

## RENUNCIANTS IN AFRICA UNDER THE AGHLABIDS

**Abstract:** Maghribi Sufism is conventionally held to have grown from an earlier movement of austere-living ulema known especially as *ṣulahā*'. The present study reviews the biographical literature for the province of Africa (*Ifriqiyah*), roughly present-day Tunisia, in the eighth and ninth centuries C.E. It confirms that leading jurists were commonly (although not invariably) described as *zuhhād* (renunciants) and *muta'abbidīn* (worshippers). Other men were recognized predominantly for their renunciant lifestyles. There are few signs of mysticism, such as would characterize later Sufism. However, a notable stress on miracles already distinguishes the African tradition from contemporary renunciation elsewhere.

Maghribi Sufism is conventionally held to have grown from an earlier movement of austere-living ulema known especially as *ṣulahā*'. The present study reviews the biographical literature for the province of Africa (*Ifriqiyah* or *Ifriqiya*), roughly present-day Tunisia, in the period of Aghlabid rule (184-296 H./800-909 C.E.).<sup>1</sup> It confirms that leading jurists were commonly (although not invariably) described as *zuhhād* (renunciants) and *muta'abbidīn* (worshippers). Other men were recognized predominantly for their renunciant lifestyles. There are few signs of mysticism, such as would characterize later Sufism. However, a notable stress on miracles already distinguishes the African tradition from contemporary renunciation in the East.

### The sources

A convenient chronicle for ninth-century Africa is the first part of Ibn 'Idhārī (d. ca 695/1295-6), *al-Bayān al-mughrib fī ikhtisār akhbār mulūk al-Andalus wa-al-Maghrib*.<sup>2</sup> The earliest biographical dictionary is Abū al-'Arab (d. Qayrawan, 333/945), *Ṭabaqāt 'ulamā'*

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<sup>1</sup> Basic studies are *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn, s.v. 'Aghlabids', by G. Marçais and J. Schacht, and Mohamed Talbi, *L'Émirat aghlabide 184-296/800-909*, Publication de la Faculté des lettres, Tunis (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1966). See also Mohamed Talbi, 'Law and economy in Ifriqiya (Tunisia) in the third Islamic century', *The Islamic Middle East, 700-1300: studies in economic and social history*, ed. A. L. Udovitch (Princeton: Darwin, 1981), 209-43, on the economic basis of elite Islamic society. A recent bibliographic survey is Isabel Fierro Bello, 'Writing and reading in early Ifriqiya', *Promissa nec aspera curans: mélanges offerts à Madame le Professeur Marie-Thérèse Urvoy*, ed. Georgio Rahal and Heinz-Otto Luthe (n.p.: Les presses universitaires and Institut Catholique de Toulouse, n.d.), 373-93.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn 'Idhārī, *al-Bayān al-mughrib fī ikhtisār akhbār mulūk al-Andalus wa-al-Maghrib*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf and Maḥmūd Bashshār 'Awwād, 4 vols (Tunis: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1434/2013).

*Ifriqiyah wa-Tūnus*, which runs to the mid-ninth century C.E.<sup>3</sup> Not much later appeared al-Khushanī (d. Cordova, 371/981?), *Ṭabaqāt ‘ulamā’ Ifriqiyah*, first published with Abū al-‘Arab’s *Ṭabaqāt* and apparently a continuation of it.<sup>4</sup> Al-Khushanī also is continually quoted in later works, usually as ‘Ibn al-Ḥārith’. Compared with other biographers, however, he has minimal interest in piety.

An important source of the next century is Abū Bakr al-Mālikī (d. Qayrawan, ca 463/1061-2), *Riyāḍ al-nufūs*. Abū Bakr al-Mālikī sometimes quotes Abū al-‘Arab concerning someone completely missing from the extant *Ṭabaqāt*.<sup>5</sup> Often, interesting details turn up; for example, of Abū ‘Īsā Marwān ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yaḥsubī (fl. early 9th cent.), Abū Bakr al-Mālikī quotes the prominent Māliki Saḥnūn (d. 240/854) as saying, ‘Abū ‘Īsā al-Yaḥsubī was a *ṣāliḥ nāsik* (righteous renunciant) man. He would not sleep most of the night from being preoccupied with the ritual prayer and conversation with his lord (*munājāt rabbih*).’<sup>6</sup> In the *Ṭabaqāt*, Abū al-‘Arab has *nāsik* without *ṣāliḥ* and prayer all night without conversation.<sup>7</sup> Such discrepancies have been explained as the result of our having only an abridgement by the Andalusian Māliki and Qur’an commentator Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭalamankī (d. 429/1038).<sup>8</sup> However, Fethi Bahri has argued that such quotations are rather from other biographical works by Abū al-‘Arab and al-Khushanī, not extant but available to Abū Bakr

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<sup>3</sup> Abū al-‘Arab and al-Khushanī, *Classes des savants de l’Ifriqīya*, ed. Mohammed ben Cheneb, Publications de la Faculté des lettres d’Alger, Bulletin de Correspondance africaine 51, 52 (Paris: Leroux, 1915, 1920). The first volume, here cited, comprises the Arabic text, the second a French translation of al-Khushanī.

<sup>4</sup> Also published as al-Khushanī, *Quḍāt Qurtubah wa-‘ulamā’ Ifriqiyah*, ed. ‘Izzat ‘Aṭṭār al-Ḥusaynī, Min turāth al-Andalus 2 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1372/1966), easier to read than Ben Cheneb’s edition but not textually superior.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Yahyá ibn Zakarīyā’ ibn Muḥammad (fl. Tunis, late 8th cent.), for whom see Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *K. Riyāḍ al-nufūs fī ṭabaqāt ‘ulamā’ al-Qayrawān wa-Ifriqiyah*, ed. Bashīr al-Bakkūsh, sup’d Muḥammad al-‘Arūsī al-Maṭwī, 3 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1401/1981, 1403/1983), 1:240; Abū al-Sarī Wāṣil ibn ‘Abd Allāh (d. 252/866-7), covered by Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:431-41, of whom Abū al-‘Arab is quoted by al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik li-ma’rifat a’lām madhhab Mālik*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī, &al., 8 vols (Rabat, &c.: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-al-Shu’ūn al-Islāmīyah, &c., 1966-83), 4:199.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:194.

<sup>7</sup> Abū al-‘Arab, *Classes*, 75-6.

<sup>8</sup> See editors’ introduction to Abū al-‘Arab, *Ṭabaqāt ‘ulamā’ Ifriqiyah wa-Tūnus*, ed. ‘Alī al-Shābbī and Na‘īm Ḥasan al-Yāfi (n.p.: al-Dār al-Tūnusīyah, 1968), 29-30. This edition is easier to read than Ben Cheneb’s and has marginal cross-references to the first edition.

al-Mālīkī and others. Al-Ṭalamankī, he believes, was merely one of the transmitters of the extant *Ṭabaqāts*.<sup>9</sup>

The principal Mālīkī biographical dictionary for the period up to the twelfth century is al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. Marrakech, 544/1149), *Tartīb al-madārik*, which covers the leading Mālīkī jurists of Africa, among other places, continually quoting earlier authors but sometimes including material not found elsewhere and very interested in reputations for piety as well as juridical acumen.<sup>10</sup> Still more interested in piety seems to have been ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Dabbāgh (d. 696/1296-7?), whose work *Ma ʿālim al-īmān fī ma ʿrifat ahl al-Qayrawān* is extant as reworked by Qāsim ibn ʿĪsā ibn Nājī (d. Tabessa, 837/1433-4).<sup>11</sup> One attraction of the *Ma ʿālim* is the way al-Dabbāgh and Ibn Nājī (the latter promises to introduce his comments by *qultu*) continually point out contradictions in the sources, sometimes suggesting harmonizations. Another is their still greater interest in piety, so that they, too, preserve information from Abū al-ʿArab not available in earlier extant works.<sup>12</sup> They also add information from additional early sources, notably one Abū Bakr Saʿīd ibn Muḥammad al-Tujībī, otherwise unidentified by me.<sup>13</sup>

A major blind spot in the available sources is the African Ḥanafī school, few of whose adherents are covered by Ḥanafī biographical dictionaries. In the late eighth century, a fair proportion of African jurists studied both Medinese and Kufan traditions. The ʿAbbāsids initially recruited qadis in Medina but then shifted to recruiting them in Kufa, so it

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<sup>9</sup> Fethi Bahri, 'Abū l-ʿArab et al-Khuchanī: deux auteurs et une œuvre', *IBLA* 65/2, no 190 (2002), 187-202.

<sup>10</sup> See n. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Dabbāgh, *Ma ʿālim al-īmān fī ma ʿrifat ahl al-Qayrawān*, rec. Ibn Nājī, ed. Ibrāhīm Shabbūh, Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī Abū al-Nūr, and Muḥammad Mādūr, *Min turāthihā al-islāmī* 1, 8, 14, 3 vols (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī and Tunis: al-Maktabah al-ʿAtīqah, 1968-78). Notes to come refer to this edition. Earlier published 4 vols in 2 (n.p.: al-Maṭbaʿah al-ʿArabīyah al-Tūnusīyah, 1320), more recently ed. ʿAbd al-Majīd Khayyālī, 5 vols in 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 2005). The Cairo/Tunis edition includes marginal cross-references to the first edition.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Dabbāgh was also the author of an extant book on mystical love, *K. Mashāriq anwār al-qulūb wa-mafātīḥ asrār al-ghuyūb*, ed. H. Ritter (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir and Dār Bayrūt, 1379/1959).

<sup>13</sup> Normally 'Abū Bakr al-Tujībī' but 'Saʿīd ibn Muḥammad al-Tujībī' at Dabbāgh, *Ma ʿālim* 1:294.

may be that eclectic Africans were trying to hedge their bets.<sup>14</sup> ‘Abd Allāh ibn Farrūkh (d. Old Cairo, 175/791-2?), an immigrant to Qayrawan from Andalusia, studied under Mālik (d. Medina, 179/795), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. Basra, 161/777?), and Abū Ḥanīfah (d. Baghdad, 150/767). Abū Bakr al-Mālikī reports that he depended on Mālik but often inclined toward the position of the people of Iraq when he thought theirs was correct.<sup>15</sup> ‘Alī ibn Ziyād (d. 183/799-800) was said to be the first to introduce the *Muwaṭṭa*’ of Mālik and the *Jāmi*’ of Sufyān al-Thawrī to Africa.<sup>16</sup> Ibn Ghānim (d. 190/806?), appointed qadi of Qayrawan in 171/787-8, corresponded indirectly with Mālik and Abū Yūsuf as to cases that had arisen.<sup>17</sup> Asad ibn al-Furāt (d. 214/829-30?), an immigrant from Khurasan, seems to have been mainly a transmitter of Ḥanafī teaching to Africa but stories are also told of his participation in the circle of Mālik.<sup>18</sup> His disciple Ma‘mar ibn Maṣṣūr (n.d.) inclined toward the opinion of the Kufans.<sup>19</sup> Another, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qādim (d. 247/861-2), is the last to be characterized as adhering to both the Iraqi and Medinese schools, although Muḥammad ibn Abān al-Ḥimyarī (d. 284/897-8) was said to have heard from (i.e., collected the teaching of) both the Iraqis and Medinese.<sup>20</sup> The Aghlabids appointed qadis alternately from both schools.<sup>21</sup>

In consequence, we read in the sources of Ḥanafīyah who succeeded Mālikī qadis, but not much about them, and almost nothing about Ḥanafī contemporaries who did not become qadis. An exception is Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fārisī, known as Ibn Zurzur (d. 291/903-4), who said,

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<sup>14</sup> See Mathieu Tillier, *Les cadis d’Iraq et l’état abbaside (132/750-334/945)* (Damascus: Presses de l’IFPO, 2009), 148-55.

<sup>15</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:181.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Yūnus (d. 347/958), *apud* ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 3:80; Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:234.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 3:69. See also Nurit Tsafir, *The history of an Islamic school of law: the early spread of Hanafism*, Harvard ser. in Islamic Law (Cambridge, Mass.: Islamic Legal Studies Program, Harvard Law School, 2004), chap. 6, esp. 110-11.

<sup>18</sup> See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edn, s.v. ‘Asad b. al-Furāt’, by Jonathan Brockopp.

<sup>19</sup> Abū al-‘Arab, *Classes*, 112.

<sup>20</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:111, 200.

<sup>21</sup> See Tsafir, *History*, 112-14.

I know the qur'anic commentary of Yaḥyá ibn Salām as I know the Qur'an. I know the jurisprudence of Abū Ḥanīfah as I know qur'anic commentary. I know the *Muwatta'* and Mālik's jurisprudence as I know Abū Ḥanīfah's jurisprudence.<sup>22</sup>

But Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, while saying he knew the doctrines of the people of Kufa, goes on to relate stories of his putting down prominent Ḥanafī authorities.<sup>23</sup>

Unusually, al-Khushanī devotes a section of his biographical dictionary to the Iraqis.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, this section is almost uniformly hostile, given over largely to anecdotes in its subjects' disfavour. It includes some information on judicial appointments but no dates, nothing on books circulating among African Ḥanafīyah, and nothing about teachers and students. Enmity between the Ḥanafī and Mālikī schools developed to the point that the prominent Mālikī Saḥnūn imprisoned and had flogged his Ḥanafī predecessor Ibn Abī al-Jawād (d. 242/856-7) for peculation after he became qadi of Qayrawan in 234/848-9,<sup>25</sup> then the Ḥanafī Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abdūn (d. 299/911-12?), appointed qadi for Qayrawan in 275/888-9, had his Mālikī predecessor Ibn Ṭālib (d. 276/889-90?) and a number of other disciples to Saḥnūn imprisoned or flogged and paraded on camels. Two reportedly died on the spot.<sup>26</sup> An exception is 'Abd Allāh ibn Hārūn, secretary to the Ḥanafī qadi Sulaymān ibn 'Imrān (his second term 259-69/872-3 to 882-3), appointed by Ibn Ṭālib to the judgeship of Tunis, kept on by Ibn 'Abdūn.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:248. Yaḥyá ibn Salām al-Taymī (d. 200/815), *al-Tafsīr*, ed. Hind Shalabī, 2 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2004/1425 [sic]), covers Q. 16-37, little more being extant. I follow Sezgin, *GAS* 1:39, as to the spelling of his *nasab*. Sallām is admittedly the more usual form, preferred by Shalabī, indirectly supported by Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī, sup'd Muḥammad 'Alī al-Najjār, *Turāthunā*, 4 vols (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣrīyah lil-Ta'līf wa-al-Tarjamah, 1964?-7, repr. Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmīyah, n.d.), 2:702.

<sup>23</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:514-15.

<sup>24</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 180-97.

<sup>25</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:65-6, 69-72; Talbi, *Émirat*, 233-4; in answer to a prayer of his, according to some ('Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:55).

<sup>26</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *K. al-Miḥan*, ed. Yaḥyá Wahīb al-Jubūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1403/1983), 463-6; Khushanī, *Classes*, 139, 187, 229; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:325-7, 356; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:176, 275; Talbi, *Émirat*, 285.

<sup>27</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 192-3.

Another blind spot is of course non-Sunni Islam. Wilferd Madelung has collected such information as there is on local Shia. When al-Qāḍī al-Nu‘mān (d. 363/974) undertook an encyclopaedic account of Ismā‘īlī law, he apparently relied heavily for hadith not on direct instruction by local teachers but on books from Egypt and further east.<sup>28</sup> Khawārij were active among Berber tribesmen further west from the early eighth century, but their history is equally obscure.<sup>29</sup> There was some learned Khārijī activity in Africa, for Saḥnūn expelled the Ṣufrīyah and ‘Ibādīyah along with the Mu‘tazilah from the Friday mosque, where they had been used to debate, when he became qadi of Qayrawan. He had some flogged and paraded and made a number of them recant.<sup>30</sup> Abū al-Khaṭṭāb al-Kindī (fl. early 9th cent.), who related the knowledge of Sufyān al-Thawrī, was accused of adhering to the Ṣufrīyah. For forty years, he did not take off his collar (*tawq*) from preoccupation with prayer and worship.<sup>31</sup>

### Terminology

One of the starting points for this study is Vincent Cornell’s study of Moroccan sainthood in the Middle Ages. The typical term for a saint in the early period seems to be *ṣāliḥ*.

In the cities, the *ṣāliḥ* was often revered as an ‘anchor of the earth’ (*watad al-arḍ*). In this role, he was a religious leader (*imām*) whose knowledge of Islamic law and moral uprightness kept the social fabric intact. As an ‘anchor’ of his society, he was first and foremost a juridical scholar (*faqīh*): one who exercised interpretive authority over the *Sharī‘a*, the divine law. When the paradigm of the *ṣāliḥ* was incorporated into Sufism, it came to symbolize the perspectives of ‘Sunni internationalism’ and *uṣūl al-dīn*, a hermeneutical method that based normative Islamic practice on the Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Wilferd Madelung, ‘Some notes on non-Ismā‘īlī Shiism in the Maghrib’, *Studia Islamica*, no 44 (1976), 87-97; idem, ‘The sources of Ismā‘īlī law’, *Journal of Near Eastern studies* 35 (1976): 29-40; idem, ‘The youth and education of the Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān’, *Islam: identité et altérité*, ed. Mohammed Amir-Moezzi, Bibliothèque de l’École des hautes études, sciences religieuses, 165 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 331-41.

<sup>29</sup> See for a start *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. ‘Khārijites’, by Adam R. Geiser.

<sup>30</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 102; ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:60; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:87-8.

<sup>31</sup> Abū al-‘Arab, *Classes*, 87; Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:251. Presumably, *tawq* indicates the whole garment by *pars pro toto*.

<sup>32</sup> Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the saint: power and authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1998), xxxvi.

*Ṣāliḥ* is a qur'anic term. It appears 30 times in combination with *'amal* ('work') or *'amila* ('to do'); e.g. 'Those who repent and *act righteously* turn to God in repentance' (25:71); 'Those who believe in God and *act righteously*, He will admit them to gardens' (65:11).<sup>33</sup> The plural *ṣāliḥāt* appears 63 times as 'good deeds'. The plural *ṣāliḥūn* appears fairly often with the meaning of 'righteous', ranging from the degree of righteousness that goes with being saved at the Last Judgement (e.g. 24:32, 'Marry off the unmarried among you and *the righteous* among your male and female slaves'; 4:69, 'Those who obey God and the messenger—they are with those whom God has blessed: the prophets and the loyal ones and the witnesses and *the righteous*') to saintliness (e.g. 6:85, 'And Zachariah and John and Jesus and Ilyās—each one [of them] was of *the righteous*').

We might better assign less weight to occurrences at verse ends, where *ṣāliḥīn* provides a handy rhyme. Still, note Q. 21:105, 'We have written in Psalms after the Reminder: "The earth will be inherited by My righteous servants (*'ibādī al-ṣāliḥūn*)."' This recalls Ps. 37:29 (v. 30 in the Prayer Book version), 'The righteous (*ṣaddîqîm*) shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever'. The biblical *ṣaddîqîm* usually pertains to conformity to the divine ordinances, much like *ṣāliḥūn* in the Qur'an. It is also, as in the Qur'an, closely associated with salvation.

The Qur'an also refers to *ṣiddîqîn*, a loan word from Syriac. It often comes up in renunciant literature to designate a saint; for example, Muslim ibn Yasār (Basran, l. Mecca, d. 100/718-19?) said, 'It is not meet for the *ṣiddîq* to curse much (*an yakūna la 'ānan*). If I ever curse anything, I do not leave it in my house.'<sup>34</sup> Probably both *ṣāliḥ* and *ṣiddîq* may be translated as 'righteous', at least for the early centuries. Later, by folk etymology, *ṣiddîq* became closely connected with the verb *ṣadaqa* and interpreted as 'veracious'. The technical

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<sup>33</sup> Here and elsewhere qur'anic quotations are from *The Qur'ān*, trans. Alan Jones (n.p.: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, 10 vols (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1352-7/1932-8), 2:293.

term *ṣadūq* in ninth- and (more commonly) tenth-century hadith criticism seems to represent an intermediate stage, inasmuch as the traditionist so labelled was probably more notable for good intentions than strict veracity.<sup>35</sup> But it might still indicate a saint. For example, Ghazālī describes four degrees of *waraʿ*, ‘scrupulosity’: in ascending order, those of *al-ʿudūl*, *al-ṣāliḥīn*, *al-muṭqinīn*, and *al-ṣiddīqīn*.<sup>36</sup>

It cannot be claimed that *ṣāliḥ* was an essential technical term for our early biographers. The example of discrepant descriptions of Abū ʿĪsā al-Yaḥṣubī has been mentioned already. Abū al-ʿArab as left us by al-Talamankī says of Zakarīyāʾ ibn al-Ḥakam (fl. early 9th cent.) ‘*ṣāliḥ*’.<sup>37</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī quotes Abū al-ʿArab as calling him ‘*thiqah maʿmūn*’ but not ‘*ṣāliḥ*’.<sup>38</sup> A convenient list from al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) is headed *Dhikr man kāna bi-Miṣr min al-ṣulahāʾ wa-al-zuhhād wa-al-ṣūfiyah*, where *ṣāliḥ* appears to be a safe term to designate persons of notable piety but not specialists in it, such as the Ḥanafī qadi Bakkār ibn Qutaybah (d. 270/884).<sup>39</sup>

One of Saḥnūn’s disciples said of him, ‘Saḥnūn is the *rāhib* of this nation. There was no one more discerning (of the law) between Mālik and Saḥnūn than Saḥnūn.’<sup>40</sup> One wonders, of course, whether renunciation in early Islamic Africa was different from elsewhere because of a peculiar Christian substrate. The term *rāhib* (‘monk’) looks like an example of continuity with the Christian past. However, such rare examples as occur in the biographical literature of interactions with Christian subjects mainly suggest anxiety on the part of the Muslims to distance themselves. For example, al-Buhlūl gave someone two dinars

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<sup>35</sup> For *ṣadūq* as a middling rank, see Eerik Dickinson, *The development of early Sunnite ḥadīth criticism*, Islamic history and civilization, studies and texts, 38 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 96. For frequency of use by different critics, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edn, s.v. ‘ḥadīth criticism’, by Pavel Pavlovitch. On *ṣiddīq*, see also Christopher Melchert, ‘Three qur’anic terms (*siyāḥa*, *ḥikma* and *ṣiddīq*) of special interest to the early renunciants’, *The meaning of the word*, ed. S. R. Burge (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 89-116, esp. 102-8, 114-15.

<sup>36</sup> Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, k. *al-ḥalāl wa-al-ḥarām*, § *darajāt al-ḥalāl wa-al-ḥarām*.

<sup>37</sup> Abū al-ʿArab, *Classes*, 86.

<sup>38</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:238.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-muḥāḍarah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 2 vols. (n.p.: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1967-8/1387), 1:511-16.

<sup>40</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:353; ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:52; Dabbāgh, *Maʿālim* 2:84.



to buy oil. He went to a Christian dealer who had the best. When the Christian heard whom it was for, he said, 'We draw near to God by means of al-Buhlūl just as you draw near to God by means of him', and gave him four dinars' worth. On hearing of it, al-Buhlūl's reaction was to go to the Christian to ask for his two dinars back, lest some love arise in his heart, *contra* Q. 58:22 ('You will not find a people who believe in God and His messenger being loving to those who oppose God and His messenger').<sup>41</sup> Moreover, *rāhib* seems to be used in a slightly different sense as applied (for example) to Ṣaḥnūn's contemporaries Hannād ibn al-Sarī (d. 240/857) and Aḥmad ibn Budayl (d. 258/871-2), for each of them was called *rāhib al-Kūfah* on account of his austerity and devotion to worship, Aḥmad ibn Budayl even losing that designation when he became a qadi.<sup>42</sup> With Ṣaḥnūn, by contrast, juridical acumen seems to be constitutive, so that *rāhib* as applied to him suggests only a religious model of some sort. (The influence of a Christian substrate is not hereby ruled out, just that it cannot be affirmed on the basis of recognition by the Islamic biographical tradition.)

A number of Africans of this period are identified as being among the *abdāl*, saintly persons of a set number for whom God would substitute another if any died.<sup>43</sup> 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Fattāl (fl. mid-8th cent.) was one of them. He imposed on himself not to laugh, not to sleep lying down, and not to eat any fat.<sup>44</sup> Rabāḥ ibn Yazīd (d. 172/788-9) was another. Among the miracle stories told of him is that he was once robbed of his she-ass and clothes, then prayed. Darkness descended and the robbers came back to him without knowing, gave him back what they had stolen, whereupon the darkness lifted.<sup>45</sup> Rabī' ibn 'Abd Allāh (fl. later 8th cent.) was much given to wandering (*siyāḥah*) from settled places. In Syria, he

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<sup>41</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 56-7.

<sup>42</sup> See Dhahabī, *Siyar* 11:466, 12:332.

<sup>43</sup> See Rana Mikati, 'On the identity of the Syrian *abdāl*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 80/1 (2017): 21-43; Christopher Melchert, *Before Sufism: early Islamic renunciant piety*, Islam - thought, culture, and society 4 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2020), 112-18.

<sup>44</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:197-8; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:252-3.

<sup>45</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:254-5.

associated with the *abdāl*.<sup>46</sup> Zaydān ibn Ismāʿīl (d. 292/904-5?) of Sousse was said to be one of them.<sup>47</sup> Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥumayd of Sousse (d. 293/905-6) was another. Someone saw a miraculous hand come out of the wall to keep flies off his face.<sup>48</sup> Ḥimās ibn Marwān (d. 303/915-16?), a worshipful qadi, had a son Sālim who was among the *abdāl*.<sup>49</sup> He also identified Abū Hārūn al-Andalusī (d. 291/903-4) to Sālim and other disciples, 'This is Abū Hārūn al-Andalusī, who is answered of prayer and one of the *abdāl*. One hopes for the blessing of his supplication.'<sup>50</sup>

*Ṣūfī* comes up rarely, as one might expect in the ninth century and far from Baghdad, where classical Sufism crystallized around al-Junayd (d. Baghdad, 298/911?).<sup>51</sup> The first Andalusian to be called a Sufī was an 'Abd Allāh ibn Naṣr (d. 315/927-8).<sup>52</sup> There were very few Sufis in Egypt before the late Fāṭimi period.<sup>53</sup> In line with such expressions of scepticism further east, the Follower Ismāʿīl ibn 'Ubayd al-Anṣārī is said to have disparaged wool as the renunciation of non-Arabs (*nusuk al- 'ajam*).<sup>54</sup> To the contrary, however, al-Dabbāgh reports that he wore a *jubbah*, *kisā*, and *qalansuwah* of wool.<sup>55</sup> Abū al- 'Arab refers to Abū

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<sup>46</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:198.

<sup>47</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:411-12.

<sup>48</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma 'ālim* 2:250-5. The hand shooing flies is reported also by Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:8. However, he does not mention that Ibn Abī Ḥumayd was among the *abdāl*, only that someone who reported a conversation with him was: *Riyāḍ* 2:7.

<sup>49</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma 'ālim* 2:322.

<sup>50</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:517.

<sup>51</sup> See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: the formative period*, The new Edinburgh Islamic surveys (Edinburgh: Univ. Press, 2007), chap. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Manuela Marín, 'The early development of *zuhd* in al-Andalus', *Shī'a Islam, sects and Sufism*, ed. Frederick De Jong (Utrecht: M. Th. Houtsma Stichting, 1992), 83-96, at 85.

<sup>53</sup> Nathan Hofer, *The popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173-1325* (Edinburgh: Univ. Press, 2015), 2, citing Suyūṭī's list. The earliest figure there who may have been a Sufi in the classical sense is Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Daqqāq (fl. late 9th century), on whom cf. al-Sha'ranī, *Lawāqih al-anwār fī ṭabaqāt al-akhyār (al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā)*, 2 vols in 1 (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al- 'Āmirah al- 'Uthmānīyah, 1316), 1:76, offering sage advice for a *murīd* (aspirant). The earliest to be evidently called a Sufi is Fāṭimah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 312/924-5), on whom cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, 17 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1422/2001), 16:630-1, reporting that she was called *al-ṣūfiyah* because she wore wool and did not sleep for over sixty years save in her prayer area (*muṣallā*) on the bare ground; i.e., a worshipper in the classic renunciant tradition, not known for mysticism. Some earlier Egyptians were called *ṣūfiyah* but in association with political activism (enjoining the good and forbidding the bad), not mystical piety, for whom see Christopher Melchert, 'Baṣran origins of classical Sufism', *Der Islam* 82 (2005): 221-40, at 232.

<sup>54</sup> Abū al- 'Arab, *Classes*, 20. For comparisons, see Melchert, 'Baṣran origins', 228.

<sup>55</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma 'ālim* 1:195.

Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn Yaḥyá (d. 249/863-4) as *al-ṣūfī*.<sup>56</sup> There is nothing in the biography that follows to associate him with a special brand of piety. Al-Dabbāgh says of a one-time disciple to Ṣaḥnūn, the renunciant Ibrāhīm ibn al-Maḍā' (d. 276/889-90?), 'There prevailed with him *'ilm al-taṣawwuf* (the science of Sufism).'<sup>57</sup> He also calls him a *ṣāliḥ*, then quotes someone else as saying he was a *zāhid* and *'ābid* ('worshipper'). Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ merely calls him *ṣāliḥ*.<sup>58</sup> Al-Dabbāgh's characterization is probably, then, anachronistic, using a later term to designate someone more given to devotions than jurisprudence.

Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ relates a story of Jabalah ibn Ḥamūd al-Ṣadaḥī (d. 299/911?), a one-time disciple to Ṣaḥnūn, who among other things wore notably ragged clothing. 'A man of the *mutaṣawwifāh* used to attend his session. When he heard things to soften the heart (*raqā'iq*), his eyes would tear up. He would tell him, "You are not qualified for this." When the Shi'ī appeared, he took to serving his scribes.'<sup>59</sup> When he first saw Ibn Ghāzī 'with his worship, *taṣawwuf*, retreating to the *ribāṭ*, and seeking knowledge, he said "This head will not die as a Muslim.'" When 'Ubayd Allāh the Fāṭimid turned up, he took up his cause.<sup>60</sup> Here, 'Sufism' apparently indicates a life of self-denial (to Jabalah transparently insufficient to keep them Sunni), not the cultivation of mystical experience. The first person Abū Bakr al-Mālikī calls a Sufi is one Abū Bakr al-Ṣadaḥī of Sousse (d. 304/916-17), of whom all he says is that he related a story of Mālik ibn Anas' teaching a lesson about the proper way to eat, drink, and renew ritual purity.

### **Renunciation among African jurists**

Islamic law is said to have come to Africa when the caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99-101/717-20) sent ten jurists 'to teach *fiqh* to the people of Africa', including the

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<sup>56</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 109.

<sup>57</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:174.

<sup>58</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:236.

<sup>59</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:372; however, an apparent alternative version describes him as wearing a *jubbah* and *ridā'* of wool but calling him a *sā'ih* ('wanderer') rather than a (would-be) Sufi: Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:35.

<sup>60</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:375.

prohibition of wine, later reinforced by the arrival of more Easterners.<sup>61</sup> The timing is a little confused. For example, Ismā'īl ibn 'Ubayd al-Anṣārī (d. 107/725-6) is among those named by Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, but Abū al-'Arab says expressly that he was not one of the ten, al-Dabbāgh that he built the big mosque known as Jāmi' al-Zaytūnah in 91/709-10.<sup>62</sup>

One of the leading jurists of the later eighth century was al-Buhlūl ibn Rāshid (d. 183/799-800?), whom Abū al-'Arab describes as much given to devotions (*mujtahid*), scrupulous (*wari'*), and answered of prayer (*mustajāb al-da'wah*).<sup>63</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī relates a story of what Mālik told what became three of the leading jurists of Africa.

Mālik looked at al-Buhlūl and said, 'This is the worshipper of his city.' He looked at 'Abd Allāh ibn Ghānim and said, 'This is the qadi of his city.' He looked at 'Abd Allāh ibn Farrūkh and said, 'This is the jurist of his city.'

Abū Bakr al-Mālikī comments, 'Al-Buhlūl was among the jurists but worship prevailed with him. Ibn Ghānim was a jurist but when he assumed the judgeship, his name prevailed with him', meaning he used his position to enrich himself.<sup>64</sup> Yet Abū al-'Arab says of Ibn Ghānim, 'No doubt he was answered of prayer.'<sup>65</sup> There was evidently some feeling that an outstandingly distinguished scholar must also have charismata.

The austerities reported of African jurists are familiar from elsewhere. Marwān ibn Abī Shāḥmah (d. 242/857) made bricks for a living, giving away one-third of his revenue as alms, giving one-third to his family, and putting one-third into more clay and straw. He slept on a brick in his house.<sup>66</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 246/860-1?) never married or took a concubine. He had two slave girls to serve him. He was asked, 'Why don't you take one of them as a concubine, since they would be good for that?' He swore that he did not

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<sup>61</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 20-1. Enumerated by Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:99-151.

<sup>62</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:106-9; Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 20; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:192.

<sup>63</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 52; also Khushanī, *Classes*, 52, 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 3:87, and Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:269.

<sup>64</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:202.

<sup>65</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 45.

<sup>66</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Ṭabaqāt*, 115; Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:392-4; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:105-6.

know what their faces looked like on account of his preoccupation with worshipping his lord.<sup>67</sup> Abū Hārūn al-Andalusī was another celibate worshipper, never having to purify himself of major ritual impurity.<sup>68</sup> Abū al-‘Arab says of Muḥammad ibn Yahyā al-Taymī (d. 262/876), son of the Qur’an commentator, ‘I was his disciple for long years. I never saw him laugh, nor become angry except once, when he yelled at a slave of his.’<sup>69</sup> Jabalah ibn Ḥamūd was seen wearing ragged clothes that one of his associates reckoned were worth three-quarters of a dirham.<sup>70</sup>

Likewise familiar are African jurists’ reported devotional activities.

Mu‘āwiyah ibn al-Faḍl (*fl.* early 9th cent.), ‘Abd Allāh ibn Khalīl (d. 276/890), ‘Abd al-Jabbār ibn Khālīd (d. 281/894), Aḥmad ibn Yazīd (d. 284/897), and Muḥammad ibn Abī Ḥumayd recited the entire Qur’an every day.<sup>71</sup> Hāshim ibn Masrūr (d. 307/919-20), answered of prayer but especially notable for extravagant almsgiving, recited the Qur’an twice a day during the year but three times during Ramadan, while Muḥammad ibn Naṣr (d. 309/921-2), likewise said to be answered of prayer, actually recited the Qur’an three times a day throughout the year.<sup>72</sup> Saḥnūn was so intent on his nighttime devotions that his house was literally broken into and plundered, even his *qalansuwah* taken off his head, without his noticing.<sup>73</sup> Ḥamdūn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Assāl (d. 244/858-9) would recite the Qur’an for a third of each night, sleep for a third of it, then weep and supplicate for a third.<sup>74</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abdūs (d. 260/873-4?) prayed the morning prayer on the ablution of the

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<sup>67</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:197.

<sup>68</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:516.

<sup>69</sup> Abū al-‘Arab, *Classes*, 38.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:372, citing Abū al-‘Arab but evidently from one of the biographies suppressed in the extant abridgement.

<sup>71</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:231; ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:384, citing Abū al-‘Arab; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:176-700, 188 (but on 187, alternatively, recited the Qur’an nightly in Ramadan), 200, 251. Abū al-‘Arab is cited for a report of Ibn Abī Ḥumayd’s reciting the Qur’an nightly in Ramadan, but evidently from one of the biographies suppressed in the extant abridgement.

<sup>72</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:149-50; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:345, 351, citing al-Mālikī but I have not found Muḥammad ibn Naṣr in *Riyāḍ al-nufūs*.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:74, citing al-Mālikī but I have not found the story in *Riyāḍ al-nufūs*.

<sup>74</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:410.

previous evening for thirty or twenty-eight years, by two reports, meaning he had stayed awake all night, although others restrict this to seven years or even just one year in his youth.<sup>75</sup> Of Jabalah ibn Ḥamūd, said to be the most renunciant of Saḥnūn's disciples, it was said, 'Jabalah did not like to display his works. All his works were hidden except for renunciation, it being evident on him.'<sup>76</sup> That his, he complemented his outward renunciant appearance with supplications, supererogatory prayers, and qur'anic recitation out of sight. Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Sidrī (d. 309/921-2), later martyred under the Fāṭimids, was observed to pay no attention to a predatory cat that came up while he was on a journey. Asked about it later, he said, 'What—do you fear anything but God?'<sup>77</sup>

The expectation of outstanding piety was evidently part of the jurists' authority. Saḥnūn is the most prominent African jurist in the Mālikī tradition as author of *al-Mudawwanah*, but Abū al-'Arab begins his biography by describing him as combining outstanding discernment (*fiqh*), true scrupulosity (*wara'*), indifference to the world, and roughness of clothing and food.<sup>78</sup> His weeping at hearing from the books of Ibn Wahb has been mentioned before. He also seems to have assembled a book on *zuhd* himself.<sup>79</sup> He evidently was supported by agriculture, dependent on slave labour, but there are stories of his sometimes engaging in manual labour, himself, as when he appeared before some disciples carrying a plough because a slave was ill.<sup>80</sup> A number of quotations belittle ritual works in favour of scrupulosity; for example,

Leaving a *dānaq* of what God (mighty and glorious is he) dislikes is better than 70,000 major pilgrimages followed by 70,000 minor pilgrimages, all accepted; better than 70,000 horses on the path of God with their provision and arms; better than the sacrifice of 70,000 camels at the sacred house of God; better than freeing 70,000 slaves of the children of Ismā'īl.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:459; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:225; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:141.

<sup>76</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:29.

<sup>77</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:167; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:355-6.

<sup>78</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 101.

<sup>79</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:451; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:213.

<sup>80</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:360-1; Talbi, 'Law and economy', 217.

<sup>81</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:359; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:55; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:99.

Of notable austerities, on the other hand, there are admittedly only a few reports. 'He used to send Mu'attib ibn Abī al-Azhar every day to buy a quarter *raṭl* of meat on which to break his fast. Then he considered that excessive and left it, following after the righteous.'<sup>82</sup> This informs us incidentally that he was in the habit of fasting every day, not only in Ramadan.

Qadis are more ambiguous, evidently expected to maintain their authority by display. Ibn Ghānim said that the execution of the qadi's rulings depended on the extent of people's awe toward him; therefore, he durst not let his *qalansuwah* fall from his head.<sup>83</sup> This points to maintaining his dignity. He maintained an impressive appearance in other ways as well; notably, his clothing at his death was evaluated at 1,000 dinars.<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, it is said that he wore rough clothing to judge and kept his eyes to the ground.<sup>85</sup> Ibn Ṭālib was a splendid dresser (*fākhir al-libās*) but also tender-hearted and given to much weeping (from regret for his sin).<sup>86</sup>

It was exceptional for Ḥimās ibn Marwān, qadi for Qayrawan 290-4/903-7, not only to be given to wearing wool, praying by night, and fasting by day, but taking no wage for judging (even though the same day he was appointed qadi, his son Sālim pawned the family axe to buy bread and oil) and opening up the drain to his house or breaking up firewood at the door while plaintiffs were arguing before him. Ibn Nājī comments on the last item, from al-Tujībī, 'In this time of ours, if a qadi were to do this, they would rebuke him and some of his judgements would not be effected.' Ibn Nājī himself had used to behave humbly this way when he was qadi for Djerba, among Berbers with the manners of bedouin, but had to give it up when he became qadi for Béja. Then he quotes Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285):

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<sup>82</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:361; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:55. On Mu'attib ibn Abī al-Azhar (d. 255/866-7?), see Khushanī, *Classes*, 138, and 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:232.

<sup>83</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:300.

<sup>84</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:219; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 3:79.

<sup>85</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:295; but Abū Bakr al-Mālikī mentions the rough clothing and eyes to the ground only in connection with sessions for women: *Riyāḍ* 1:227-8, also 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 3:69.

<sup>86</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:309.

Among the recommended innovations is preserving (*ṣawn*; i.e. the honour of) religious leaders, qadis, and rulers by means of clothing and mounts, contrary to the way of the Companions. Exaltation to the first rank was by religion, but when order degenerated and the people came to exalt only by preserving (honour), it became recommended to preserve (honour) for the good order of the people.<sup>87</sup>

The examples of earlier African qadis show that the shift from good morals to fine clothing and accoutrements had actually first appeared much earlier than Ḥimās' time.

Abū Bakr al-Mālikī arranges his biographies mostly in chronological order, but for most of the ninth century he has separate sections for jurists and renunciants. Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ does something similar, as in heading a section, 'Among those known for discipleship to Saḥnūn who were not famous for their prominence in jurisprudence, of this generation, a large number, many of whom were predominantly given to worship and narration' (the last meaning hadith).<sup>88</sup> One might then infer that law and piety were increasingly differentiated as specialist pursuits. At the same time, al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's heading is evidence that jurists and renunciants very much intersected with each other. Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ felt no need of similar sections for Egyptian or Andalusian jurists more prominent for their piety than their jurisprudence. An instance of conflict between a Mālikī jurist and contemporary renunciants, discussed below, found disciples of Saḥnūn on both sides.

As Mālikī and Ḥanafī jurisprudence moved to Africa from further east, so there is some evidence of eastern influence on African renunciation. Sufyān al-Thawrī is the leading source of items in Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), *al-Zuhd*, and much of this material was probably in *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* by Sufyān introduced to Africa by 'Alī ibn Ziyād and heard and taught by al-Buhlūl. In his youth, recalled Saḥnūn, there had come a man called 'Abd al-

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<sup>87</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim*, 2:323-4. On Ḥimās ibn Marwān, see also Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:118-22, and 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 5:66-70.

<sup>88</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:409.



Raḥmān ibn Ziyād al-Ḥimṣī. Al-Buhlūl heard from him *Kitāb al-Zuhd*.<sup>89</sup> When *Kitāb al-Jihād* or *al-Zuhd* of Ibn Wahb (Egyptian, d. 197/813) was read to Saḥnūn, he would weep till the tears flowed onto his beard.<sup>90</sup> Aḥmad ibn Yalūl (d. 262/875-6) of Tozeur assembled *Raqā'iq Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād* and *Kitāb Zuhd Sufyān al-Thawrī*.<sup>91</sup> Muḥammad ibn Razīn (d. 255/869-70) of Sousse went out at the festival in a mean garment after the example of Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād (d. 228/843), a Khurasani traditionist active in Egypt before being hauled to Baghdad for defying the Inquisition.<sup>92</sup>

As for influence moving east from Africa, al-Dabbāgh identifies Shuqrān ibn 'Alī (d. Qayrawan, 186/802) as *ustādh* to Dhū al-Nūn (d. Giza, 245/860 or 246/861), quoting al-Sulamī, *Tārīkh al-ṣūfīyah*.<sup>93</sup> There is no mention of him in the biography of Dhū al-Nūn in *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfīyah*, but Abū Bakr al-Mālikī reports that he showed Dhū al-Nūn a prayer by which anything he asked for would be given.<sup>94</sup> Shuqrān is the subject of several miracle stories. He was so provided with warm water and a lamp for him to make the major ritual ablution at night.<sup>95</sup> When a woman tried to seduce him, he prayed God to turn her evil from him, so he apparently became leprous (alternatively, developed sores) and she pushed him away.<sup>96</sup> He is not mentioned by al-Qāḍī 'Iyād, but Abū al-'Arab says that he had an

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<sup>89</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 43. 'Abd al-Raḥmān' is the name in the text, but the section heading is 'Alī ibn Ziyād'. Ben Cheneb guesses that 'Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān' was the man's *kunya* (Khushanī, *Classes*, trans., 101). Fierro refers to al-Buhlūl as composing his own book of *zuhd*, but her note is misleading (Fierro, 'Writing', 378, 391).

<sup>90</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:366-7; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:77.

<sup>91</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:235.

<sup>92</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:191.

<sup>93</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:279.

<sup>94</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:313-14; more stories of Dhū al-Nūn's learning from him at *Riyāḍ* 1:314-17. Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī (d. 304/916-17) was said to have become Dhū al-Nūn's disciple in hopes of learning the greatest name of God, prayer in which would always be answered, for which see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, 17 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1422/2001), 16:464-5. On Dhū al-Nūn see provisionally Michael Ebstein, 'Dū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī and early Islamic mysticism', *Arabica* 61 (2014): 559-612. Ebstein finds that reports of Dhū al-Nūn's activity in alchemy seem generally the most credible part of the biographical record. The story of his going to Africa in his youth may then be another example of speculative invention to account for his mysticism in advance of developments in Syria, Iraq, and further east.

<sup>95</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:321. A lamp from Heaven would likewise descend on Muḥammad ibn Naṣr: Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:351.

<sup>96</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:317-18; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:284-5.

authoritative book of *farā'id* (the law of inheritance shares) that circulated among African ulema after him.<sup>97</sup> Also common are reports of Africans who transferred east. For example, Muḥammad ibn Masrūq (fl. late 8th cent.) renounced his father's villages, telling the inhabitants they were free, and devoted himself to worship. He later settled in Alexandria, where he died.<sup>98</sup> After quoting something of al-Sulamī, *Tārīkh al-ṣūfīyah*, al-Dabbāgh complains, 'The fame of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Maghribī, Abū Sulaymān, Abū 'Iqāl ibn Ghalbūn, and Abū al-Ghuṣn al-Khādim in the Mashriq is greater than their fame in the Maghrib on account of their dying there.'<sup>99</sup>

### Institutions

Mosques are certainly the most common site of teaching and devotions. Senior disciples to Saḥnūn complained that they had never seen Yaḥyá ibn 'Umar al-Kinānī (d. 289/902) with him. A contemporary explained, 'Yes, he heard from Saḥnūn at his house on the coast', confirming that the normal expectation was that he should have been seen studying in the mosque. Al-Kinānī himself explained, 'I never heard from Saḥnūn in Qayrawan. I heard him only in the wilderness.'<sup>100</sup>

Attempts were made to protect the sanctity of the mosque. Ismā'īl ibn Rabāḥ repeatedly rebuked someone for allowing weaving in the mosque where he was teaching, and once put a weaver out of the mosque himself.<sup>101</sup> Saḥnūn erected a building (tent?) within the mosque where he could isolate himself, the two disputants, and their witnesses, so as not to hear the clamour of the multitude. It became the custom for Māliki qadis after him, but whenever a Ḥanafī qadi was appointed, the structure would be demolished.<sup>102</sup> This was not to

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<sup>97</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 61.

<sup>98</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:194; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 1:329; Talbi, 'Law and economy', 210-11.

<sup>99</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:294.

<sup>100</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:362-3. *Bādiyah* plainly refers to any non-urban space.

<sup>101</sup> Abū al-'Arab, *Classes*, 68-9; Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:336.

<sup>102</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:60.

go so far as the Shāfi‘i school, though, which called for the qadi not to sit in the mosque at all, since opponents will insult each other, violating the sanctity of the place.<sup>103</sup>

Some mosques were especially associated with devotions. The Saturday Mosque, said to be attended by *zuhhād* (renunciants) and *‘ubbād* (worshippers), was distinguished by group devotional activities especially from dawn to noon on Saturdays (more on this to come).<sup>104</sup> Ibrāhīm ibn al-Maḍā’ built the Thursday Mosque in al-Dimnah, outside Qayrawan. The *qurrā’* (Qur’anic reciters) and *mughabbirūn* (group chanters) would meet there, alternatively the *ṣulahā’* and *qurrā’*.<sup>105</sup> Aḥmad ibn Mu‘attib ibn Abī al-Azhar, whose neighbours used to hear him weeping at night, heard a frightening Qur’anic verse or some poetry about Hellfire at the Saturday Mosque, fell down unconscious, and died as he was being carried to his house.<sup>106</sup>

Devotions in mosques were sometimes controversial. Al-Kinānī wrote a denunciation of the Saturday Mosque, although participants included some of Saḥnūn’s prominent disciples, among whom, by one report, the qadi Ibn Ṭālib was buried in that mosque.<sup>107</sup> Al-Kinānī called for the building to be destroyed to prevent people from going there. A man who used to attend the Saturday Mosque came to al-Kinānī’s mosque and recited Q. 2:114:

Who does greater wrong than those who bar access to God’s places of worship, so that His name may not be mentioned in them, and who serve to destroy them? They should enter them only in fear. They will have shame in this world and a great torment in the world to come.

Al-Kinānī wept till his beard was soaked, then imprecated the man for reciting not for God’s sake but to disparage him: the man soon died.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Al-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Umm*, ed. Rif‘at Fawzī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, 11 vols (al-Manṣūrah: Dār al-Wafā’, 1422/2001; 2nd printing 1425/2004), 7:490; al-Muzanī, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, in margin of al-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Umm*, 7 vols (Bulaq: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Kubrā al-Amīriyah, 1321-5), 5:241.

<sup>104</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:495; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 1:31, 2:238.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:236-7 (printed *mu‘abbirūn*, ‘dream interpreters’); Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 1:32, 2:174.

<sup>106</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 138-9; Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:471; ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:353; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:179.

<sup>107</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:183-4; four of Saḥnūn’s disciples names by Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:495.

<sup>108</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:495-6; ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:361; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:237-8.

Al-Kinānī's objection may have been especially to group devotions, for it is also recalled that al-Kinānī passed by a group saying *Allāhu akbar* on the ten days (the first of Muḥarram? the last of Ramadan? the first of Dhū al-Ḥijjah?). He forbade them, saying it was an innovation. They did not cease, so he imprecated them and the place went to ruin.<sup>109</sup> He also told someone, 'Make a note: do not wish for the companionship of brethren, for it is enough to be tried by knowledge of him for you to beware of him. Work singly, O people of knowledge; work singly (*infaridū*).'<sup>110</sup>

Disapproval of group devotions may also have been involved when Ḥamdīs al-Qaṭṭān (d. 289/901-2) rejected meeting for *taghbīr* in which people beat their breasts and lamented.<sup>111</sup> The term is difficult, but it comes up elsewhere about the same time. Shaybah ibn Zanūn (Qayrawani, d. 286/899-900) invited a number of Saḥnūn's old disciples to his wedding party.

Our fellows, at the first part of the night, were occupied with qur'anic recitation, *taghbīr*, weeping, and fear (*khushū*). Then they took up questions of knowledge (law) and debated them. Then they dispersed to the corners of the house, praying their *awrād*.<sup>112</sup>

An earlier expression of disapproval is al-Shāfi'ī's denunciation of *taghbīr* as an invention of the *zanadiqah* (secret unbelievers) to distract people from the Qur'an.<sup>113</sup> When al-Ḥārith ibn Miskīn (d. 250/864) became qadi for Old Cairo in 237/851, 'he demolished a mosque that a Khurasani had built among the tombs . . . in the desert. They had met in it for qur'anic recitation, preaching (*qaṣaṣ*), and *taghbīr*.'<sup>114</sup> When Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) was

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<sup>109</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:497; 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:361; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:239.

<sup>110</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:497; but 'Iyād gives the variant 'Work singly with the people of knowledge (*infaridū bi-ahl al-'ilm*)' (*Tartīb* 4:362).

<sup>111</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:381 (printed *taghyīr*).

<sup>112</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:442.

<sup>113</sup> Al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib al-Shāfi'ī*, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr, 2 vols (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1390-1/1970-1), 1:283.

<sup>114</sup> 'Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:31, citing al-Kindī but not found in the parallel passage, *The governors and judges of Egypt*, ed. Rhuvon Guest, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial ser. 19 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1912), 469.

asked about *taghbīr*, he said, ‘It does not please me.’<sup>115</sup> Synthesizing the medieval dictionaries, Lane offers for *taghbīr*, ‘A reciting of poetry, or verses, in the praising, or glorifying, of God, in which the performers trill, or quaver, and prolong, the voice . . . ; as though the persons thus called [*mughabbirah*], being afflicted with a lively emotion, danced, and raised the dust.’<sup>116</sup> Perhaps also, then, disapproval of *taghbīr* was about the general distrust of emotional display and in particular of reciting the Qur’an to tones.<sup>117</sup>

Renunciants regularly show up in forts.<sup>118</sup> ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (d. 246/860-1?) gave up trade to build Qaṣr Ziyād, where he went to live, for 6,000 dinars of his own money, 6,000 of his brothers’.<sup>119</sup> He retained a grand estate with 17,000 olive trees.<sup>120</sup> Abū al-Sarī Wāṣil ibn ‘Abd Allāh resided at one, although differently named by Abū Bakr al-Mālikī and al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād.<sup>121</sup> He had once been a trader in foodstuffs but then studied under Saḥnūn and later still renounced the world, took up residence in the fort, and stayed up nights and fasted by day till he became one of the *awliyā*.<sup>122</sup> A story of his last days shows incidentally that the forts were notably for men only. On his deathbed, he asked that his sister be summoned, but when she came, he said, ‘I will not be the first to allow women into forts’,

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<sup>115</sup> Abū Dāwūd, *K. Masā’il al-imām Aḥmad*, ed. Muḥammad Bahjah al-Bayṭār (Cairo: Dār al-Manār, 1353/1934, repr. Beirut: Muḥammad Amīn Damj, n.d.), 281; Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghawī, *Juz’ fī masā’il*, ed. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaddād, *Masā’il Aḥmad* 2 (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āshimah, 1407/1986), 58.

<sup>116</sup> Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 pts (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863-93), s.v. *gh-b-r*.

<sup>117</sup> Christopher Melchert, ‘The controversy over reciting the Qur’ān with tones (*al-qirā’ah bi’l-alḥān*)’, *Journal of the International Qur’anic Studies Association* 4 (2019): 85-109.

<sup>118</sup> The vagueness of early terminology is emphatically established by Antoine Borrut and Christophe Picard, ‘*Râbata, ribât, râbita*: une institution à reconsidérer’, *Chrétiens et musulmans en Méditerranée médiévale (VIII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, ed. Nicolas Froutou and Philippe Sénac, *Civilisation médiévale* 15 (Poitiers: Centre d’Études Supérieures de la Civilisation Médiévale, 2003), 33-65. Two more recent surveys of literature on forts as devotional centres likewise demonstrate considerable variety of terminology, also that information about the early Middle Ages is relatively sparse: Nathan Hofer, ‘Sūfī outposts (*ribāṭs*)’, *Sufi institutions*, ed. Alexandre Papas, *Handbuch der Orientalistik, erste Abteilung, Nahe und Mittlere Osten* 154, and *Handbook of Sufi studies* 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 174-83; Corrado la Martire, ‘Between Christian monasticism and Islamic *ribāṭ* in Ifriqiya: pious endowments as traces of historical continuity’, *Endowment studies* 2 (2018): 107-32.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:197.

<sup>120</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:423.

<sup>121</sup> Qaṣr Jummaḥ, later known as Qaṣr al-Ribāt in al-Maḥḍīyah, according to Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:431, Qaṣr al-Tūb (mud bricks?) near Sousse, according to ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:199.

<sup>122</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:431.

so she wept and wailed outside, he on hearing her inside.<sup>123</sup> When the Aghlabid prince Abū ‘Iqāl Ghalbūn ibn al-Ḥasan (d. 291/903-4?) renounced wealth, wife, children, and home, he stuck to a fort (*hiṣn*) where he made himself disciple to an Abū Hārūn al-Andalusī, with whom, by one account, he later travelled to Mecca where he died.<sup>124</sup>

The whole city of Sousse was reputedly a devotional centre and military outpost.

The whole city of Sousse at that time had in it nothing objectionable (*munkar*): no wine, games (*lahw*), or musical instruments (‘*azf*). Its people were occupied only with war, protecting Muslims male and female, keeping vigil at night, and fasting by day.<sup>125</sup>

The voluntary character of military service on the frontier is illustrated by the story of Wāṣil, who moved into the fort there, Qaṣr al-Ribāt, without any provision. (Qaṣr al-Ribāt itself had been built by a private individual.<sup>126</sup>) After some days, the people of the fort noticed his praying and fasting and took to feeding him; then tired of it and left him. On the third day of his going without food, there was a knock on the gate, which turned out to be the slave of a notable of Qayrawan who had promised his slave freedom if he delivered some food to Wāṣil. There was a rule against opening a fort by night, but they opened it now for the sake of securing the slave’s freedom. Wāṣil took some of the food, then ordered the rest divided among the whole group. A similar story was told of a woman who heard in a dream that she should tell a slave to deliver him some food and be freed.<sup>127</sup> Plainly, there was no regular stipend from the government or a private *waqf* to support volunteers.

The same is illustrated by a story of Abū al-Aḥwas Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh (d. 284/897-8), a worshipper (*muta‘abbid*) from the far West who went to Sousse *murābiṭan*. When his provision ran out, he was on the verge of leaving, then saw a sign as he prayed at the mosque suggesting to him that he should depend on God, which led to his making it his

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<sup>123</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:440-1.

<sup>124</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:215, 217.

<sup>125</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:487.

<sup>126</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:401.

<sup>127</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:201-2.

home to the end of his life.<sup>128</sup> A group of worshippers once collected in the Friday mosque, then headed for the palace of Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad (r. 261-89/875-902), where he had openly enjoyed musical instruments and games (‘*azf*, *lahw*). They threatened to leave for elsewhere in Islam, so he resorted thereafter to a Qubbat al-Raml to indulge in music, returning to the castle only at night.<sup>129</sup> These worshippers were plainly on call for military duty, hence Ibrāhīm’s unwillingness to see them go. It seems significant also that the mosque is where they first collected, not directly in a fort.

Support for renunciants in the mosque also comes up in an odd story of Ibn ‘Abdūn the despised qadi. There was a party called al-Ruknīyah who had no occupation but sat in a corner of the mosque. Ibn ‘Abdūn was close to one of them, an Abū al-Qāsim al-Masājīdī, to whom he gave a stipend. The rest envied him, so one after another privately slandered him to Ibn ‘Abdūn till he cut him off.<sup>130</sup> Again, we see reliance on informal private almsgiving rather than the later pious foundations; also, evidence that renunciation was valued in Ḥanafi circles as well as Mālikī.

Relations were sometimes troubled between renunciants and rulers. By one account, al-Buhlūl ibn Rāshid died from infection after being flogged by al-‘Akkī, last governor of Africa before the Aghlabids (r. 181-4/797-800), for berating him for sending copper, iron, and weapons to the *ṭāghīyah*; that is, non-Muslim enemies to the north.<sup>131</sup> Someone named Ḥafṣ ibn ‘Umar or Ḥumayd came with a delegation to ask ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aghlab (r. 197-201/812-17) to revoke his charge of eight dinars for anyone to marry. After he refused and they left, they prayed God to relieve the Muslims of his oppression. He developed a sore below his ear and died on the sixth day.<sup>132</sup> The renunciant al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī’ (fl. mid-9th

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<sup>128</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:482-3; ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:391.

<sup>129</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:486-7.

<sup>130</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 188-9.

<sup>131</sup> Abū al-‘Arab, *K. al-Miḥan*, ed. Yaḥyá Wahīb al-Jubūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1403/1983), 417-9; ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 3:98-101; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 1:276.

<sup>132</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:331-2; Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān* 1:134-5.

cent.?) was flogged by his uncle the military commander Muḥammad ibn al-Ash‘ath.<sup>133</sup>

Someone close to the ruler allowed his horse to trample the cultivation of some *murābiṭūn*. At their request, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn ‘Abd Rabbih prayed with his eyes to Heaven and the horse became blind in both eyes.<sup>134</sup>

Someone complained to the gathering at the Thursday Mosque that an ‘Āmir ibn ‘Amrūn ibn Zurārah, an associate of the ruler’s, had built an upper story to his house from which could be seen this man’s poorly-clad daughters. They prayed. Before the next day, the man returned to report that a pillar had fallen and dashed out ‘Āmir’s brains.<sup>135</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abdūs (d. 260/873-4?) imprecated the Aghlabid Abū al-Gharānīq Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (r. 250-61/863-75).<sup>136</sup> The qadi Ibn Ṭālib said of Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad (r. 261-89/875-902), after he had sent his black slaves to molest some people who had refused to alienate their estates to him, ‘This is the talk of the Dahrīyah; this is the action of someone who does not believe in God and the Last Day.’ This was one reason for the Ḥanafī Ibn ‘Abdūn to be appointed in his place.<sup>137</sup> Aḥmad ibn Mu‘attib ibn Abī al-Azhar (d. 277/891), having suffered bastinado under Ibn ‘Abdūn, said he hoped it was a blessing from God, since it had bereaved his heart of love for Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad.<sup>138</sup> Sa‘īd ibn Ishāq (d. 295/908), who lived at Qaṣr al-Ṭūb although periodically coming to Qayrawan to teach, refused to admit some of Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad’s slave soldiers, then the prince himself, who left when he sensed that the place had been lit under him.<sup>139</sup>

On the other hand, rulers evidently liked to shore up their legitimacy by keeping close to renunciants. On the 15th Sha‘bān, then Ramaḍān, the Aghlabids would distribute alms at

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<sup>133</sup> Abū al-‘Arab, *Miḥan*, 459.

<sup>134</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:427-8, estate at 423.

<sup>135</sup> ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:236; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:175.

<sup>136</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 133; ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:223; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:139.

<sup>137</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 228; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:181-2; cf. ‘Iyād, *Tartīb* 4:325.

<sup>138</sup> Khushanī, *Classes*, 139.

<sup>139</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:14-15; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:257.



the main mosque. From there they would proceed to the mosque of al-Dimnah outside Qayrawan where the *qurrā* ('Qur'an reciters', more generally 'renunciants') were gathered for *dhikr* ('recollection', mainly the reciting of praises to God) to benefit from the supplications of Abū Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (d. 250/864-5?).<sup>140</sup> Several stories are told in which Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aghlab (r. 242-9/856-63), having said something while drunk importing unbelief, asks the ulema whether repentance is possible. He is then told yes by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyá al-Taymī, after which he spends lavishly on the mosque in gratitude.<sup>141</sup>

### Miracles

There was also some expectation of miracles, notably more regular than for contemporaries to the east. To name as examples only such men as have entries in al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik*—that is, who were recognized in retrospect as significant Mālikī jurists—, besides al-Buhlūl ibn Rāshid and Ibn Ghānim, there was to begin with 'Awn ibn Yūsuf (d. 239/853?), who related hearing a neighbour of the *jinn* reciting the Qur'an along with him by night.<sup>142</sup> He was found with almost no food in the house, since he refused to accept anything from anyone; but talk was heard, they came in, and found him with a hot loaf and dates that he said had been provided him by al-Khaḍir.<sup>143</sup> Sa'īd ibn 'Abbād (d. 251/865-6), prominent among the disciples of Saḥnūn, was said to be answered of prayer, although no particular miracle is related of him.<sup>144</sup> Abū al-Sarī Wāṣil prayed for some Romans to be shipwrecked, which they were.<sup>145</sup> The qadi 'Isá ibn Miskīn (d. 295/907-8) often foretold someone's death.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:411-12; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:116.

<sup>141</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:146-8.

<sup>142</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:90-1.

<sup>143</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:196.

<sup>144</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:230.

<sup>145</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:202.

<sup>146</sup> 'Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:343.

Ibn ‘Abdūs was associated with a miracle in vindication of orthodoxy. A man knocked on his door and asked him his position regarding faith. He said, ‘I am a believer.’ The man said, ‘And in the sight of God?’ Ibn ‘Abdūs said, ‘I have told you that I am a believer. As for a believer in the sight of God, I do not affirm that of myself with certainty, since I do not know how it will end with me.’ The man spat in Ibn ‘Abdūs’ face, then went blind on the spot.<sup>147</sup> When some of the people of Qayrawan went out to greet the Fāṭimid, Jabalah ibn Ḥamūd imprecated them and they were all robbed on the way.<sup>148</sup>

‘Īsá ibn Miskīn imprecated his Ḥanafī predecessor as qadi for Qayrawān, Ibn ‘Abdūn, who developed an ulcer on his face from which he eventually died. A Christian shook hands with him without his being aware. When he learnt of it later, he imprecated him, so that he was attacked by robbers that night and had his hand cut off. He was said to have learnt to foresee things before their time from Abū Khārijah, disciple to Mālik ibn Anas.<sup>149</sup> He was said to meet with al-Khaḍir.<sup>150</sup>

Books of Islamic law regularly include directions for a procedure to pray for rain (*istisqā’*).<sup>151</sup> Abū Khārijah ‘Anbasah ibn Khārijah produced rain by a formal ceremony outside Sfax.<sup>152</sup> Shuqrān ibn ‘Alī led a rain prayer and they went back with the water halfway up their shins.<sup>153</sup> During one drought, Abū Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, who was blind, was borne outside the city to the Saturday Mosque. The *qurrā’* recited with raised hands, then Abū Muḥammad raised his hands and said, ‘O God, I have raised ten short ones to you. Do not repel them disappointed.’ They returned to the city with the water up to their knees.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:227; also Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:460-1, and Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:139.

<sup>148</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:374; also Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:42, and Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:273.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:343. For Abū Khārijah ‘Anbasah ibn Khārijah (d. 210/825) and his reputation for clairvoyance, see Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:243-4, Alternatively, ‘Īsá ibn Miskīn learnt clairvoyance from a correspondent in the East or directly from God (*Tartīb* 4:343-4).

<sup>150</sup> ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb* 4:344.

<sup>151</sup> See for example Saḥnūn, *al-Mudawwanah al-kubrā*, 16 vols in 8 (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘ādah, 1323), 1:165-7.

<sup>152</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:242-3.

<sup>153</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:319-20; Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 1:286.

<sup>154</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma‘ālim* 2:115.

Şadaqah (d. 304/916-17?), a worshipper who was missing both hands and feet, was called on with success to pray for rain.<sup>155</sup>

Many other miracles are reported, with wide or narrow effect. A miraculous voice heard at the funeral of Yaḥyá ibn Zakarīyā' al-Tujībī urging people to crowd one another in imitating his works rather than crowding around his bier.<sup>156</sup> Abū Sulaymān al-Ḥabbāl (*fl.* early 9th cent.) was worshipful and given to much weeping. Two food miracles are reported: his wife wanted some meat, whereupon a giant bird appeared in the house, and he came home with sacks of sawdust that turned into wheat.<sup>157</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥasan ibn al-Mufarrij, client to Mahrīyah (daughter of an Aghlabid) rebelled against the Fāṭimids and died a martyr in 309/921-2. He and another were crucified after death, but light was seen on the wood at night and recitation of the Qur'an heard from him; therefore, he was ordered to be brought down and buried.<sup>158</sup>

## Conclusion

Compared with renunciant piety in the Nile-to-Oxus region, some characters of renunciant piety in ninth-century Africa do stand out. First, Africa appears to lag behind in the differentiation of jurisprudents and renunciants. Disparagement of group devotions in the mosque is recorded of Mālik in the late eighth century but apparently does not show up in Africa until almost a century later, with al-Kinānī's condemnation of the Saturday Mosque.<sup>159</sup> Biographical sources of the tenth century do not distinguish between the two groups, only sources of the next century and later.

Secondly, miracle working seems to appear much more often than further east. Only a small minority of jurisprudents are credited with answered prayer. Just seven of 114 figures

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<sup>155</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:129; Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:334.

<sup>156</sup> Abū Balr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:240.

<sup>157</sup> Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 1:322.

<sup>158</sup> Dabbāgh, *Ma'ālim* 2:354; cf. Abū Bakr al-Mālikī, *Riyāḍ* 2:173-4.

<sup>159</sup> On Mālik, see Melchert, *Before Sufism*, 167-9.

(6 percent) in Abū al-‘Arab, *Ṭabaqāt*, are said to have been answered of prayer, six out of 103 Africans who died in the third century H. in al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Tartīb al-madārik*. However, six out of 103 Africans may be compared with two out of 266 who died elsewhere in the third century H. and are said to have been answered of prayer. Another comparison: reviewing Shāfi‘īyah who died in the third century H., Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) is willing to use the terms *zāhid*, *‘ābid*, *ṣāliḥ*, and the like, and concludes his notice for Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī with a long discussion of the possibility of *karāmāt* (in which, as an Ash‘ari, he believes).<sup>160</sup> Of no one, however, does he say that he was answered of prayer. The Sufi literary tradition is commonly reticent about miracles as a temptation to self-importance.<sup>161</sup> They seem more prominent in the Maghribi Sufi tradition than elsewhere, anticipated by special prominence in the renunciant period before.

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<sup>160</sup> Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi‘īyah al-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥulw, 10 vols (Cairo: ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1964-76), 2:314-44, the rest of the volume being devoted to Shāfi‘īyah who died before 300 H.

<sup>161</sup> See Denis Gril, ‘Le *miracle* en Islam, critère de la sainteté?’ *Saints orientaux*, ed. Denise Aigle, Hagiographies médiévales comparées (Paris: De Boccard, 1995), 69-81, and Eric Geoffroy, ‘Attitudes contrastées des mystiques musulmans face au miracle’, *Miracle et Karāma*, ed. Denise Aigle, Hagiographies médiévales comparées 2, Bibliothèque de l’École des hautes études, sciences religieuses, 104 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 301-16.