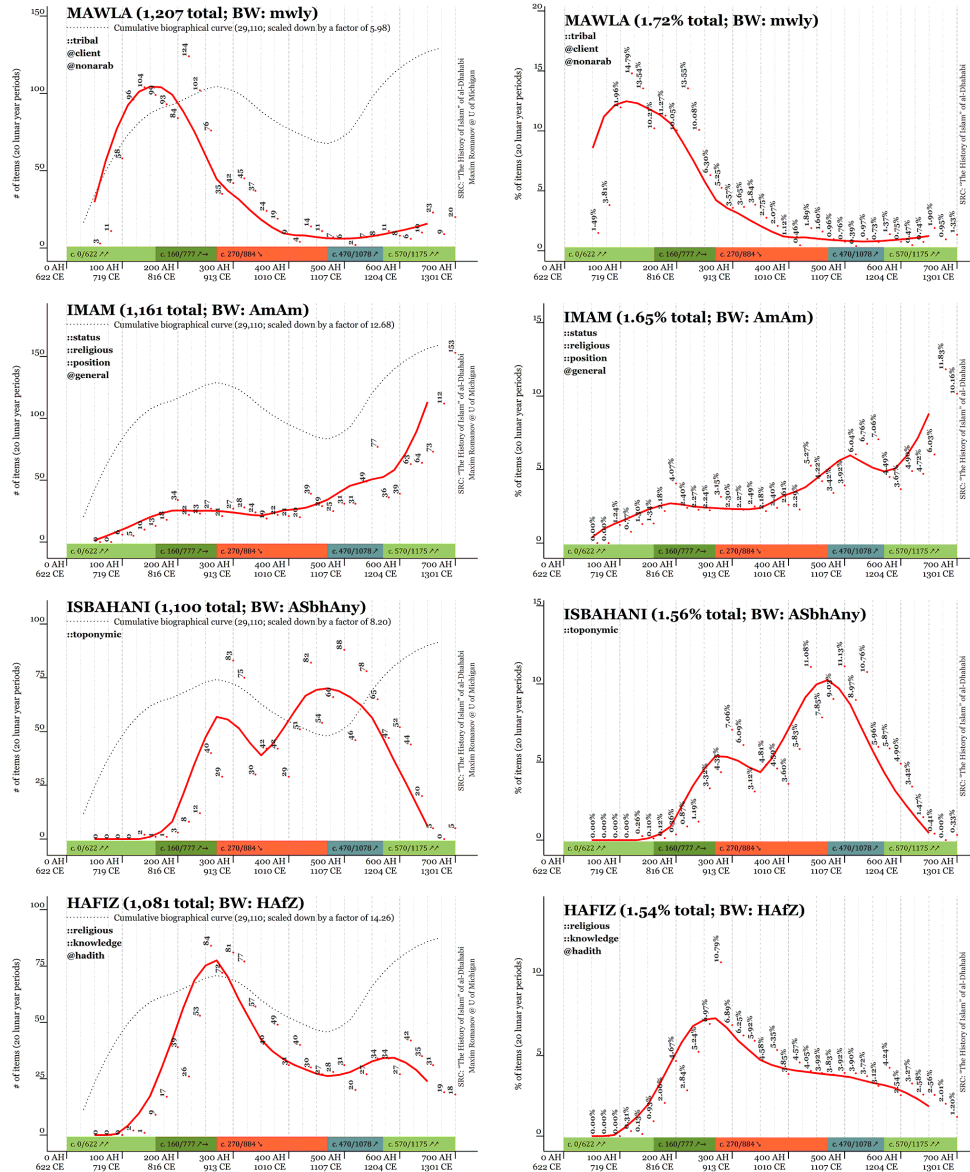


Figure C.3: Top *Nisbas*: MAWLA (BW: mwly); IMAM (BW: AmAm); ISBAHANI (BW: ASbhAny); HAFIZ (BW: HAFZ).

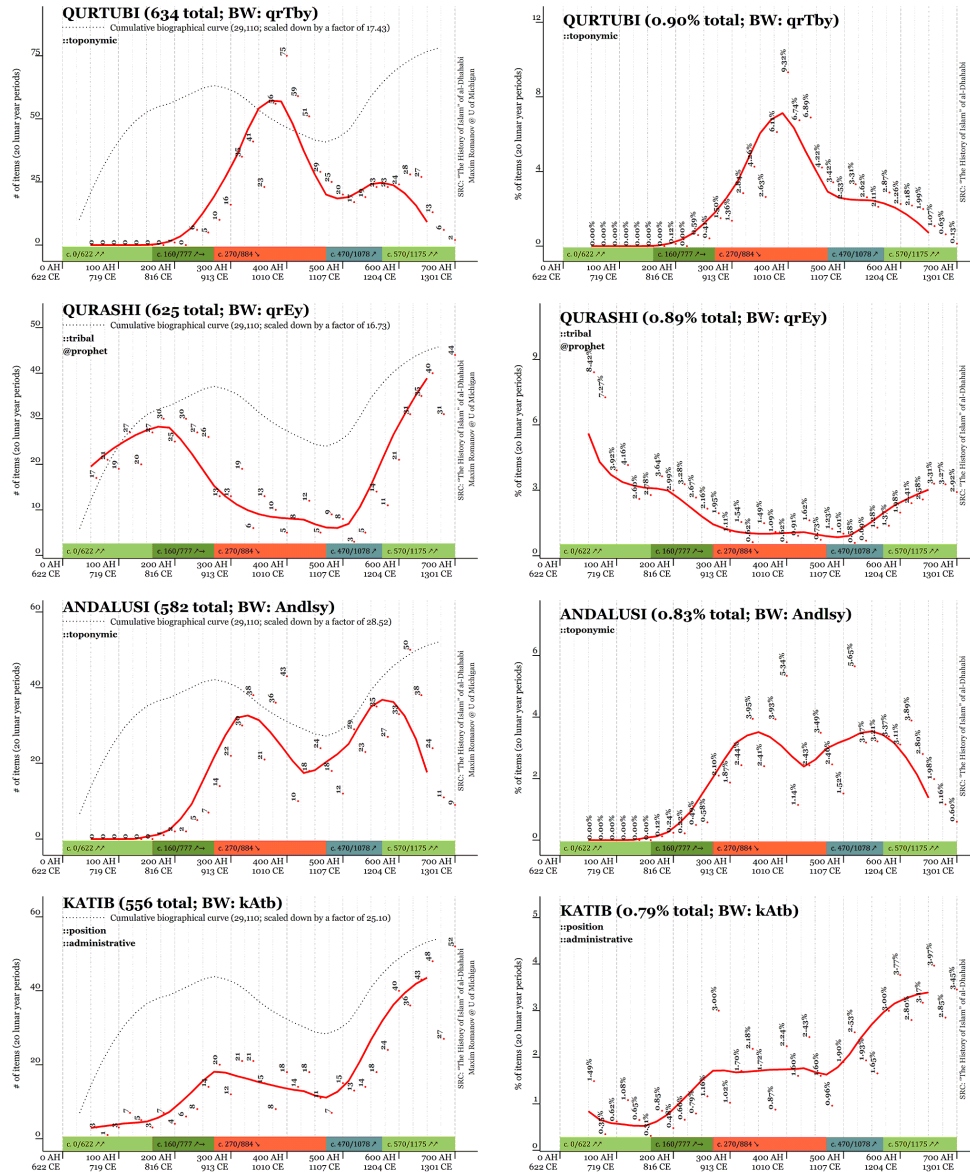


Figure C.6: Top *Nisbas*: QURTUBI (BW: qrTby); QURASHI (BW: qrEy); ANDALUSI (BW: Andlsy); KATIB (BW: kAtb).

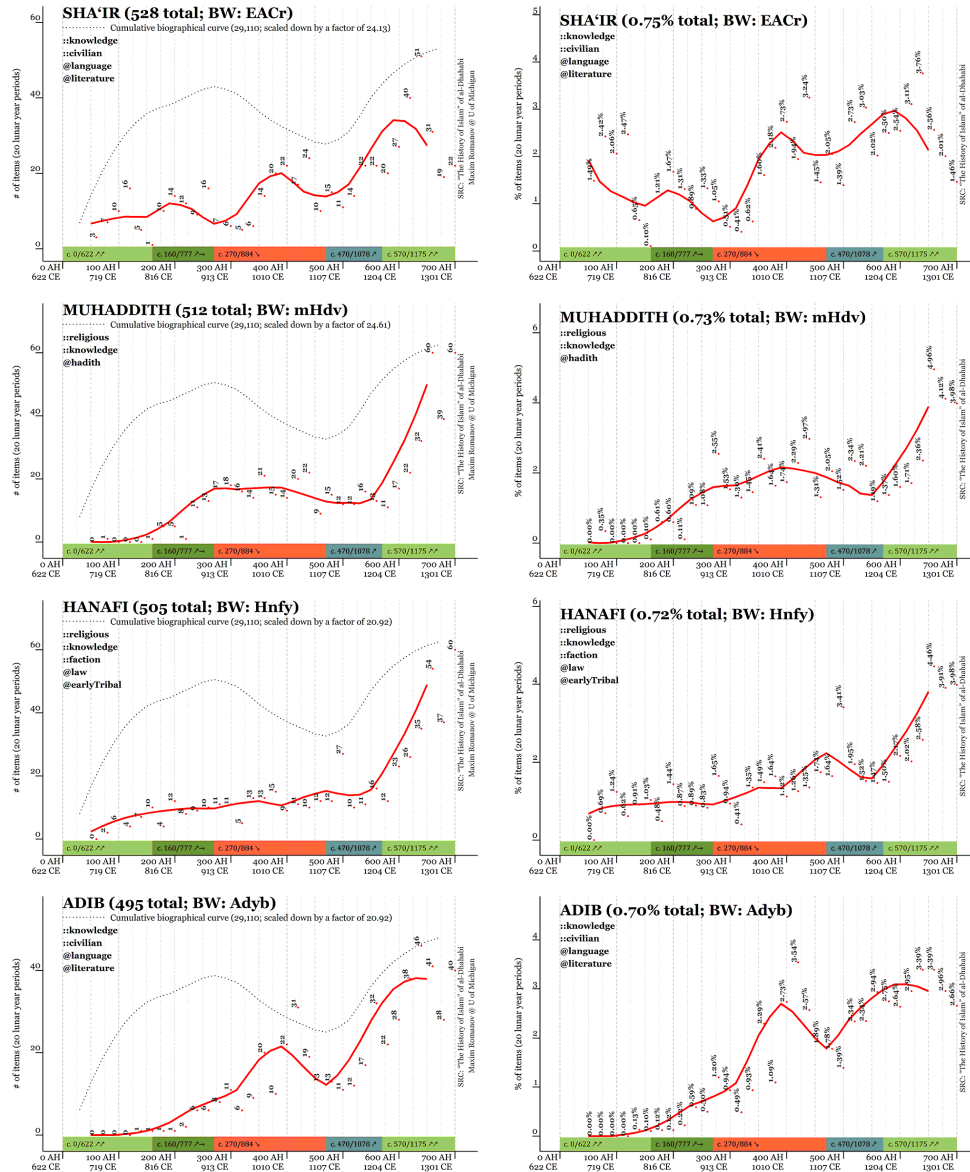


Figure C.7: Top *Nisbas*: SHA'IR (BW: EACr); MUHADDITH (BW: mHdv); HANAFI (BW: Hnfy); ADIB (BW: Adyb).

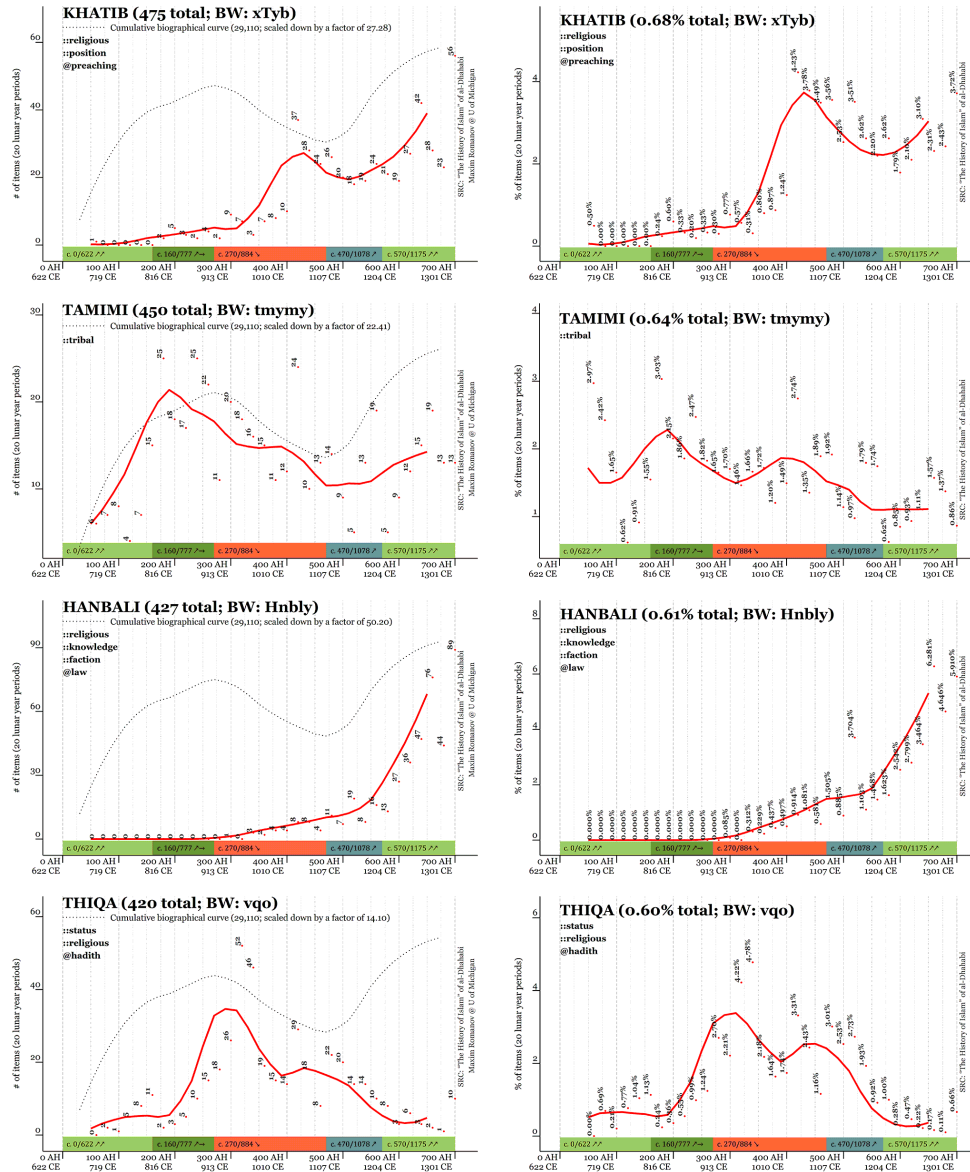


Figure C.8: Top *Nisbas*: KHATIB (BW: xTyb); TAMIMI (BW: tmymy); HANBALI (BW: Hnbly); THIQA (BW: vqo).

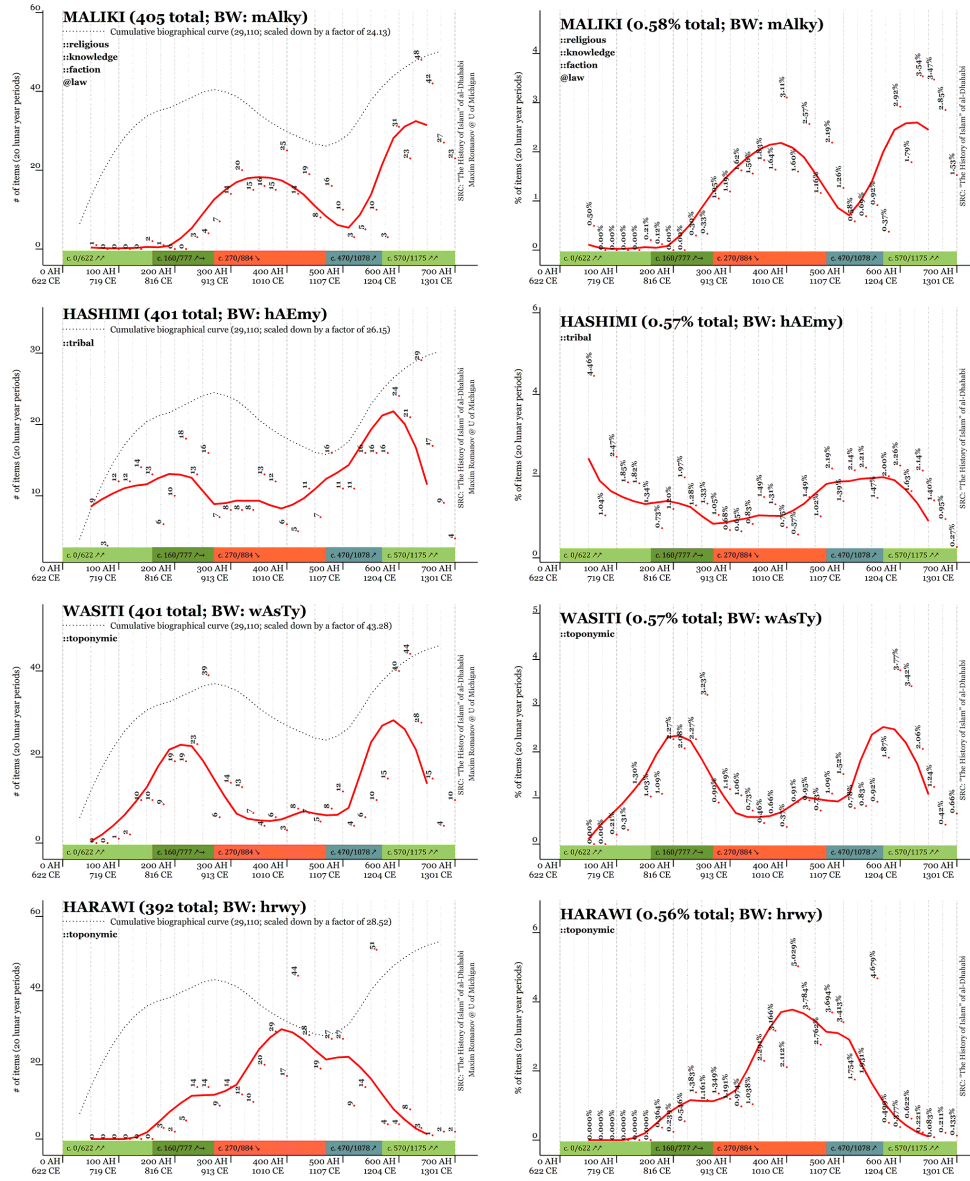


Figure C.9: Top *Nisbas*: MALIKI (BW: mAlky); HASHIMI (BW: hAEmy); WASITI (BW: wAsTy); HARAWI (BW: hrwy).

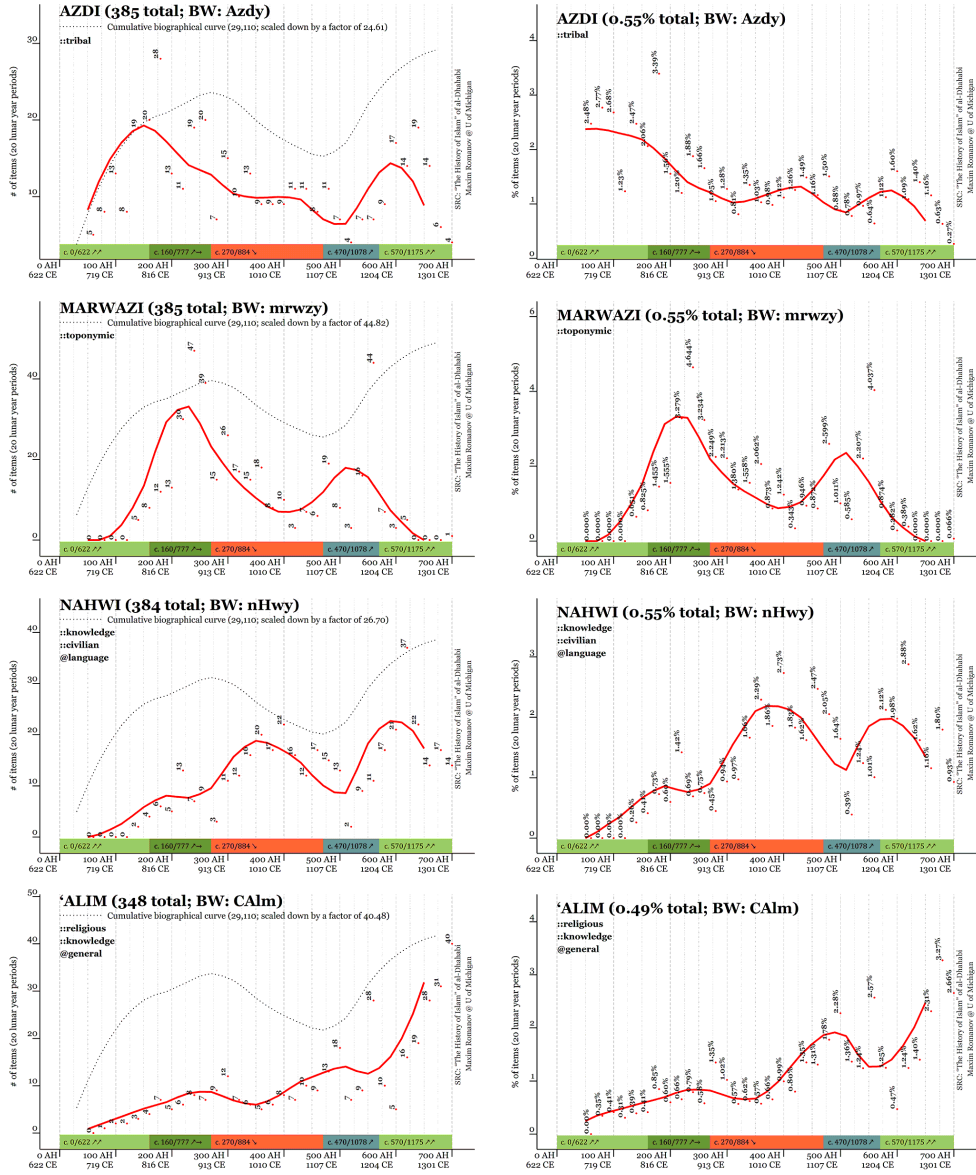


Figure C.10: Top *Nisbas*: AZDI (BW: Azdy); MARWAZI (BW: mrwzy); NAHWI (BW: nHwy); 'ALIM (BW: CAIm).

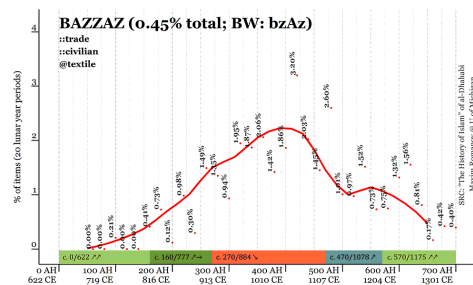
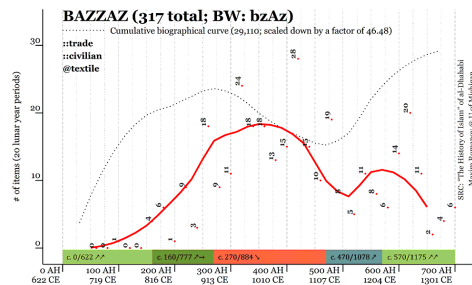
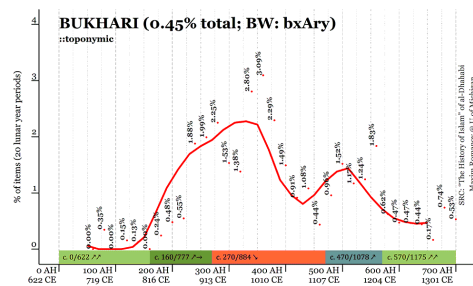
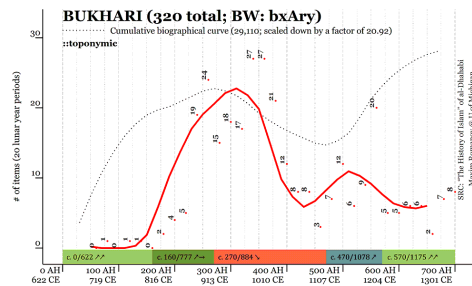
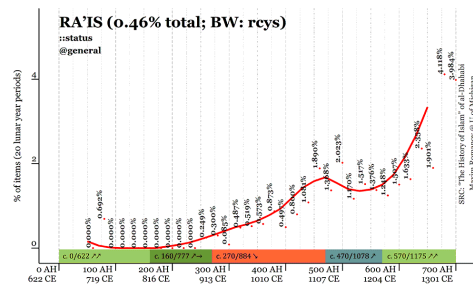
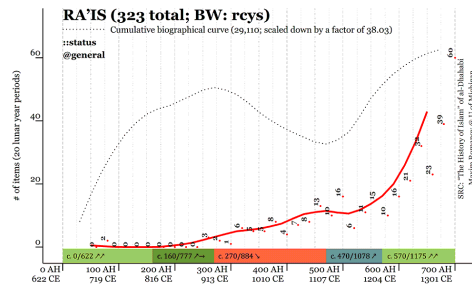
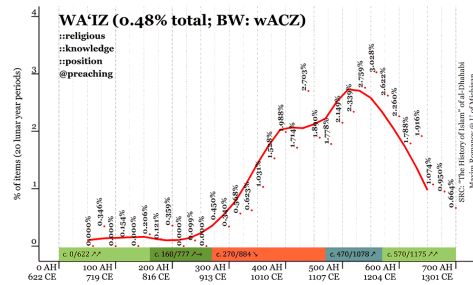
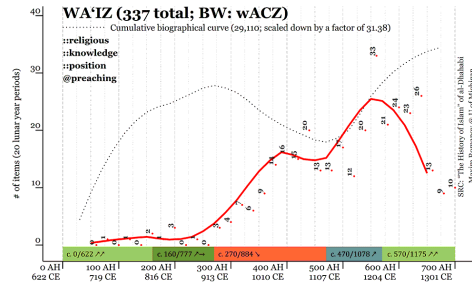


Figure C.11: Top *Nisbas*: WA'IZ (BW: wACZ); RA'IS (BW: rcys); BUKHARI (BW: bxAry); BAZZAZ (BW: bzAz).



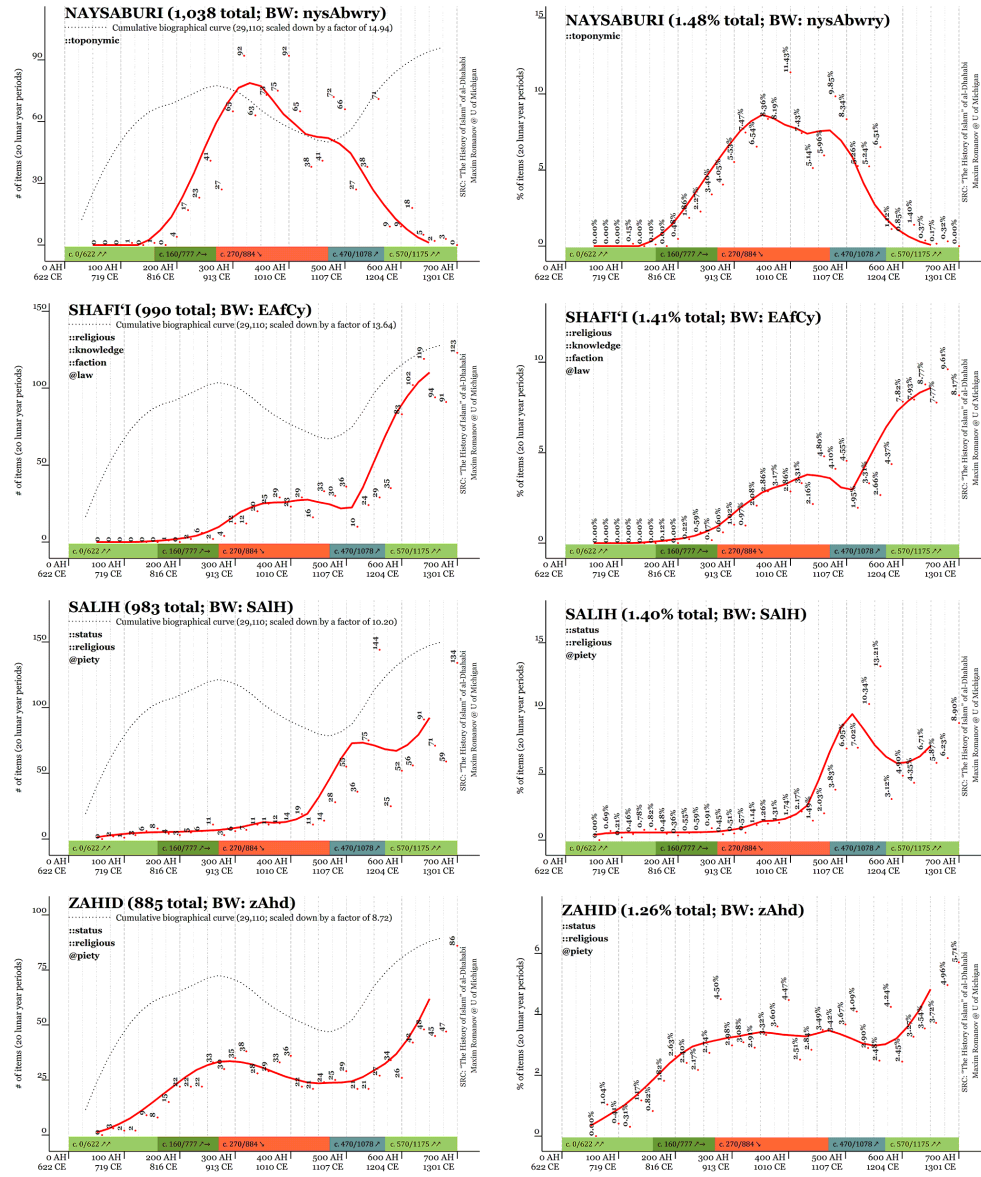


Figure C.4: Top *Nisbas*: NAYSABURI (BW: nysAbwry); SHAFI'I (BW: EafCy); SALIH (BW: SAIH); ZAHID (BW: zAhd).

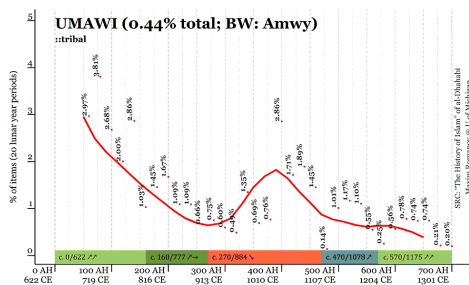
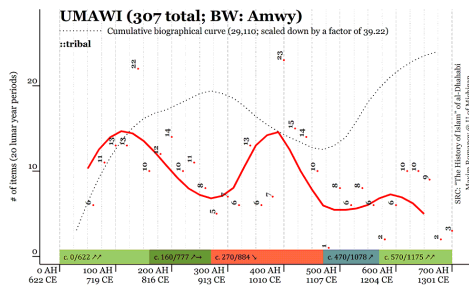
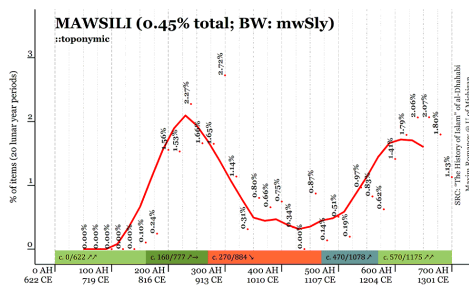
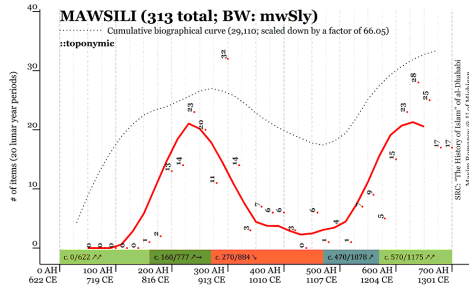
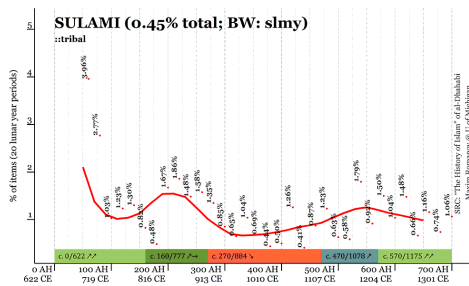
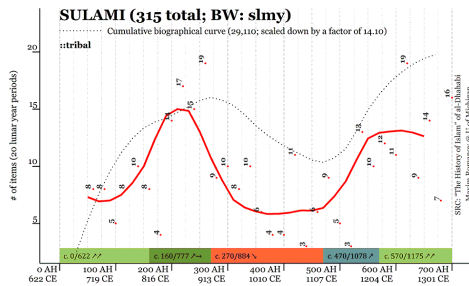
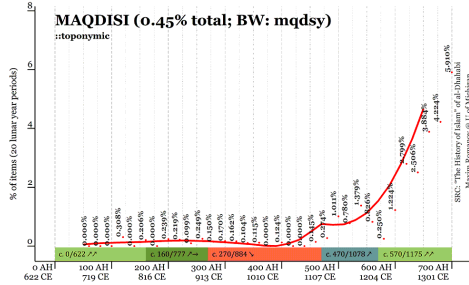
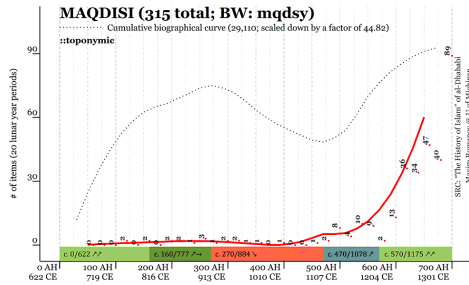


Figure C.12: Top *Nisbas*: MAQDISI (BW: mqdsy); SULAMI (BW: slmy); MAWSILI (BW: mwSly); UMAWI (BW: Amwy).

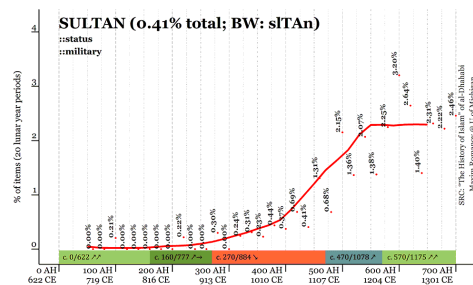
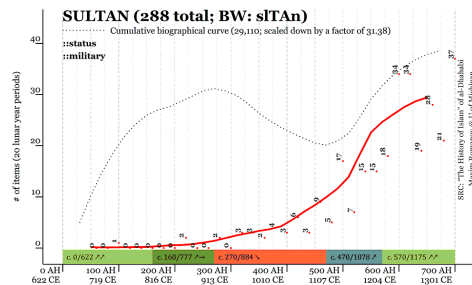
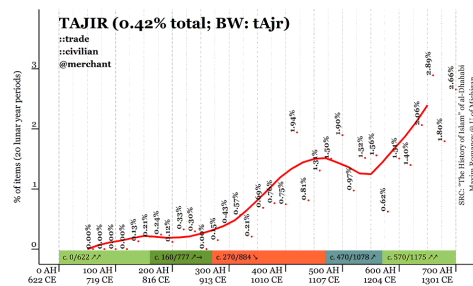
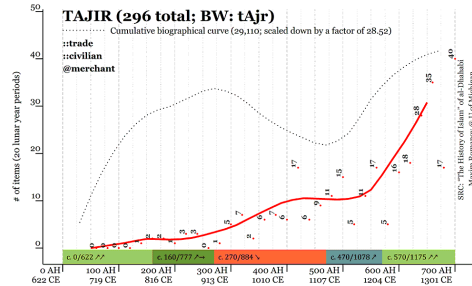
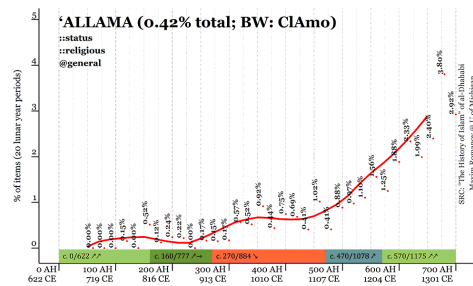
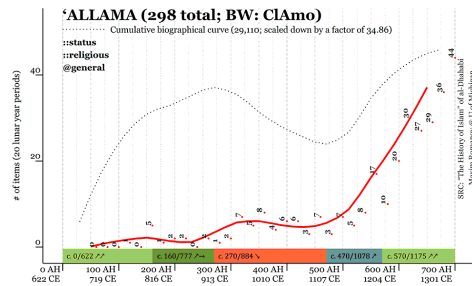
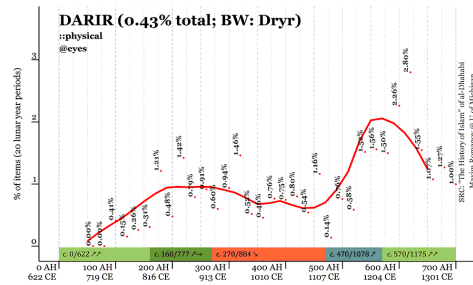
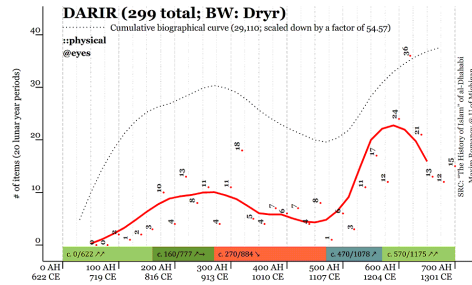


Figure C.13: Top *Nisbas*: DARIR (BW: Dryr); 'ALLAMA (BW: CIamo); TAJIR (BW: tAjr); SULTAN (BW: sITan).

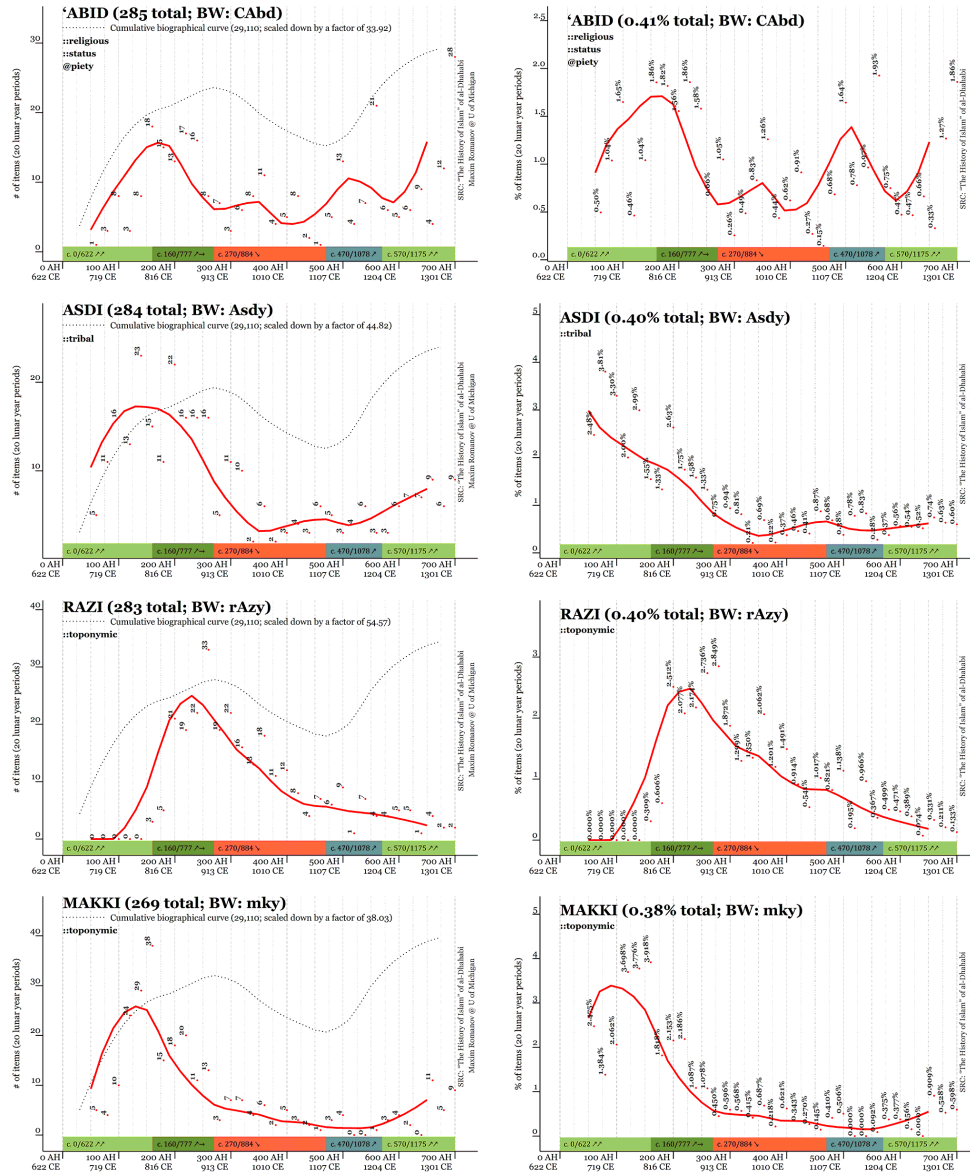


Figure C.14: Top *Nisbas*: 'ABID (BW: CAbd); ASDI (BW: Asdy); RAZI (BW: rAzy); MAKKI (BW: mky).

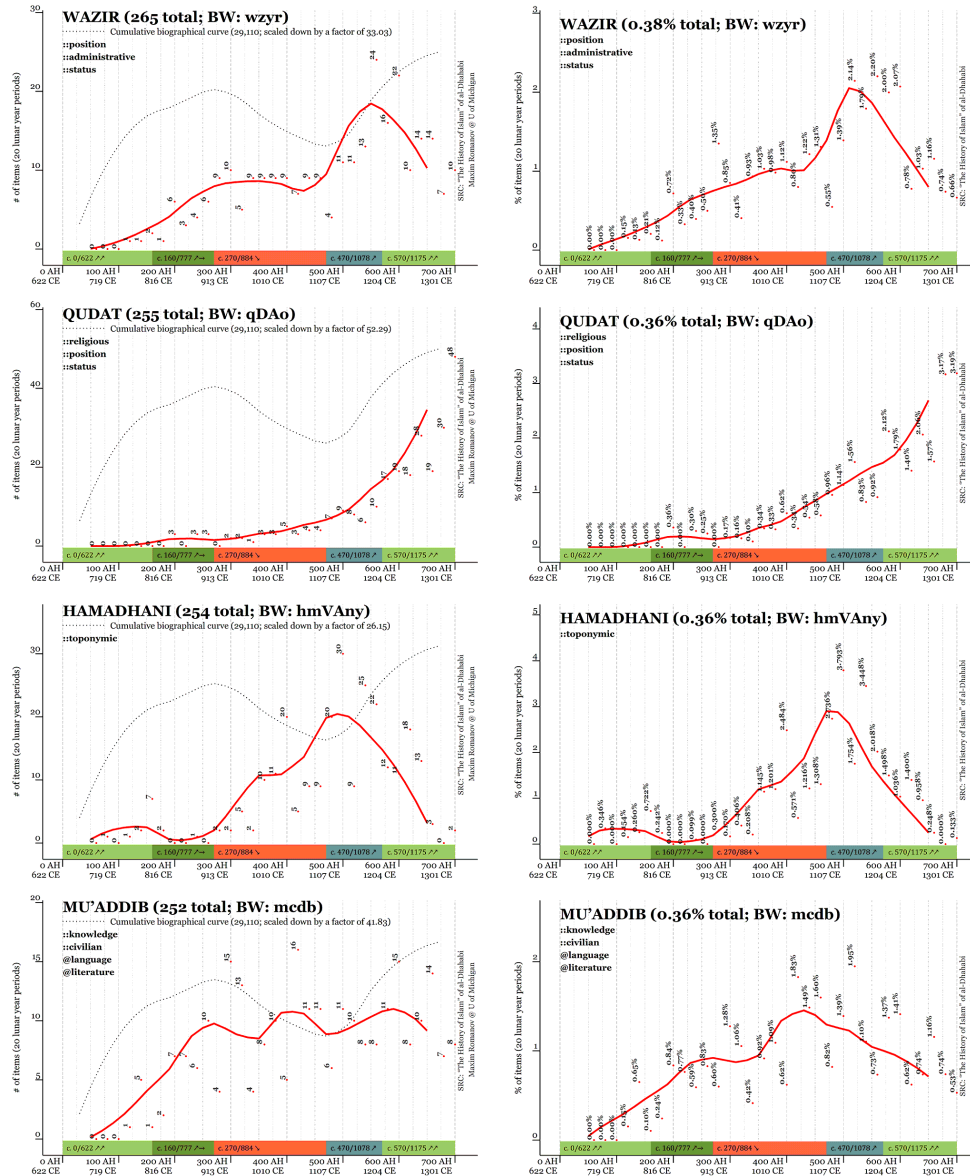


Figure C.15: Top *Nisbas*: WAZIR (BW: wzyr); QUDAT (BW: qDAo); HAMADHANI (BW: hmVAny); MU'ADDIB (BW: mcdb).

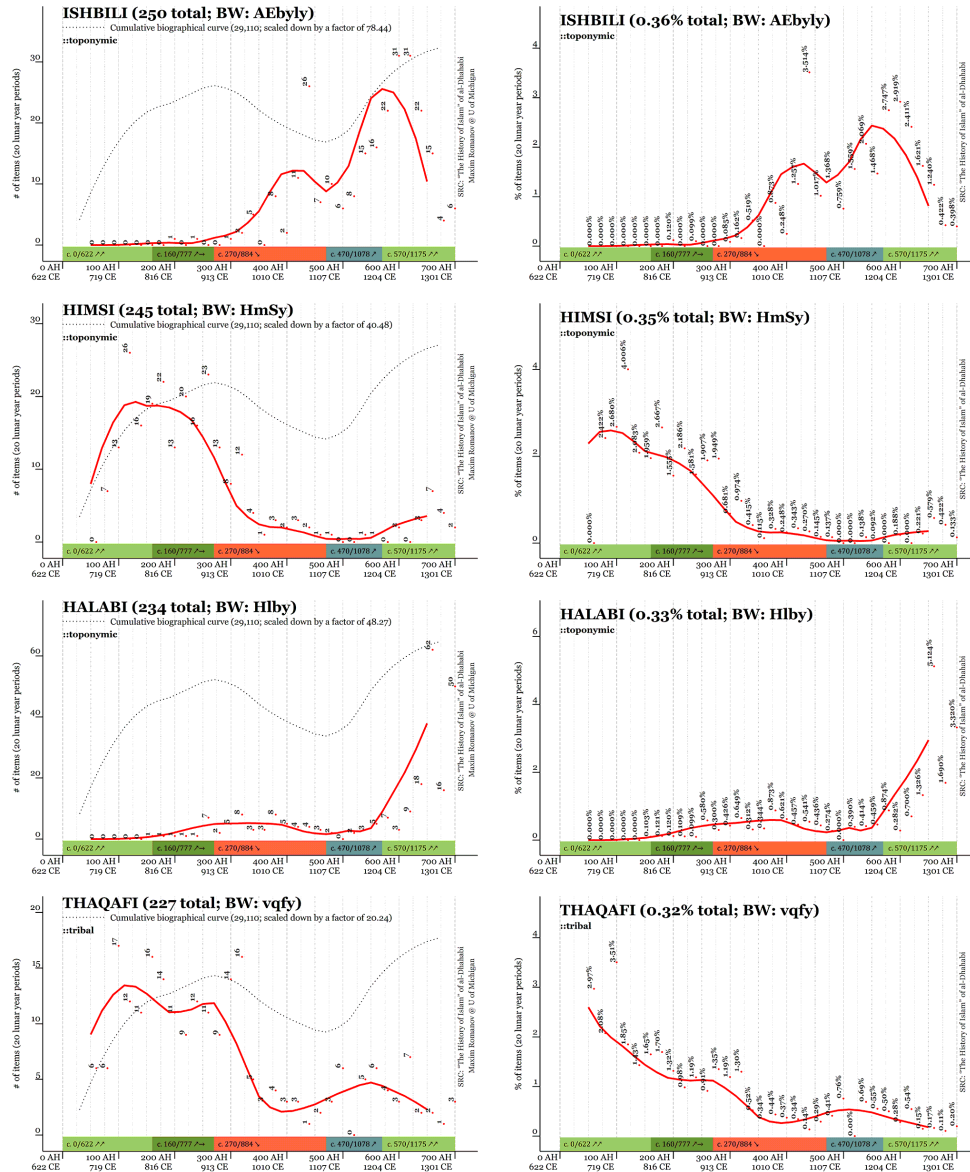


Figure C.16: Top *Nisbas*: ISHBILI (BW: AEbyly); HIMSI (BW: HmSy); HALABI (BW: Hlby); THAQAFI (BW: vqfy).

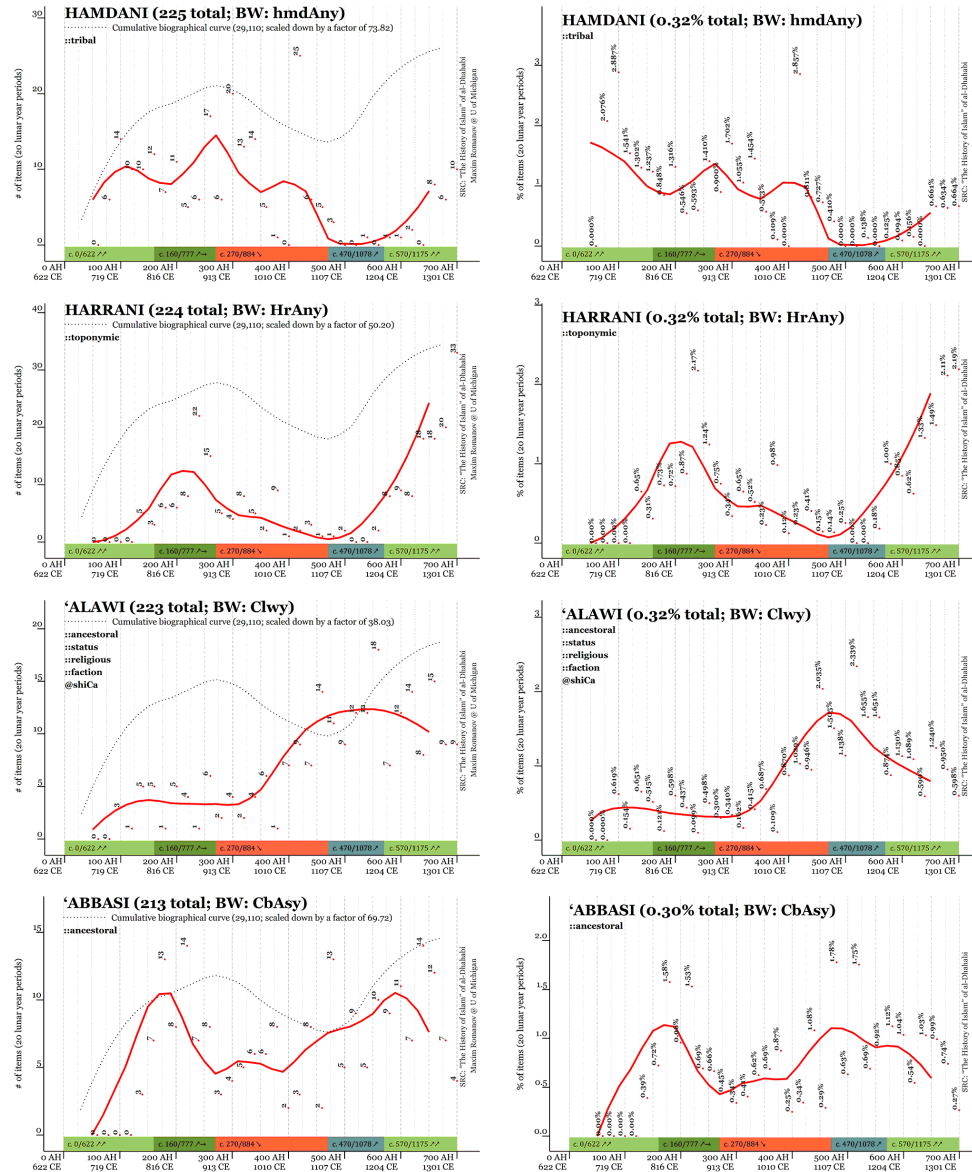


Figure C.17: Top *Nisbas*: HAMDANI (BW: hmdAny); HARRANI (BW: HrAny); 'ALAWI (BW: Clwy); 'ABBASI (BW: CbAsy).

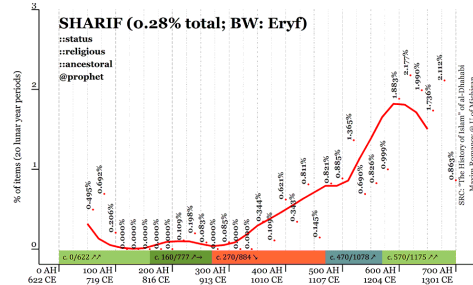
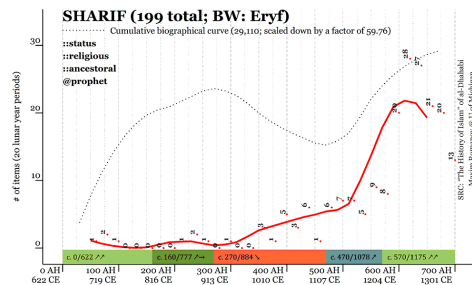
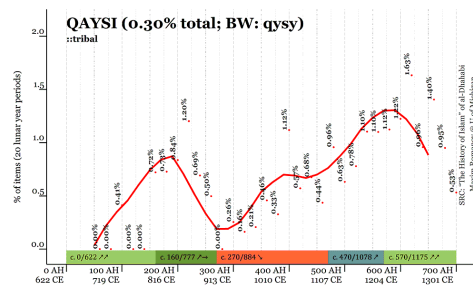
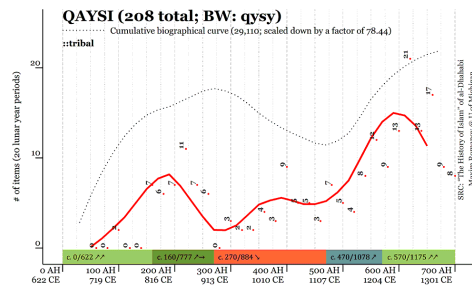
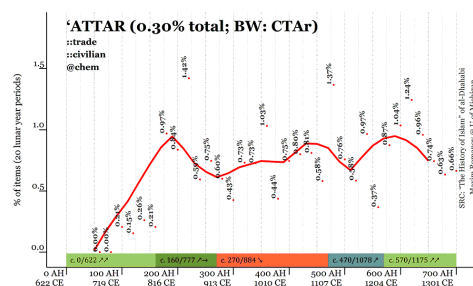
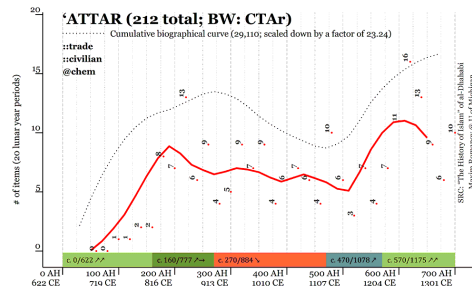
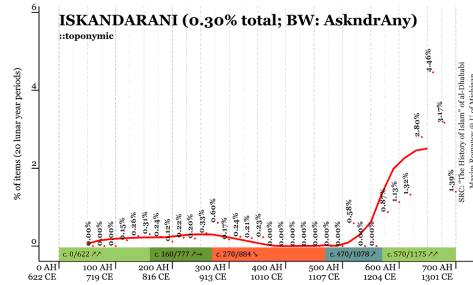
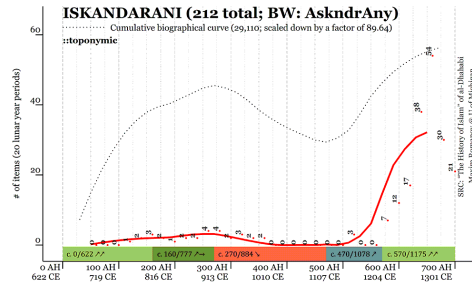


Figure C.18: Top *Nisbas*: ISKANDARANI (BW: AskndrAny); ATTAR (BW: CTAr); QAYSI (BW: qysy); SHARIF (BW: Eryf).



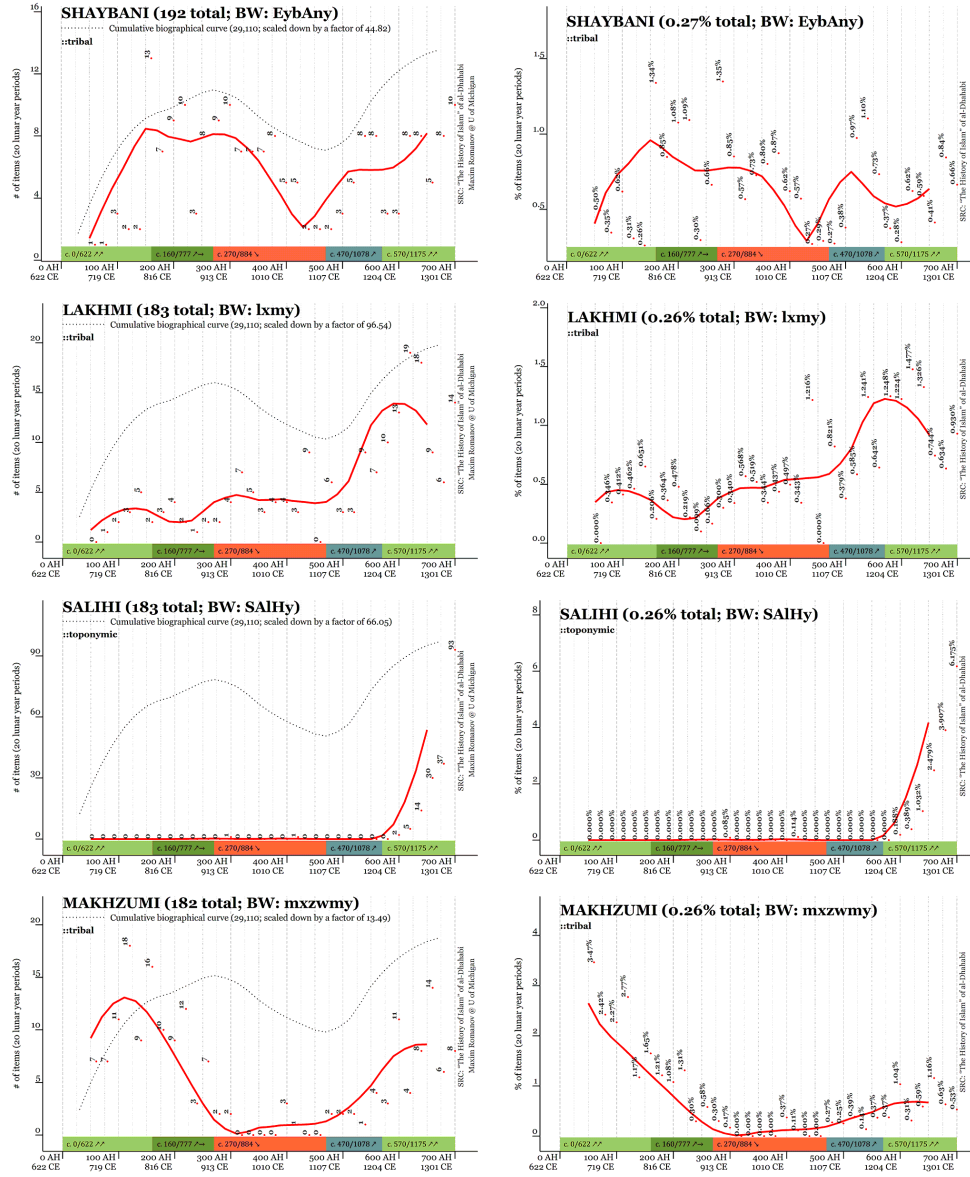


Figure C.19: Top *Nisbas*: SHAYBANI (BW: EybAny); LAKHMI (BW: lxmy); SALIHI (BW: SAIHy); MAKHZUMI (BW: mxzwmzy).

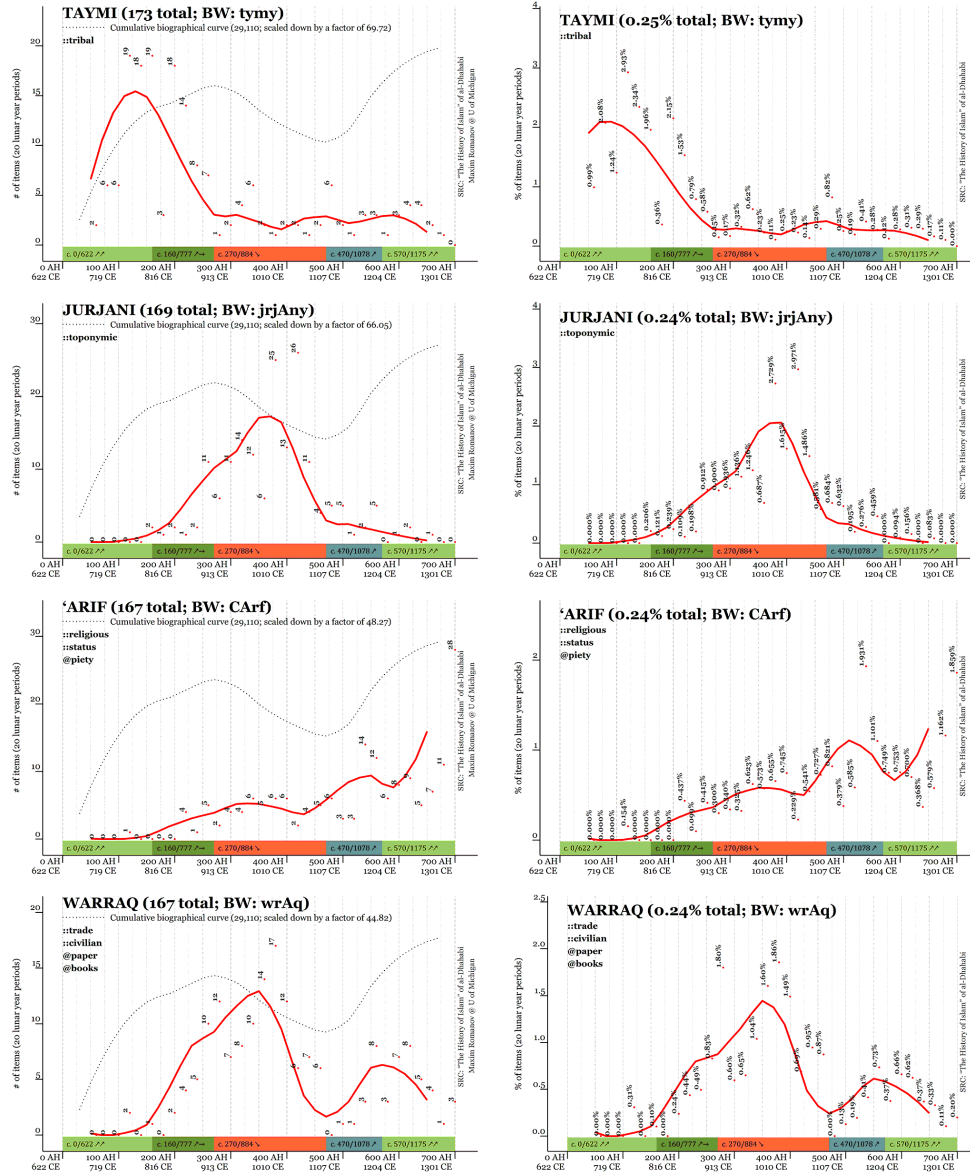


Figure C.20: Top *Nisbas*: TAYMI (BW: tymy); JURJANI (BW: jrjAny); 'ARIF (BW: CArf); WARRAQ (BW: wrAq).

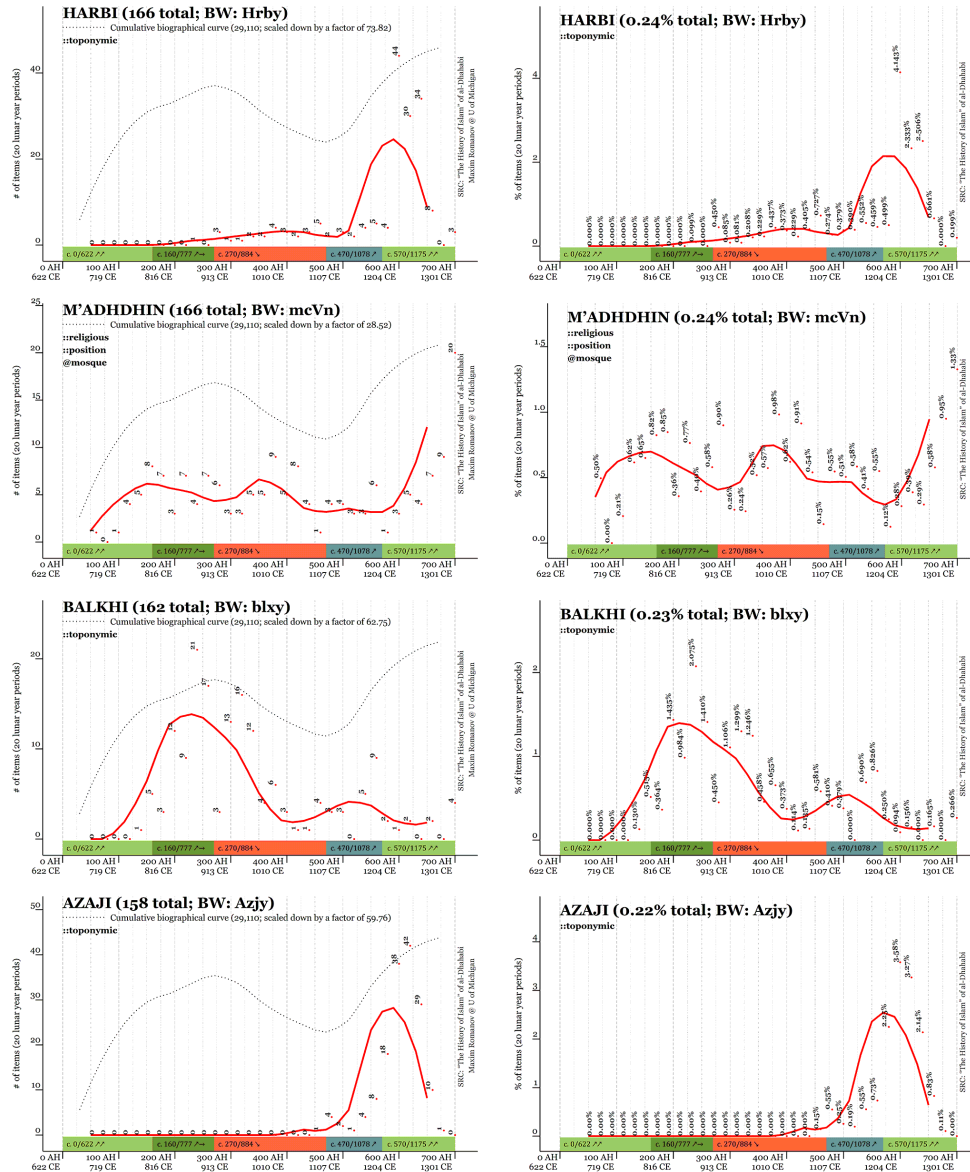


Figure C.21: Top *Nisbas*: HARBI (BW: Hrby); M'ADHDHIN (BW: mcVn); BALKHI (BW: blxy); AZAJI (BW: Azjy).

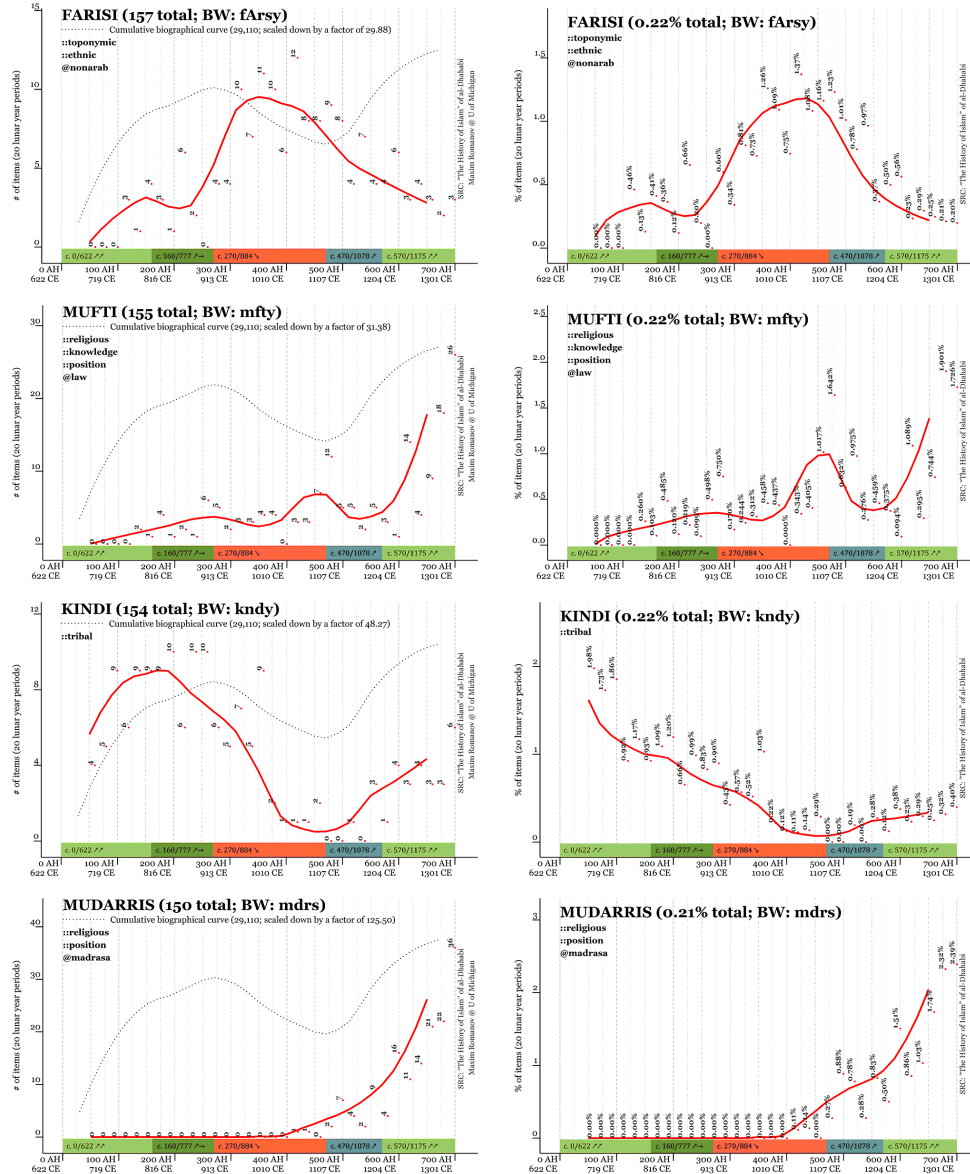


Figure C.22: Top *Nisbas*: FARISI (BW: fArSy); MUFTI (BW: mftY); KINDI (BW: kndY); MUDARRIS (BW: mdrS).

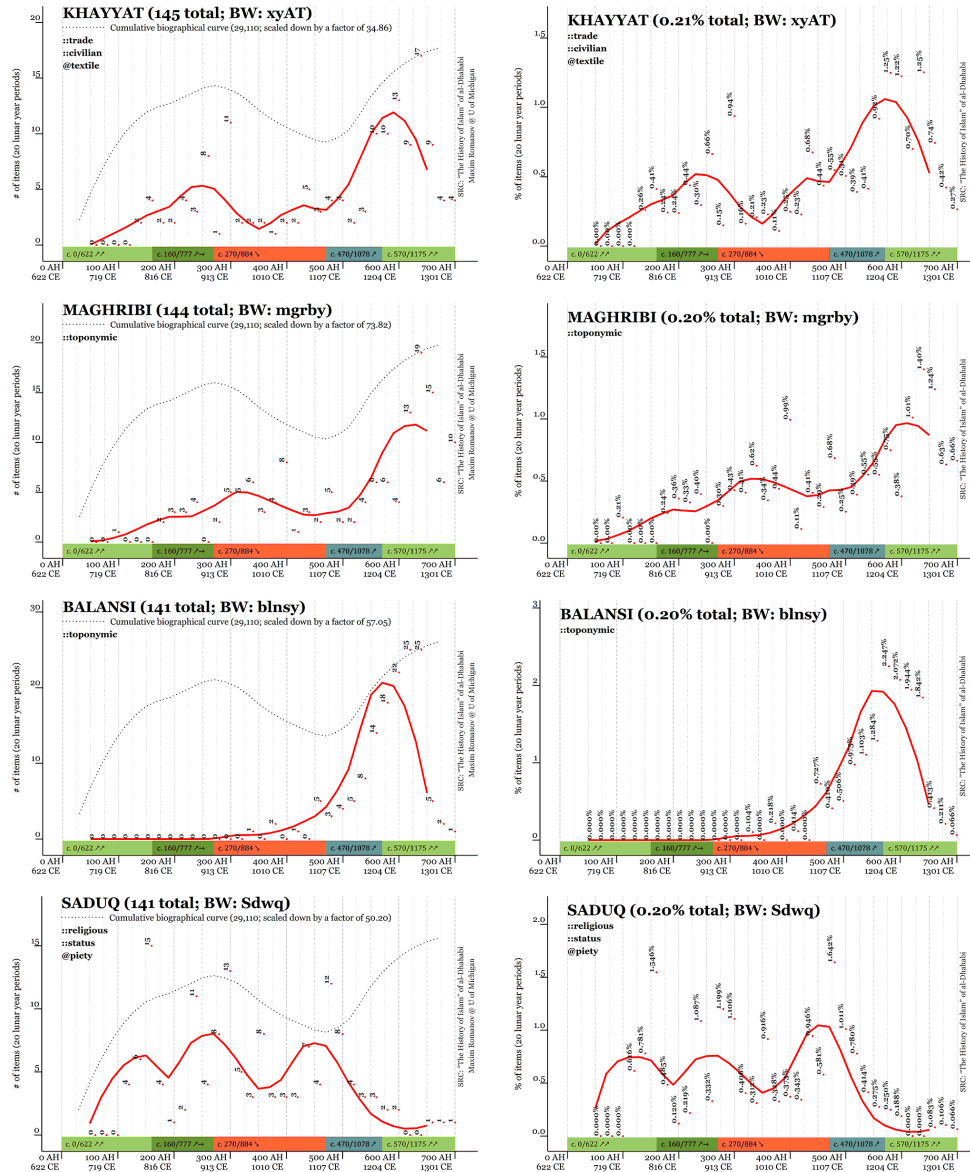


Figure C.23: Top *Nisbas*: KHAYYAT (BW: xyAT); MAGHRIBI (BW: mgrby); BALANSI (BW: blnsy); SADUQ (BW: Sdwq).

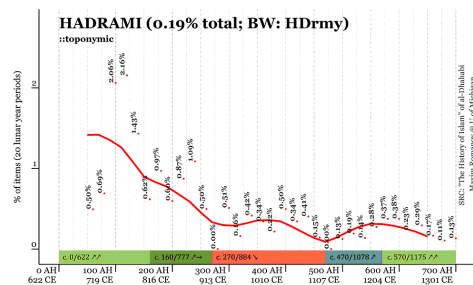
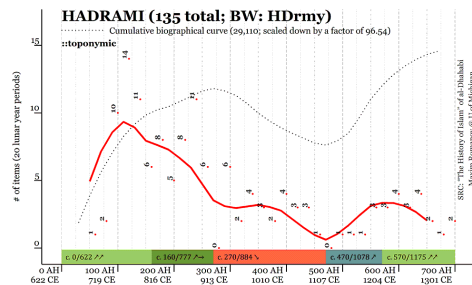
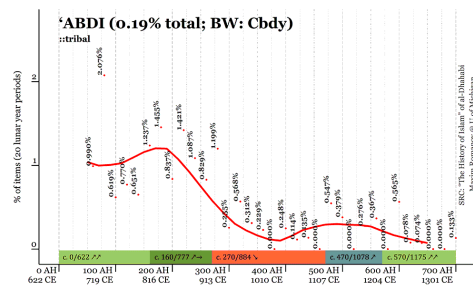
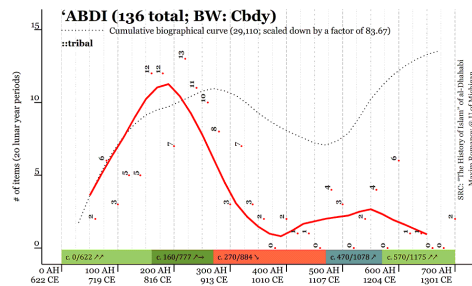
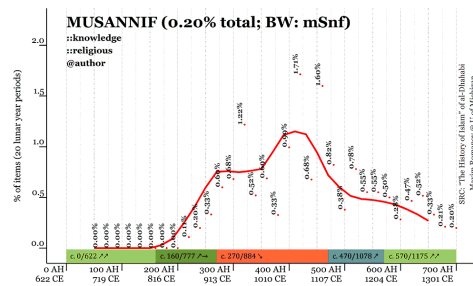
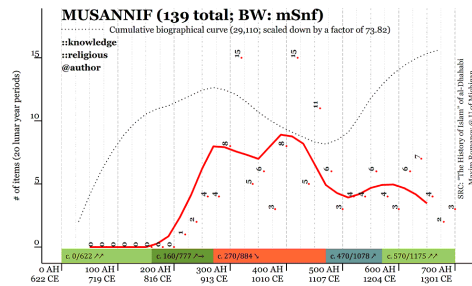
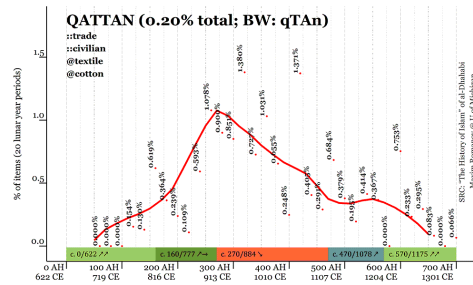
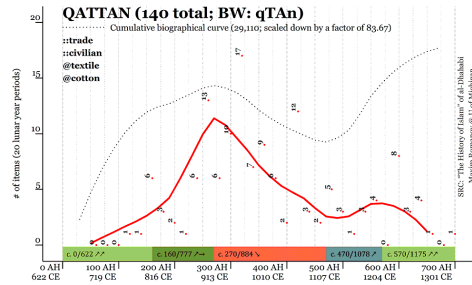


Figure C.24: Top *Nisbas*: QATTAN (BW: qTAn); MUSANNIF (BW: mSnf); 'ABDI (BW: Cbdy); HADRAMI (BW: HDRmy).

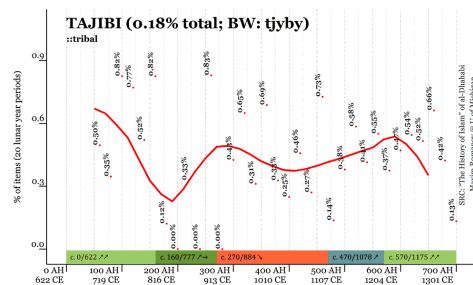
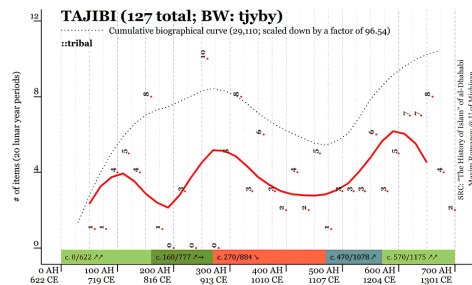
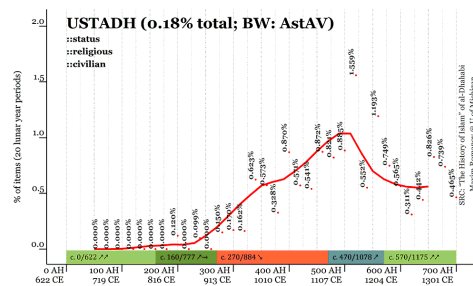
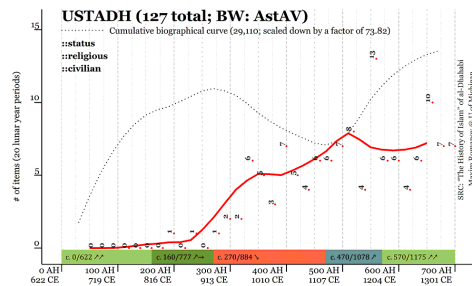
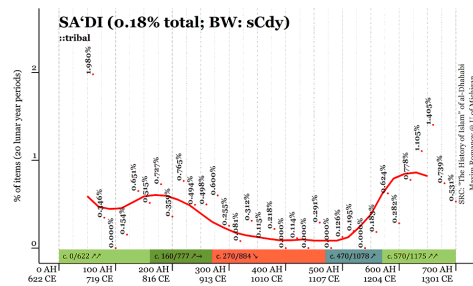
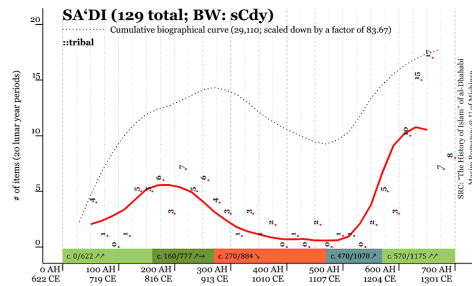
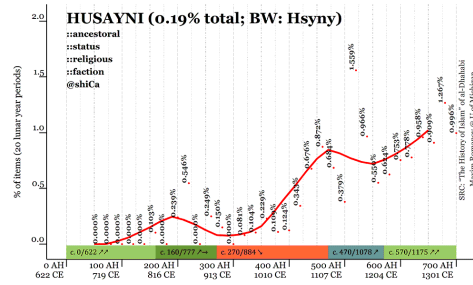
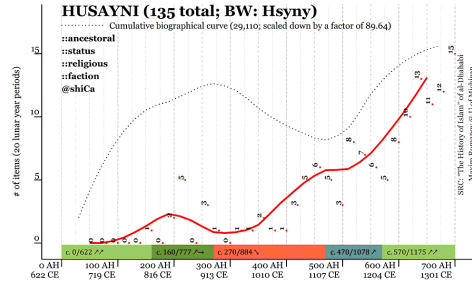


Figure C.25: Top *Nisbas*: HUSAYNI (BW: Hsny); SA'DI (BW: sCdy); USTADH (BW: AstAV); TUJIBI (BW: tjby).

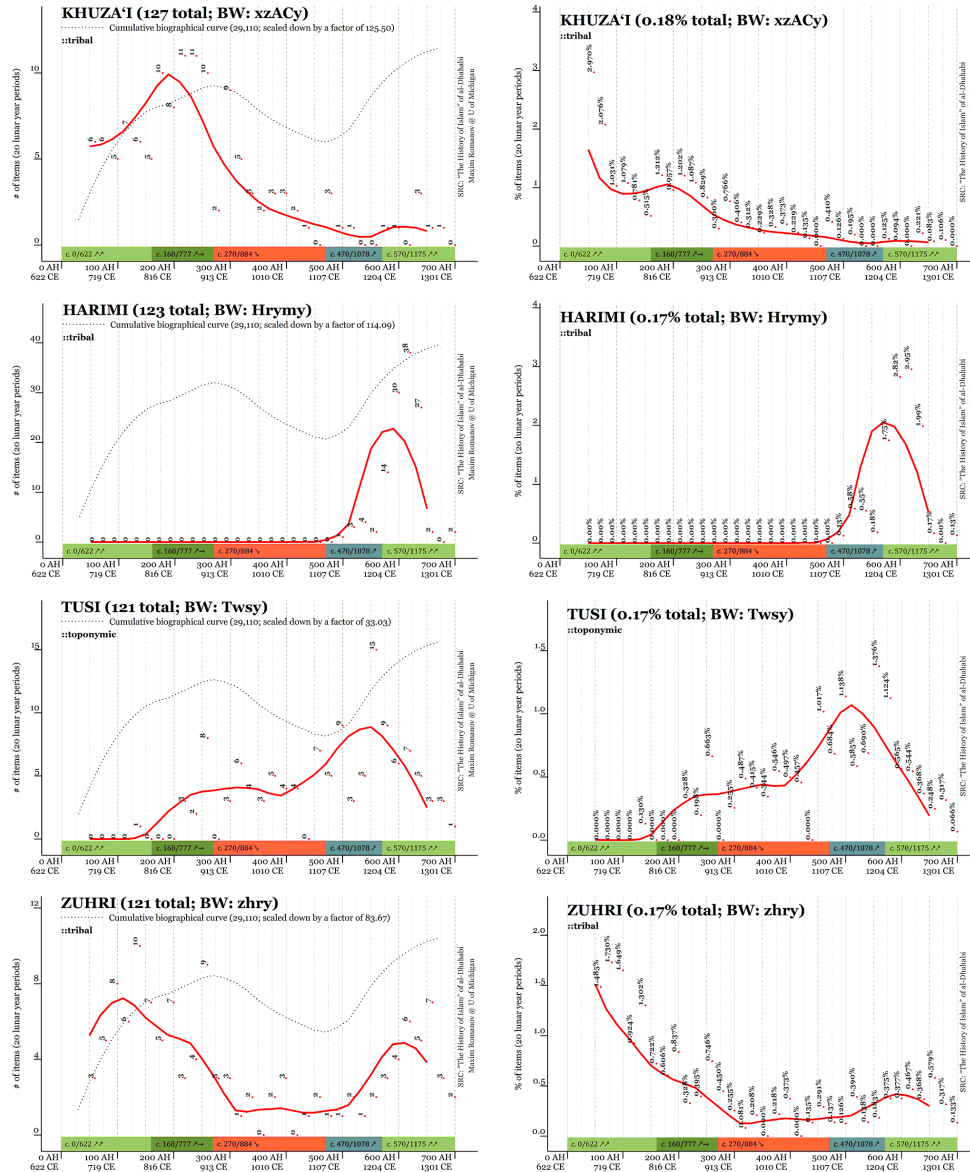


Figure C.26: Top *Nisbas*: KHUZA'I (BW: xZACy); HARIMI (BW: Hrymy); TUSI (BW: Twsy); ZUHRI (BW: zhry).



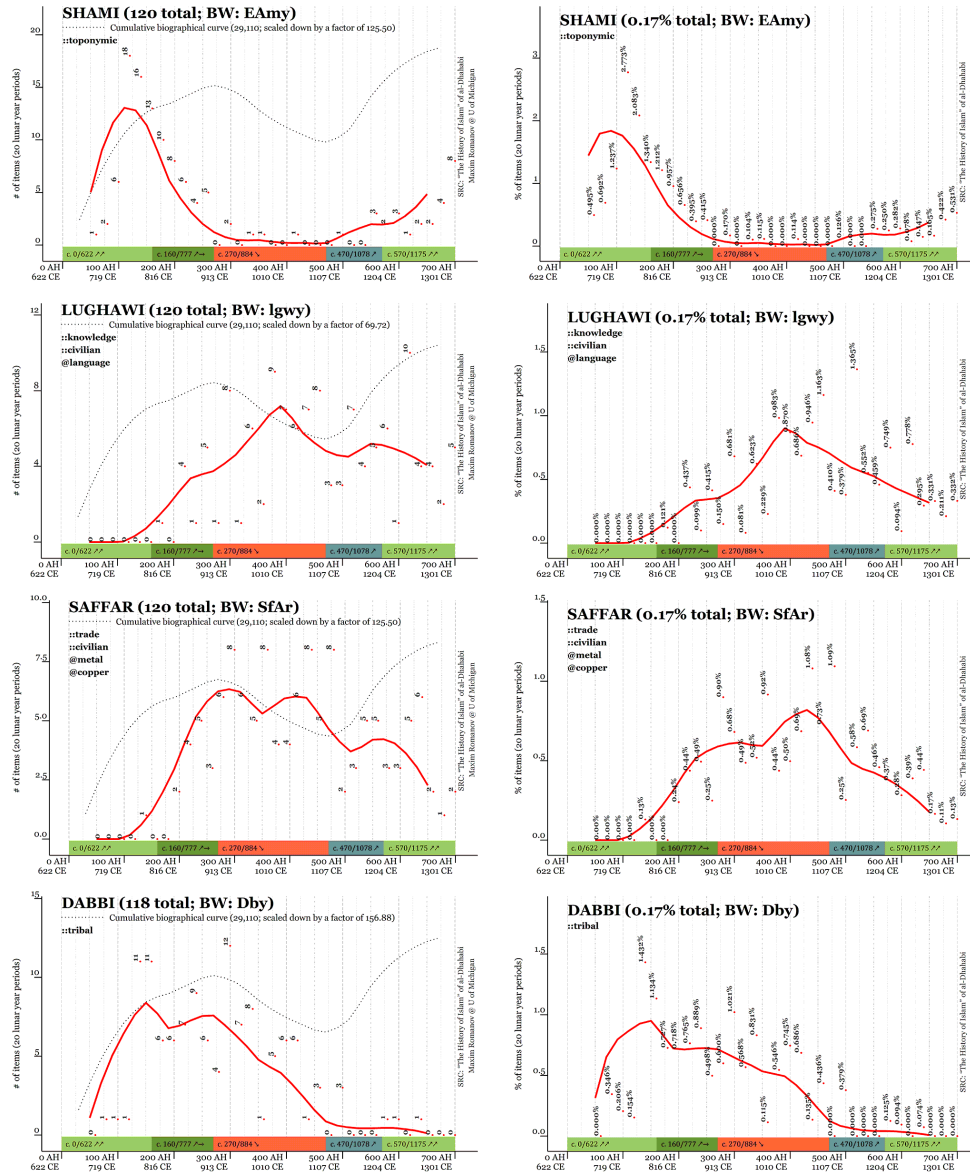


Figure C.27: Top *Nisbas*: SHAMI (BW: EAmY); LUGHAWI (BW: lgwy); SAFFAR (BW: SfAr); DABBI (BW: Dby).

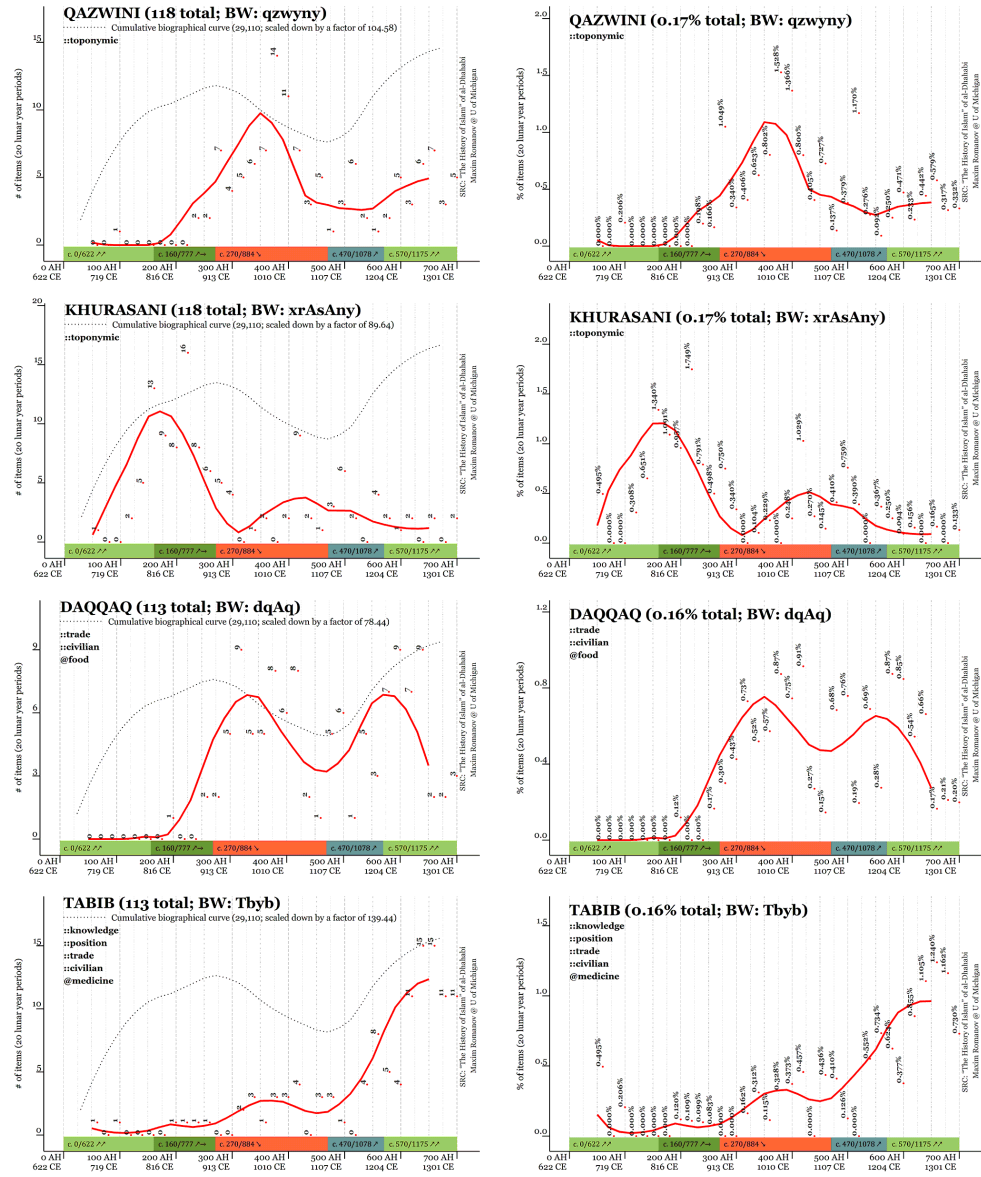


Figure C.28: Top *Nisbas*: QAZWINI (BW: qzwyny); KHURASANI (BW: xrAsAny); DAQQAQ (BW: dqAq); TABIB (BW: Thyb).

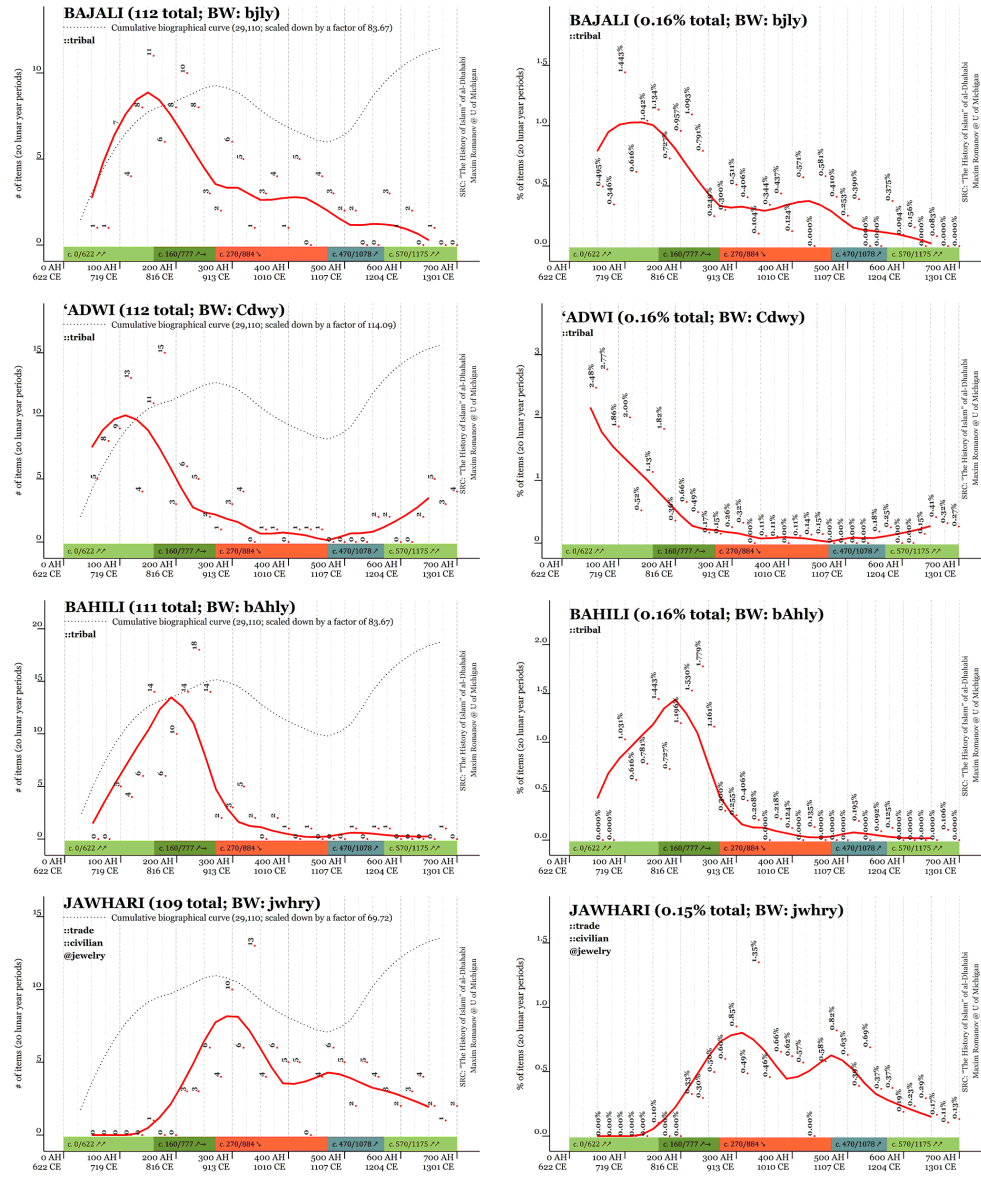


Figure C.29: Top *Nisbas*: BAJALI (BW: bjly); 'ADWI (BW: Cdwy); BAHILI (BW: bAhly); JAWHARI (BW: jwhry).



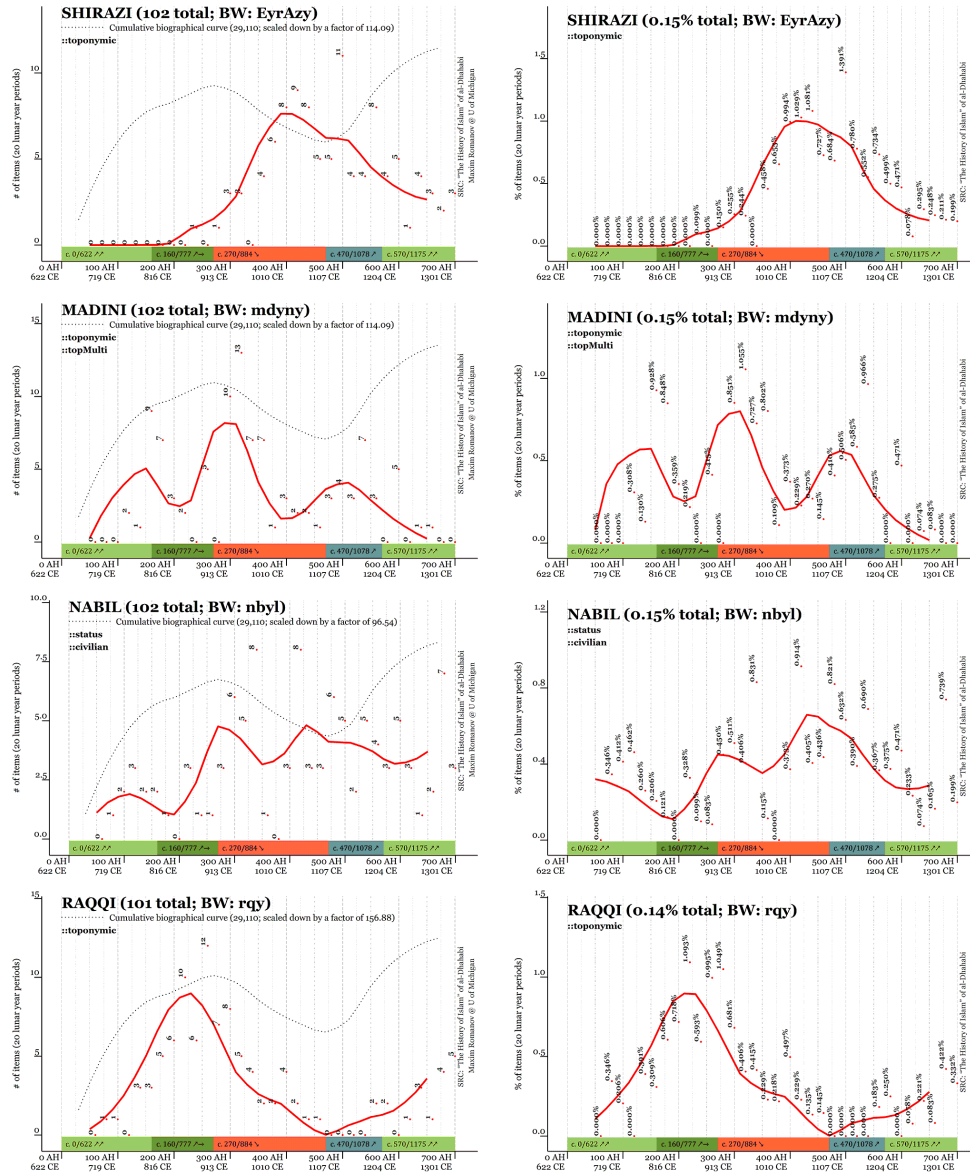


Figure C.31: Top *Nisbas*: SHIRAZI (BW: EyrAzy); MADINI (BW: mdyny); NABIL (BW: nbyl); RAQQI (BW: rqy).

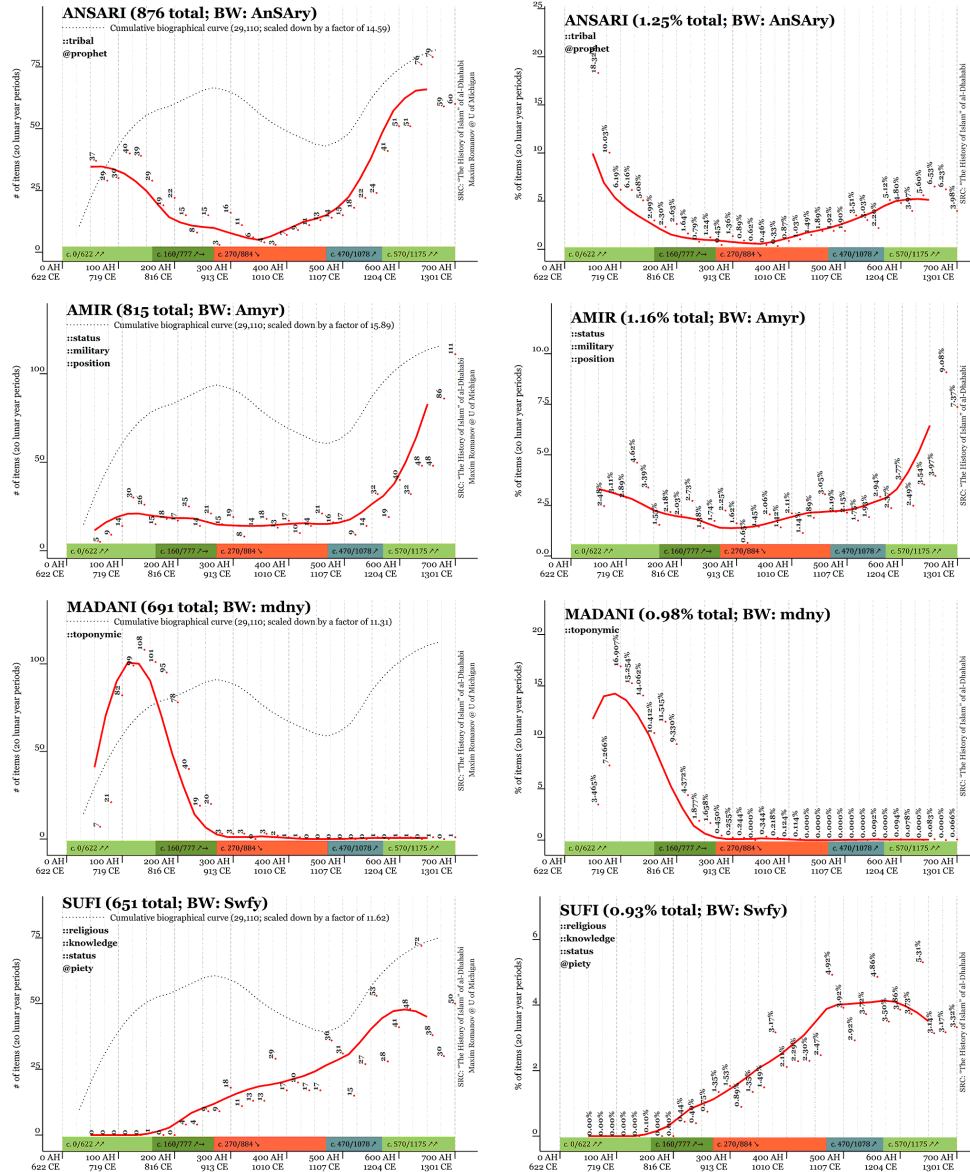


Figure C.5: Top *Nisbas*: ANSARI (BW: AnSary); AMIR (BW: Amyr); MADANI (BW: mdny); SUFI (BW: Swfy).

# Appendix D

## *Nisbas of Wu<sup>cc</sup>āz*

الواعظ	332	الحنبلي	28	المفسر	14	المولى	11
الفقيه	74	الدمشقي	23	المحدث	14	الواسطي	11
البغدادي	61	الحنفي	22	المروزي	14	البخاري	10
الإمام	60	العالم	20	الأنصاري	13	الشيرازي	10
الزاهد	53	الحافظ	20	العلامة	13	الهروي	10
الشيخ	52	الصالح	18	المقري	13	القرشي	10
النيسابوري	49	المصري	17	الرازي	12	العابد	9
الإصبهاني	40	التميمي	17	الخطيب	12	العارف	9
الشافعي	38	البصري	16	الشاعر	11	المتكلم	9
الصوفي	36	القاضي	16	الكوفي	11	الهمذاني	8

Figure D.1: *Nisbas* of the Wu<sup>cc</sup>āz (537) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

البغدادي	61	البخاري	10	الغزنوي	6	العمري	4
النيسابوري	49	الشيرازي	10	المقدسي	6	الجيلي	4
الإصبهاني	40	الهروي	10	الخراساني	6	المدني	4
الدمشقي	23	الهمداني	8	الأنباري	5	المغربي	4
المصري	17	المكي	8	الأندلسي	5	الموصلبي	4
البصري	16	القزويني	8	الأزجي	5	القرطبي	4
المروزي	14	السمعاني	8	البلخي	5	السهروودي	4
الرازي	12	الطوسي	8	الخراني	5	السجستاني	4
الكوفي	11	الجرجاني	7	السمرقندي	5	الإسفرائيني	3
الواسطي	11	الطليطلي	7	العكبري	4	البسطامي	3

Figure D.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Wu'cāz* (537) in *Ta'riḫ al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الواعظ	332	الحافظ	20	الشاعر	11	التميمي	7
الفقيه	74	الصالح	18	المولى	11	الأمير	6
الإمام	60	التميمي	17	القرشي	10	الأستاذ	6
الزاهد	53	القاضي	16	العابد	9	العلوي	6
الشيخ	52	المفسر	14	العارف	9	الضريير	6
الشافعي	38	المحدث	14	المتكلم	9	الشريف	6
الصوفي	36	الأنصاري	13	السمعاني	8	المدرس	6
الحنبلي	28	العلامة	13	الهاشمي	7	المفتي	6
الحنفي	22	المقرئ	13	المذكر	7	الأديب	5
العالم	20	الخطيب	12	السلطان	7	البكري	5

Figure D.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Wu'cāz* (537) in *Ta'riḫ al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).



البصري	15	الفقيه	5	البغدادي	2	الأعور	1
الزاهد	15	المدني	4	العباسي	2	الإفريقي	1
الواعظ	12	الشاعر	3	العجلي	2	الأنطاكي	1
المولى	10	المصري	3	العنزي	2	الإسكندراني	1
الكوفي	8	الصوفي	3	المفسر	2	الأستاذ	1
العابد	7	السيد	3	المروزي	2	الأوزاعي	1
الشيخ	7	التيمي	3	القااص	2	البربري	1
الإمام	6	الخراساني	3	السهمي	2	البنار	1
المكي	6	الأمير	2	التميمي	2	العالم	1
الدمشقي	5	الأزدي	2	الثوري	2	العارف	1

Figure D.4: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (67) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–250 AH/642–865 CE).

الواعظ	38	الدينوري	2	الإسفراييني	1	الفارسي	1
النيسابوري	10	الحنفي	2	الأستاذ	1	الفقيه	1
الزاهد	6	الحيري	2	البجلي	1	الفريابي	1
الإصبهاني	5	المرجاني	2	البلخي	1	الغوري	1
الحافظ	5	المحدث	2	البصري	1	الغزال	1
الصوفي	5	المقرئ	2	البسطامي	1	الكرامي	1
البغدادي	4	المصري	2	البستي	1	المالكي	1
الشيخ	3	الرازي	2	العالم	1	المفسر	1
القاضي	3	الوراق	2	العلامة	1	المصنف	1
العارف	2	الأديب	1	الضرير	1	النسفي	1

Figure D.5: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (46) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (251–350 AH/866–962 CE).

الواعظ	77	الطليطلي	5	المصري	3	الأصولي	2
النيسابوري	26	التميمي	5	المتكلم	3	العالم	2
البغدادي	16	الحنبلي	4	النبييل	3	الهروي	2
الفقيه	16	الجرجاني	4	القاضي	3	الجوهري	2
الإصبهاني	13	العارف	3	الرازي	3	المالكي	2
الزاهد	11	الحافظ	3	الصالح	3	المكي	2
الإمام	7	الهمداني	3	الأموي	2	المقرئ	2
الشافعي	7	المفسر	3	الإسماعيلي	2	المصنف	2
الصوفي	7	المفتي	3	الأستاذ	2	الميهني	2
الشيخ	5	المحدث	3	الأسترابادي	2	القرطبي	2

Figure D.6: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (113) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (351–450 AH/963–1059 CE).

الواعظ	102	الصالح	11	العالم	6	العلامة	4
الفقيه	30	الحنفي	10	الحافظ	6	الضريير	4
الإمام	29	البخاري	9	الطوسي	6	الغزنوي	4
الشيخ	19	الروزي	9	العلوي	5	المدرس	4
البغدادي	16	الهروي	8	المحدث	5	المفسر	4
الزاهد	15	التميمي	8	القاضي	5	الأمير	3
الإصبهاني	14	الأنصاري	7	الرازي	5	البلخي	3
الصوفي	13	الدمشقي	7	السلطان	5	الهمداني	3
الشافعي	12	الشيرازي	7	السمعاني	5	المقدسي	3
النيسابوري	11	الحنبلي	7	السمرقندي	5	المقرئ	3

Figure D.7: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (170) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (451–550 AH/1060–1156 CE).

الواعظ	217	الحافظ	14	البخاري	9	الطوسي	7
الفقيه	47	الصالح	14	العالم	9	العلوي	6
النيسابوري	47	التميمي	14	الدمشقي	8	الهمداني	6
الإمام	36	الحنفي	13	الشيرازي	8	المتكلم	6
البغدادي	36	الحنبلي	11	المفسر	8	السلطان	6
الإصبهاني	32	القاضي	11	الأنصاري	7	السمعاني	6
الزاهد	32	الهروي	10	الرجزاني	7	العارف	5
الشيخ	27	المحدث	10	المقري	7	العلامة	5
الصوفي	25	المروزي	10	المصري	7	الضريير	5
الشافعي	19	الرازي	10	الطليطلي	7	المدرس	5

Figure D.8: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (329) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (251–550 AH/866–1156 CE).

الواعظ	103	الحنفي	9	الأزجي	5	القاضي	4
البغدادي	23	الإصبهاني	8	الشريف	5	السهروودي	4
الفقيه	22	العلامة	8	الهاشمي	5	الآبار	3
الشافعي	19	الصوفي	8	الحافظ	5	الأنباري	3
الإمام	18	الخطيب	8	المقري	5	الأندلسي	3
الشيخ	18	المصري	7	القرشي	5	العارف	3
الحنبلي	17	الأنصاري	6	الأديب	4	العباسي	3
العالم	10	الشاعر	6	البكري	4	الحراني	3
الدمشقي	10	القزويني	6	الماموني	4	الجيلي	3
الواسطي	10	الزاهد	6	المفسر	4	الكاتب	3

Figure D.9: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (141) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (551–670 AH/1157–1272 CE).

الواعظ	168	المروزي	14	العالم	9	الرجاني	7
النيسابوري	48	الحافظ	12	الحنبلي	9	السمعاني	7
الفقيه	41	الرازي	12	المفسر	9	الغزنوي	6
الإصبهاني	40	القاضي	11	الصالح	9	الأستاذ	5
الإمام	33	البغدادي	10	الدمشقي	8	البلخي	5
الشيخ	24	البخاري	10	الهمذاني	8	العارف	5
الشافعي	22	العلامة	10	المحدث	8	المتكلم	5
الزاهد	21	الشيرازي	10	القزويني	8	السمرقندي	5
الصوفي	18	الهروي	10	الطوسي	8	الخراساني	5
الحنفي	14	التميمي	10	الأنصاري	7	الضرير	4

Figure D.10: *Nisbas* of the *Wu<sup>cc</sup>āz* (Iran and Central Asia) (269) in *Ta<sup>r</sup>īkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الواعظ	95	العابد	7	الحراني	5	الموصللي	4
البغدادي	60	المكي	7	الصالح	5	التميمي	4
الشيخ	20	المولى	7	الإصبهاني	4	العلوي	3
البصري	19	المقرئ	6	العالم	4	العمرى	3
الفقيه	19	الصوفي	6	العكبري	4	الدينوري	3
الإمام	18	الأنباري	5	العلامة	4	الماموني	3
الحنبلي	17	الأزجي	5	الحافظ	4	المدني	3
الزاهد	12	الشاعر	5	الحنفي	4	المفتي	3
الكوفي	11	الشافعي	5	المفسر	4	الخطيب	3
الواسطي	11	الهاشمي	5	المصري	4	الأستاذ	2

Figure D.11: *Nisbas* of the *Wu<sup>cc</sup>āz* (Iraq and Arabia) (168) in *Ta<sup>r</sup>īkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الواعظ	40	الشيخ	5	الحافظ	2	النوبي	2
الدمشقي	22	المقدسي	5	الجلي	2	القرشي	2
المصري	17	الشيرازي	4	الحموي	2	القيسي	2
الفقيه	14	المروزي	4	الحراني	2	الرملي	2
الإمام	9	الأنصاري	3	الجوهري	2	الصالح	2
الزاهد	8	القاضي	3	المالكي	2	السعدي	2
الشافعي	7	الإسكندراني	2	المحدث	2	السلمي	2
السمعاني	7	البغدادي	2	المقرئ	2	الصورى	2
الحنبلى	6	العالم	2	المذكر	2	التميمي	2
الحنفي	6	العارف	2	النايلسي	2	الخطيب	2

Figure D.12: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (Syria and Egypt) (75) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الواعظ	8	الإمام	2	الأمير	1	الدمشقي	1
الطليطلي	7	العالم	2	الإصبهاني	1	الشاعر	1
الأندلسي	5	العارف	2	الأصبحي	1	الشافعي	1
الزاهد	5	المصري	2	البكري	1	الشيخ	1
المغربي	4	السبتي	2	البلنسي	1	الفاسي	1
القرطبي	4	التجيبى	2	البلوى	1	الغرناطى	1
الأموي	3	الأبيض	1	البربرى	1	الحافظ	1
الفقيه	3	الإشبلى	1	العامل	1	الحجرى	1
المالكي	3	الأشقر	1	العلوى	1	الجلي	1
الآبار	2	الإلبيرى	1	العزى	1	الحنبلى	1

Figure D.13: *Nisbas* of the *Wuṣṣāz* (North Africa and Andalusia) (35) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

## Appendix E

### *Nisbas of Khutabā*

الخطيب	346	المقرئ	34	الصالح	20	الأديب	12
الفقيه	69	المقدسي	28	الأمير	19	الإصبهاني	12
القاضي	60	المصري	27	الشريف	18	اللخمي	12
الإمام	58	البغدادي	26	الحنبلي	18	التميمي	12
الشافعي	52	القرطبي	26	العلامة	17	الواعظ	12
الأندلسي	50	العالم	25	الآبار	15	الغرناطي	11
الشيخ	47	العباسي	25	الأموي	15	المالكي	11
الدمشقي	42	الحافظ	22	البلنسي	14	المفتي	11
الأنصاري	40	القرشي	21	الإشبيلي	13	المرّي	11
الهاشمي	36	الزاهد	21	المحدث	13	القضاة	11

Figure E.1: *Nisbas of the Khutabā* (596) in *Tarīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الأندلسي	50	المرى	11	الخلبى	6	المرسى	5
الدمشقى	42	الحموى	10	الحرانى	6	الصالحى	5
المقدسى	28	المروزى	10	الكوفى	6	العراقى	4
المصرى	27	النيسابورى	10	المالقى	6	الهمذانى	4
البغدادى	26	الموصلى	9	الطلىطلى	6	المدىنى	4
القرطبى	26	المغربى	8	الطوسى	6	المكى	4
البلنسى	14	الواسطى	8	الدانى	5	المىهنى	4
الإشبلىلى	13	الهروى	7	الشامى	5	النبلسى	4
الإصبهانى	12	الحبانى	7	الضرى	5	الرازى	4
الغرناطى	11	الأنبارى	6	الجماعىلى	5	السمرقندى	4

Figure E.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Khutabā* (596) in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الخطىب	346	العباسى	25	الأموى	15	السلمى	11
الفقىه	69	الحافظ	22	المحدث	13	الأزدى	9
القاضى	60	القرشى	21	الأدىب	12	الشاعر	9
الإمام	58	الزاهد	21	اللخمى	12	المولى	9
الشافعى	52	الصالح	20	التمىمى	12	الصوفى	9
الشفىخ	47	الأمىر	19	الواعظ	12	الورع	9
الأنصارى	40	الشفرف	18	المالكى	11	الأسدى	8
الهاشمى	36	الحنبلى	18	المفتى	11	المقرىء	8
المقرئ	34	العلامة	17	المرى	11	الحنفى	7
العالم	25	الآبار	15	القضاة	11	الأسىنى	7

Figure E.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Khutabā* (596) in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الأمير	17	المدني	3	اللخمي	2	الأشعري	1
الأموي	10	الخليفة	3	المروزي	2	الإفريقي	1
القرشي	10	الجزاعي	3	المصري	2	الإمام	1
العباسي	5	الأنصاري	2	المتولي	2	الأخباري	1
الدمشقي	5	البصري	2	القيرواني	2	البعلي	1
الخطيب	5	العالم	2	الطويل	2	البربري	1
الأسدي	4	الشاعر	2	الجزرجي	2	البيع	1
المولى	4	الشامي	2	الأعرج	1	العبدى	1
التميمي	4	الفرزاري	2	الأعور	1	العنبري	1
الفقيه	3	الهاشمي	2	الأديب	1	العتابي	1

Figure E.4: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabā* (51) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–250 AH/642–865 CE).

الخطيب	14	البروجردى	1	المولى	1	التميمي	1
الدمشقي	4	العباسي	1	النيسابوري	1	الثقفي	1
القاضي	4	الشافعي	1	القضاة	1	الثقة	1
الأندلسي	3	الشيخ	1	القرطبي	1	الواعظ	1
البغدادي	3	الفقيه	1	الرازي	1	الحلال	1
المقرئ	2	الحافظ	1	الصالح	1	اليهودي	1
الأمير	1	الجوهري	1	السبتي	1	الزاهد	1
الأنباري	1	المحدث	1	الطائي	1		
الإصبهاني	1	المري	1	التميمي	1		
الأسدي	1	المصري	1	التنوخي	1		

Figure E.5: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabā* (25) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (251–350 AH/866–962 CE).



الخطيب	61	الإمام	4	الشاعر	2	الميهني	2
القاضي	12	الإصهاني	4	الشافعي	2	النصيبي	2
الفقيه	9	الشيخ	4	الشاهد	2	القرشي	2
القرطبي	9	التميمي	4	الشريف	2	القزويني	2
البغدادي	8	الإشبيلي	3	الحضرمي	2	الرازي	2
الأنصاري	7	الدمشقي	3	الحربي	2	الرئيس	2
العباسي	6	الهروي	3	المالكي	2	الصوفي	2
الهاشمي	6	الأديب	2	المفتي	2	الطليطلي	2
المقرئ	6	الأزدي	2	المرى	2	الواعظ	2
الأندلسي	5	البلخي	2	المولى	2	الأبيض	1

Figure E.6: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabāʾ* (89) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (351–450 AH/ 963–1059 CE).

الخطيب	96	الأنصاري	7	الإصهاني	4	السلمي	4
الإمام	16	البغدادي	7	البلنسي	4	الطليطلي	4
الهاشمي	11	المروزي	7	الداني	4	الطوسي	4
المقرئ	11	الصالح	7	الشريف	4	الأموي	3
الدمشقي	10	الورع	7	الغرناطي	4	الأنباري	3
القاضي	10	الزاهد	7	الحافظ	4	العلامة	3
الأندلسي	9	العالم	6	الحسيني	4	العلوي	3
الشيخ	9	العباسي	5	الكوفي	4	الشافعي	3
الفقيه	9	الغافقي	5	المقدسي	4	الهروي	3
النيسابوري	8	المرى	5	القرطبي	4	المقرئ	3

Figure E.7: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabāʾ* (149) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (451–550 AH/ 1060–1156 CE).

الخطيب	171	الشيخ	14	التميمي	7	الغافقي	5
القاضي	26	القرطبي	14	الورع	7	الحسيني	5
الإمام	20	العباسي	12	الشافعي	6	المولى	5
الفقيه	19	النيسابوري	10	الشريف	6	الصوفي	5
المقرئ	19	الإصبهاني	9	الحافظ	6	الأموي	4
البغدادى	18	الصالح	9	الهروي	6	الأزدي	4
الأندلسي	17	المروزي	8	الطليطلي	6	العلامة	4
الدمشقي	17	المرى	8	الإشبيلي	5	العلوي	4
الهاشمي	17	الزاهد	8	الأنباري	5	الداني	4
الأنصاري	14	العالم	7	البلنسي	5	الغرناطي	4

Figure E.8: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabāʾ* (263) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (251–550 AH/ 866–1156 CE).

الخطيب	170	الدمشقي	20	الشريف	11	المحدث	8
الفقيه	47	الهاشمي	17	الصالح	11	القضاة	8
الشافعي	46	الحنبلي	17	البلنسي	9	القرشي	8
الإمام	37	العالم	16	الحموي	9	الواعظ	8
الأندلسي	33	الحافظ	16	الموصلى	9	الغرناطي	7
القاضي	33	الآبار	15	الأديب	8	المالكي	7
الشيخ	32	المقرئ	14	الإشبيلي	8	الواسطي	7
الأنصاري	24	العلامة	13	البغدادى	8	المالقي	6
المقدسي	24	الزاهد	13	العباسي	8	المفتي	6
المصري	21	القرطبي	12	اللخمي	8	السلمي	6

Figure E.9: *Nisbas* of the *Khuṭabāʾ* (282) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (551–670 AH/ 1157–1272 CE).

الخطيب	75	الشيخ	6	السمرقندي	4	النبيل	3
الإصبهاني	14	الطوسي	6	الصوفي	4	القرشي	3
الفقيه	13	الورع	6	البخاري	3	الأهوازي	2
القاضي	13	الحنفي	5	العابد	3	الأملي	2
الإمام	12	الرازي	5	الداري	3	الأنصاري	2
المروزي	10	الصالح	5	الدمشقي	3	البغدادي	2
النيسابوري	9	الزاهد	5	الحاج	3	البلخي	2
العالم	7	الشريف	4	المحدث	3	البروجردي	2
الهروي	7	الهمذاني	4	المقرئ	3	العرضي	2
الشافعي	6	القشيري	4	الميهني	3	الضرير	2

Figure E.10: *Nisbas* of the *Khutabā* (Iran and Central Asia) (111) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الخطيب	69	المقرئ	8	العراقي	4	المديني	3
البغدادي	27	القاضي	8	الضرير	4	المحدث	3
الهاشمي	19	الواسطي	8	الحنبلي	4	النصيبي	3
الشيخ	14	الأنباري	6	المفتي	4	السلمي	3
الفقيه	13	الحراني	6	المكي	4	الصوفي	3
العباسي	10	الكوفي	6	الصالح	4	الطوسي	3
الإمام	9	الأديب	5	العالم	3	الواعظ	3
الموصللي	9	الدمشقي	5	العلوي	3	الزاهد	3
الشافعي	8	الحضرمي	5	الحافظ	3	الإشبيلي	2
الشريف	8	العلامة	4	الحرابي	3	البصري	2

Figure E.11: *Nisbas* of the *Khutabā* (Iraq and Arabia) (108) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الخطيب	86	الحنبلي	10	الآبار	5	الناقلي	4
الدمشقي	40	الأنصاري	9	الحافظ	5	اليونيني	4
الشافعي	34	العالم	9	الجماعيلي	5	الحسيني	3
المقدسي	27	العلامة	6	المقرئ	5	المولى	3
المصري	27	الجلبي	6	القرشي	5	الرملي	3
الفقيه	25	المحدث	6	الصالح	5	الخرجي	3
الإمام	23	القضاة	6	الشاهد	4	الزبيدي	3
القاضي	17	الصالح	6	الشمي	4	الأهوازي	2
الشيخ	14	السلمي	6	المالكي	4	الأمير	2
الحموي	10	الزاهد	6	المفتي	4	الإسكندراني	2

Figure E.12: *Nisbas* of the *Khutabā* (Syria and Egypt) (165) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الأنديسي	50	القاضي	10	النحوي	6	السرقسطي	4
الخطيب	47	الفقيه	9	القيسي	6	الأديب	3
القرطبي	26	اللخمي	8	الطليطلي	6	الأشعري	3
الأنصاري	21	الإمام	7	الداني	5	الأمير	3
المقرئ	16	الأزدي	7	المرسي	5	العالم	3
البلنسي	14	الحياني	7	التجيني	5	العلامة	3
الإشبيلي	13	الآبار	6	العبدري	4	الفهري	3
الحافظ	12	الشيخ	6	الغافقي	4	الحاج	3
الغرناطي	11	المالقي	6	الحضرمي	4	الحميري	3
المري	11	المغربي	6	الرعيني	4	المولى	3

Figure E.13: *Nisbas* of the *Khutabā* (North Africa and Andalusia) (185) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

## Appendix F

### *Nisbas of Quṣṣāṣ*

القاص	27	الإمام	3	الهدلي	2	البجلي	1
الكوفي	10	الأنصاري	3	المكي	2	البكاء	1
البصري	9	الخراساني	3	المقري	2	البلخي	1
المولى	8	الأعرج	2	الصالح	2	البسري	1
المدني	7	الأزدي	2	التجبي	2	العبادي	1
الزاهد	6	البخاري	2	الأعمي	1	العلاف	1
الواعظ	5	العامري	2	الأمير	1	العراقي	1
العابد	4	الدمشقي	2	الأزرق	1	العطار	1
المصري	4	الشيخ	2	الباهلي	1	الداري	1
القرشي	4	الفقيه	2	البغدادي	1	الضبي	1

Figure F.1: *Nisbas* of the *Quṣṣāṣ* (57) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الكوفي	10	البصري	1	الرومي	1
البصري	9	العراقي	1	الصنعاني	1
المدني	7	الداري	1	الخولاني	1
المصري	4	الضبعي	1	الظفري	1
الخراساني	3	الشامي	1		
البخاري	2	الفارسي	1		
الدمشقي	2	الحداني	1		
المكي	2	الجزري	1		
البغدادي	1	المروزي	1		
البلخي	1	النيسابوري	1		

Figure F.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Quṣṣās* (57) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

القاص	27	العامري	2	الباهلي	1	الفارسي	1
المولى	8	الشيخ	2	البجلي	1	الفقير	1
الزاهد	6	الفقيه	2	البكاء	1	الحداني	1
الواعظ	5	الهذلي	2	البصري	1	الحجاج	1
العابد	4	المقرئ	2	العبادي	1	الهلالي	1
القرشي	4	الصالح	2	العلاف	1	الحنفي	1
الإمام	3	التجبيبي	2	العطار	1	الكناني	1
الأنصاري	3	الأعمي	1	الداري	1	الليثي	1
الأعرج	2	الأمير	1	الضبعي	1	المعلم	1
الأزدي	2	الأزرق	1	الشاعر	1	المدرس	1

Figure F.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Quṣṣās* (57) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

القاص	24	الأنصاري	3	المقرئ	2	البخاري	1
الكوفي	10	الخراساني	3	الصالح	2	العلاف	1
البصري	9	الأعرج	2	التجيبى	2	العتار	1
المولى	8	الإمام	2	الأعمى	1	الدارى	1
المدني	7	الأزدي	2	الأزرق	1	الضبي	1
العابد	4	العامري	2	الباهلي	1	الشاعر	1
المصري	4	الدمشقي	2	البعلي	1	الشامي	1
القرشي	4	الفقيه	2	البكاء	1	الفارسي	1
الواعظ	4	الهدلي	2	البلخي	1	الحداني	1
الزاهد	4	المكي	2	البري	1	الحجاج	1

Figure F.4: *Nisbas* of the *Quṣṣāṣ* (50) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–250 AH/642–865 CE).

# Appendix G

## *Nisbas of Duʿāt*

الداعي	6	المتكلم	3	الكوفي	2	الإصبهاني	1
البغدادى	4	القاضي	3	المعتزلي	2	الأستاذ	1
العالم	4	الأديب	2	المولى	2	الإيادي	1
الزاهد	4	الأمير	2	النيسابوري	2	البلخي	1
الإمام	3	الإسماعيلي	2	الصوفي	2	البخاري	1
البصري	3	الباطني	2	الخورزمي	2	البيع	1
العلوي	3	الضرير	2	الإفريقي	1	البيكندي	1
الشيخ	3	الشاعر	2	الأهوازي	1	العابد	1
الحنبلي	3	الشيوعي	2	الأنطاكي	1	العارف	1
المقدسي	3	الفقيه	2	الإربلي	1	العلامة	1

Figure G.1: *Nisbas of the Duʿāt* (34) in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).



البغدادي	4	الإصهباني	1	الموصلي	1
البصري	3	البلخي	1	الرهاوي	1
المقدسي	3	البخاري	1	السجستاني	1
الكوفي	2	البيكندي	1	الترمذي	1
النيسابوري	2	العراقي	1		
الخوارزمي	2	الدمشقي	1		
الإفريقي	1	الفارسي	1		
الأهوازي	1	الهمذاني	1		
الأنطاكي	1	المغربي	1		
الإربلي	1	المصري	1		

Figure G.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Duʿāt* (34) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الداعي	6	الأمير	2	الأستاذ	1	الحسني	1
العالم	4	الإسماعيلي	2	الإيادي	1	الحسيني	1
الزاهد	4	الباطني	2	البييع	1	الكعبي	1
الإمام	3	الضرير	2	العابد	1	اللغوي	1
العلوي	3	الشاعر	2	العارف	1	المفسر	1
الشيخ	3	الشيوعي	2	العلامة	1	المقري	1
الحنبلي	3	الفقيه	2	الفارسي	1	المقريء	1
المتكلم	3	المعتزلي	2	الفقير	1	المصنف	1
القاضي	3	المولى	2	الحافظ	1	النحوي	1
الأديب	2	الصوفي	2	الحماني	1	القضاة	1

Figure G.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Duʿāt* (34) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

## Appendix H

### *Nisbas of Mudhakkirūn*

المذكر	21	المصري	4	الجمال	2	الأندلسي	1
الواعظ	15	البصري	3	المحدث	2	الأستاذ	1
الإمام	9	الحنفي	3	السلمي	2	الأصولي	1
الشيخ	7	المروزي	3	السمعاني	2	الباهلي	1
الشافعي	6	القاضي	3	الصوفي	2	البلوي	1
النيسابوري	6	القاص	3	الطليطلي	2	البوشنجي	1
الزاهد	6	التميمي	3	الأبيض	1	البزاز	1
الإصبهاني	4	البغدادى	2	الأديب	1	العالم	1
الدمشقي	4	البسطامي	2	الأشعري	1	العارف	1
الفقيه	4	الحافظ	2	الأشقر	1	العدوي	1

Figure H.1: *Nisbas* of the *Mudhakkirūn* (54) in *Taʿrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

النيسابوري	6	الأنديسي	1	الحيري	1	السجزي	1
الإصهاني	4	البوشنجي	1	المدني	1	الصقلي	1
الدمشقي	4	الشاشي	1	المقدسي	1	السرخسي	1
المصري	4	الشبلي	1	القرطبي	1	التونسي	1
البصري	3	الشيرازي	1	الراسبي	1	الطوسي	1
المروزي	3	الفاسي	1	الرازي	1	الخراساني	1
البغدادي	2	الغزنوي	1	الصالحى	1		
البسطامي	2	الهمذاني	1	السبتي	1		
السمعاني	2	الحري	1	الصدفي	1		
الطليطلي	2	الهروي	1	السجستاني	1		

Figure H.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Mudhakkirūn* (54) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

المذكر	21	التميمي	3	الأشقر	1	الداوودي	1
الواعظ	15	الحافظ	2	الأستاذ	1	الدقاق	1
الإمام	9	الجمال	2	الأصولي	1	الفرضي	1
الشيخ	7	المحدث	2	الباهلي	1	الغزالي	1
الشافعي	6	السلمي	2	البلوي	1	الحنبلي	1
الزاهد	6	السمعاني	2	البزاز	1	الجدامي	1
الفقيه	4	الصوفي	2	العالم	1	الكناني	1
الحنفي	3	الأبيض	1	العارف	1	الكرامي	1
القاضي	3	الأديب	1	العدوي	1	المالكي	1
القاص	3	الأشعري	1	العلامة	1	المفسر	1

Figure H.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the *Mudhakkirūn* (54) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

# Appendix I

## *Nisbas* of the Ḥanafī Scholars

الحنفي	481	البخاري	31	المحدث	15	السلمي	9
الفيقيه	166	القضاة	28	الواعظ	14	السمرقندي	9
القاضي	96	المصري	21	المقرئ	13	الأديب	8
الشيخ	75	الخليبي	19	الصالح	13	الأنصاري	8
الإمام	71	المفتي	19	القرشي	12	العارف	8
الدمشقي	50	الزاهد	19	الصوفي	11	الدامغاني	8
النيسابوري	43	البصري	18	النحوي	10	الشبلي	8
العلامة	39	الهروري	18	البلخي	9	الحموي	8
البغدادي	36	العالم	16	الشافعي	9	المروزي	8
المدرس	33	الكوفي	16	الحافظ	9	المولى	8

Figure I.1: *Nisbas* of the Ḥanafīs (481) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الدمشقي	50	السمرقندي	9	الواسطي	5	الجزجاني	3
النيسابوري	43	الدامغاني	8	الحوارزمي	5	الكردي	3
البغدادي	36	الشبلي	8	الأستراباذي	4	الكرخي	3
البخاري	31	الحموي	8	النسفي	4	المارديني	3
المصري	21	المروزي	8	الرومي	4	المنبجي	3
الخليبي	19	الموصلي	8	الصالحى	4	المقدسي	3
البصري	18	الإصبهاني	7	اليمامي	4	النصري	3
الهروي	18	الرازي	6	الفارسي	3	السمعاني	3
الكوفي	16	الطحاوي	5	الفرغاني	3	السنجاري	3
البلخي	9	التركي	5	الغزنوي	3	السرخسي	3

Figure I.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Ḥanafīs (481) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الحنفي	481	العالم	16	السلمي	9	العقيلي	6
الفقيه	166	المحدث	15	الأديب	8	الكناني	6
القاضي	96	الواعظ	14	الأنصاري	8	المتكلم	6
الشيخ	75	المقرئ	13	العارف	8	الورع	6
الإمام	71	الصالح	13	المولى	8	البزاز	5
العلامة	39	القرشي	12	الرئيس	8	العابد	5
المدرس	33	الصوفي	11	التميمي	8	العلوي	5
القضاة	28	النحوي	10	الخطيب	8	الضريير	5
المفتي	19	الشافعي	9	الأمير	6	الشاعر	5
الزاهد	19	الحافظ	9	الأسدي	6	الشريف	5

Figure I.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Ḥanafīs (481) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

## Appendix J

### *Nisbas* of the Mālikī Scholars

المالكي	400	المغربي	21	البغدادى	13	المولى	8
الفقيه	173	الصالح	20	الللخمي	13	السعدي	8
الإسكندراني	61	الأنصاري	19	الأزدي	12	الأديب	7
الإمام	55	العلامة	18	الحافظ	12	العارف	7
المصري	55	الزاهد	18	المحدث	10	الفاشي	7
القاضي	54	المفتي	16	الربعي	10	المقدسي	7
القرطبي	44	التميمي	16	الضرير	9	القيسي	7
الشيخ	39	البصري	15	المدرس	9	الرئيس	7
المقرئ	23	العالم	15	القضاة	9	التجيبى	7
الأندلسي	21	القرشي	14	القيرواني	9	الزهري	7

Figure J.1: *Nisbas* of the Mālikīs (400) in *Taʾriḫ al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الإسكندراني	61	الأبهري	6	الحضرمي	3	المالقي	2
المصري	55	الإفريقي	6	المهدوي	3	المرى	2
القرطبي	44	السبتي	5	الناقلي	3	القرظوني	2
الأندلسي	21	الصقلي	5	التونسي	3	الرازي	2
المغربي	21	الدمشقي	4	الإشبيلي	2	الصدفي	2
البصري	15	التلمساني	4	الشاطبي	2	السوسي	2
البغدادى	13	الطليطلي	4	الشريشي	2	الطبري	2
القيرواني	9	الأنطاكي	3	الغرناطي	2	الخولاني	2
الفاسي	7	الأسواني	3	الهمذاني	2	الإلييري	1
المقدسي	7	الشيرازي	3	الكوفي	2	الأمدي	1

Figure J.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Mālikīs (400) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

المالكي	400	المفتي	16	المدرس	9	الأموي	6
الفقيه	173	التميمي	16	القضاة	9	الهاشمي	6
الإمام	55	العالم	15	المولى	8	الجزامي	6
القاضي	54	القرشي	14	السعدي	8	المقريء	6
الشيخ	39	اللخمي	13	الأديب	7	الخطيب	6
المقريء	23	الأزدي	12	العارف	7	البكري	5
الصالح	20	الحافظ	12	القيسي	7	الشاهد	5
الأنصاري	19	المحدث	10	الرئيس	7	الغساني	5
العلامة	18	الربعي	10	التجيبى	7	المصنف	5
الزاهد	18	الضريير	9	الزهري	7	النحوي	5

Figure J.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Mālikīs (400) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

# Appendix K

## *Nisbas* of the Shāfiʿī Scholars

الشافعي	973	القرشي	47	النيسابوري	33	المروزي	20
الفقيه	465	الأنصاري	46	الحافظ	32	النحوي	20
القاضي	205	العالم	46	الحموي	32	الإربلي	19
الإمام	184	الخطيب	44	الصوفي	29	الشاعر	18
المصري	157	المقرئ	43	الرئيس	28	الحلبي	18
الدمشقي	125	المدرس	38	المقدسي	26	الضرير	17
الشيخ	114	الزاهد	38	الموصلي	26	الكاتب	16
القضاة	70	الصالح	37	الأديب	24	المتكلم	16
العلامة	57	المفتي	35	الإصهاني	23	الواسطي	16
البغدادي	50	المحدث	35	الواعظ	21	القزويني	15

Figure K.1: *Nisbas* of the Shāfiʿīs (973) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).



المصري	157	الخليبي	18	المكي	9	العراقي	6
الدمشقي	125	الواسطي	16	الناقلي	9	الشاشي	6
البغدادي	50	القزويني	15	البلعبي	8	الشامي	6
النيسابوري	33	الطبري	15	الشيرازي	8	الشهرزوري	6
الحموي	32	الجرجاني	12	الهمداني	8	الفارسي	6
المقدسي	26	البصري	11	الجزري	8	الهروي	6
الموصلبي	26	الكردي	11	المرورودي	8	اليمني	6
الإصهباني	23	الرازي	11	الأرموي	7	العسقلاني	5
المروزي	20	الطوسي	10	الدمياطي	7	الجويني	5
الإربلي	19	الإسكندراني	9	الكرخي	7	الحيلي	5

Figure K.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Shāfi'īs (973) in *Ta'rikh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الشافعي	973	الخطيب	44	الأديب	24	المخزومي	14
الفقيه	465	المقرئ	43	الواعظ	21	التميمي	14
القاضي	205	المدرس	38	النحوي	20	السعدي	13
الإمام	184	الزاهد	38	الشاعر	18	الربيعي	12
الشيخ	114	الصالح	37	الضريير	17	الثقة	12
القضاة	70	المفتي	35	الكاتب	16	الكردي	11
العلامة	57	المحدث	35	المتكلم	16	السلطان	10
القرشي	47	الحافظ	32	الورع	15	الأسدي	9
الأنصاري	46	الصوفي	29	العارف	14	الحنفي	9
العالم	46	الرئيس	28	الفرضي	14	المصنف	9

Figure K.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Shāfi'īs (973) in *Ta'rikh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

# Appendix L

## *Nisbas* of the Ḥanbalī Scholars

الحنبلي	427	المقرئ	29	المصري	15	المدرس	8
الفيقيه	129	الحراني	28	التاجر	15	الورع	8
البغدادي	93	القاضي	23	الأزجي	12	الأديب	7
المقديسي	91	الواعظ	20	المقريء	11	الإصبهاني	7
الشيخ	81	الحافظ	19	الخطيب	10	الشيرازي	7
الإمام	80	الأنصاري	18	الجماعيلي	9	الحيلى	7
الصالح	56	المحدث	17	المؤدب	9	القضاة	7
الصالحى	43	العالم	16	البعليكي	8	التنوخى	7
الدمشقي	40	العلامة	16	العكبري	8	العارف	6
الزاهد	30	المفتي	16	الضريير	8	العراقي	6

Figure L.1: *Nisbas* of the Ḥanbalīs (427) in *Tarīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

البغدادي	93	الإصبهاني	7	الإربلي	3	الخلي	2
المقدسي	91	الشيرازي	7	البصري	3	الهمذاني	2
الصالح	43	الحيلى	7	الهروي	3	الحموي	2
الدمشقي	40	العراقي	6	الجزري	3	الكردي	2
الحراني	28	النايلسي	6	النهرواني	3	الموصلي	2
المصري	15	المعري	4	اليونيني	3	الرهاوي	2
الأزجي	12	المرداوي	4	الأنباري	2	الآجري	1
الجماعيلي	9	الرسعني	4	البرداني	2	الأرموي	1
البلعبي	8	الصحراوي	4	الدينوري	2	البسطامي	1
العكبري	8	الآمدي	3	الخلاوي	2	البخاري	1

Figure L.2: Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Ḥanbalīs (427) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

الحنبلي	427	الأنصاري	18	المدرس	8	العطار	5
الفقيه	129	المحدث	17	الورع	8	السعدي	5
الشيخ	81	العالم	16	الأديب	7	السلمي	5
الإمام	80	العلامة	16	القضاة	7	الصوفي	5
الصالح	56	المفتي	16	التنوشي	7	التميمي	5
الزاهد	30	التاجر	15	العارف	6	البرمكي	4
المقري	29	المقريء	11	الشافعي	6	البزاز	4
القاضي	23	الخطيب	10	الفرضي	6	الشاهد	4
الواعظ	20	المؤدب	9	الرئيس	6	الشريف	4
الحافظ	19	الضرير	8	العابد	5	الشيبياني	4

Figure L.3: Non-Toponymic *Nisbas* of the Ḥanbalīs (427) in *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (20–670 AH/642–1272 CE).

# Appendix M

## Preachers in Legal Collections

<i>type</i>	<i>source</i>	<i>bios</i>		<i>khaṭīb</i>		<i>wā'iz</i>	<i>ratio</i>
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>JM</b>	3,056	47	1.54%	37	1.21%	1.27
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>TT</b>	358	6	1.68%	4	1.12%	1.50
<i>ḥanafī</i>	<b>TS</b>	894	24	2.68%	12	1.34%	2.00
<i>mālikī</i>	<b>DM</b>	631	34	5.39%	6	0.95%	5.67
<i>mālikī</i>	<b>TM</b>	975	25	2.56%	13	1.33%	1.92
<i>shāfi'ī</i>	<b>TFSH</b>	277	4	1.44%	17	6.14%	0.24
<i>shāfi'ī</i>	<b>TShK</b>	1,420	62	4.37%	92	6.48%	0.67
<i>shāfi'ī</i>	<b>TSh</b>	748	75	10.03%	34	4.55%	2.21
<i>ḥanbalī</i>	<b>TH</b>	707	1	0.14%	9	1.27%	0.11
<i>ḥanbalī</i>	<b>DhTH</b>	547	27	4.94%	63	11.52%	0.43
<i>Tarīkh al-islām</i> (c. 250–670 AH/864–1272 CE)							
<i>Ḥanafīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	481	7	1.46%	23	4.78%	0.30
<i>Mālikīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	400	15	3.75%	4	1.00%	3.75
<i>Shāfi'īs</i>	<b>TI</b>	973	47	4.83%	33	3.39%	1.42
<i>Ḥanbalīs</i>	<b>TI</b>	427	18	4.22%	31	7.26%	0.58

Figure M.1: The *Khaṭabā* and the *Wu'āz* in the Legal Biographical collections. **Sources:** **JM**—*al-Jawāhir al-muḍīya fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Abī-l-Wafā' (d. 775/1374 CE); **TT**—*Tāj al-tarājim fī ṭabaqāt al-ḥanafīya* of Ibn Qutlūbughā (d. 879/1475 CE); **TS**—*al-Ṭabaqāt al-sanīya fī tarājim al-ḥanafīya* of al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 1010/1602 CE); **DM**—*al-Dibāj al-mudhhab fī ma'rifat a'yān 'ulamā' al-madhhab* of Ibn Farḥūn (d. 799/1397 CE); **TM**—*Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-ma'rifat a'lām madhhab Mālik* of al-Yaḥsūbī (d. 544/1150 CE); **TFSH**—*Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-shāfi'īya* of al-Shahrazūrī (d. 676/1278 CE); **TShK**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'īya al-kubrā* of al-Subkī (d. 771/1370 CE); **TSh**—*Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'īya* of Ibn Qādī Shuhba (d. 851/1448 CE); **TH**—*Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Abī Ya'lá (d. 526/1133 CE); **DhTH**—*al-Dhayl 'alá ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* of Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393 CE).

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