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Articulating the *Hijāba*: Cultural Patronage and Political Legitimacy in al-Andalus

The ʿĀmirid Regency c. 970–1010 AD



By
Mariam Rosser-Owen

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Articulating the *Hijāba*: Cultural Patronage and Political Legitimacy in al-Andalus

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Mariam Rosser-Owen



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IBN KHALDŪN, *Muqaddimah*, 58



This book began more than twenty years ago, in the Fellows' Room at the Departamento de Estudios Árabes, part of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, at that time located in downtown Madrid, where I was lucky enough to be based for the fieldwork year of my doctoral research (1999–2000). Having begun a thesis focusing on the famous Andalusí ivories, my supervisors – Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns – rightly asked me how my contribution to the study of these objects was going to be original and new. I didn't really know. I will be forever grateful to my fellow doctorand, Marcus Milwright, for suggesting that I spend some time in Spain, immersing myself in the museum collections that contained the objects I was hoping to study. In the years before Academia.edu and the widespread digital availability of publications from other nations' disciplines, it was also necessary to be physically present in Spanish libraries to consult the publications I knew about and to discover those I didn't, by browsing the shelves. That year in Spain was funded by two

scholarships granted by the University of Oxford: the Lady Allen Scholarship, and the De Osmá Studentship, which opened up for me the magical world of the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan as one of my institutional homes in Madrid. It was a huge privilege to be able to freely browse the precious collections in the Instituto's empty galleries, introducing me to other media and later periods of Andalusí art, objects which I have carried with me into my career as a curator of Islamic art. I am deeply indebted to its then Director, Cristina Partearroyo, and all my hosts during that year in Madrid, both within CSIC and those whom I encountered on a more personal level, who helped me to improve my spoken Spanish and gave me the enduring sense of Madrid as a second home.

That year was transformative, not least of my doctoral subject, as I became more interested in the objects and fragments that had been made for 'Ámirid patrons, and the historical role those patrons had played in artistic and cultural patronage, which seemed to have been almost entirely overlooked in modern scholarship. This picked up on interests I had developed during my Master of Studies, in which I chose to study the lid, in the Ashmolean Museum, of an ivory pyxis that had been made for al-Manṣūr's son 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Sanchuelo' (Figures 139–141). After a couple of months in Madrid, I had become enthused by the challenge of taking a much broader and more interdisciplinary while chronologically narrower approach to my doctoral subject, one which had been much less studied. Julian (Jeremy was on sabbatical that year) bore with good grace my suggestion that I should change my subject more than one year into the D.Phil., and has been a great support to me ever since, even after he left the University of Oxford to become Director of the Freer-Sackler Gallery in Washington DC. He gave me good advice when, much later, I started to think seriously about turning the thesis into a book. Jeremy shepherded me through to

completion and into the start of my career and has been there for me ever since. I owe a huge debt of thanks to them both, for setting me on the career path I tread today.

The thesis was submitted in 2002, in time for the celebration of the millennium since al-Manṣūr's death. I started working at the V&A straight away, and was soon thrown into the redevelopment of the museum's Islamic Middle East gallery; that, combined with a rocky viva experience, invitations to work on the ivories in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, then other research interests and publishing projects, and further gallery projects at the museum, especially the new Ceramics Galleries, made it difficult for me to think further about al-Manṣūr – but he never went away. I became increasingly aware that the period of the caliphate after the death of al-Ḥakam II was poorly understood, even sidelined, by specialists of Andalusī art: as if history just stopped then and picked up again after the Fitna. Over the years of not seeing anything else published on the art of the 'Āmirid period, I gradually realised my doctoral research still had a contribution to make. The celebration of the millennium since al-Manṣūr's death had engendered many conferences and publications on al-Andalus during the 'Āmirid period, but few of the studies contained therein focused on the 'Āmirids themselves, and there was no outpouring of research on the material culture of the period. There were significant historical publications – by Bariani 2003, Ballestín 2004a, Sénac 2006, Echevarría 2011 – and the occasional publication of relevant new objects or inscriptions, new information from archaeology. The invitation in 2014 from Abigail Krasner Balbale, then at the Bard Graduate Center, New York, to participate in the symposium she was organising on 'Objects and Power: an Interdisciplinary Approach to Medieval Islamic Material Culture', gave me the incentive I needed to re-engage with the 'Āmirids' artistic patronage and to test the waters of scholarly interest in the subject.

Returning to a thesis more than a decade later, and then working on the book over the course

of a further near-decade, has its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage is that in the intervening time I have deepened and matured my knowledge and perspectives, especially through working in a very hands-on way with objects in such a world-class museum collection, in a way that you never can over the course of a three- or four-year doctoral research project, especially when new to the field as I was when I began my M.St. in 1996. My role at the V&A has helped me to widen my research perspectives into the Mediterranean and on ivory more broadly than just from Iberia; it has helped me to deepen my understanding of ceramics and textiles, of parallel and later histories of al-Andalus and other regions such as Egypt. I have benefitted from new perspectives that have developed in the study of the Islamic West, especially the growing focus on North Africa and the endlessly fascinating world of trans-Saharan trade. Marcus Milwright's invitation to be Lansdowne Visiting Lecturer to the University of Victoria (BC) Medieval Studies Workshop in 2013, where I gave a lecture 'The Gold Route: Trans-Saharan Trade and Luxury Arts in Medieval Europe', helped me to focus my thoughts on the gold trade. Through contacts and friendships I have made or deepened over the years, conversations and information-sharing have helped me understand a much bigger picture.

In the intervening period, no-one else had written on al-Manṣūr or the 'Āmirids from precisely this perspective, but other scholars had written on aspects of their patronage: Susana Calvo's further publications on the mosque inscriptions, for example. There had been new work on the Cordoban ivories, further research on metalwork, new archaeological finds ... There were historical updates to make too. My approach has always been to present the art historical context together with the historical context, indeed that the information provided by material culture is another historical source. This allows us to present a wholistic picture of the 'Āmirid period and to fully understand the motivations for cultural and artistic patronage, which cannot be divorced from historical contexts

and concerns. This is why this had to be such a long book, especially since the history of the period is so little known. I had to update myself with all of that literature, making visits to libraries when possible on trips to Spain for other projects, but also hugely benefitted this time around by the online availability of many academic publications. Spanish scholars excel at uploading their work to Academia.edu! I am deeply grateful to my V&A managers, Tim Stanley and Anna Jackson, for recognising that this was something I needed to get out of my system and for giving me V&A time to work on the book, including for quite focused periods on occasion.

During the last months of drawing this project to its conclusion, I faced a new challenge – that of completing the revisions and sourcing images during the global pandemic caused by Covid-19, of being in lockdown and on furlough, without access to libraries or a professional email account from which to contact institutions for image permissions, institutions which were in any case mostly closed. And there are a lot of images in this book! It was important to me to publish little-known or unknown or unpublished objects and buildings. I have tried to prioritise these, as one way to expand the field of Andalusí art history. I am deeply grateful to all the many people who have helped me to source images, have provided their own images, who sent me PDFs of articles, or answered last minute queries – they are too many to name individually here: some of them are credited in the list of illustrations or the footnotes, but those who are not, know that you have my utter gratitude.

Many people over the years have helped me with this project in a variety of ways. I would not have been able to begin the D.Phil. without funding from the AHRB (now AHRC). The University of Oxford also gave financial support through various top-up funds. The Barakat Trust supported me throughout my graduate study; in particular, the Salahuddin Y H Abuljawad Graduate Scholarship funded my writing-up year in 2001–2. They also generously awarded me a grant to pay for the book's image costs. I am deeply grateful to the

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me images and alerting me to crucial publications of hers that I had missed. Matilde Grimaldi has drawn some beautiful graphics for me, interpreting my sometimes-vague instructions and bad-quality photographs, and patiently tweaking. Pedro Marfil Ruiz gave me an archaeological tour of the Córdoba Mosque in 2009, including the ever-memorable climb down underneath the mosque pavement to visit the excavations of the road beneath the Āmirid extension. María Antonia Martínez Núñez has been extremely generous with her time and epigraphic expertise. Irina Sears of Arabic Language Associates tidied up the Arabic transcriptions in my Appendices, lifting a huge weight off my mind.

Some colleagues are also excellent friends and have always been willing to send help, advice, references, articles, images, introductions: Ana Cabrera, Therese Martin, Antonio Vallejo – who has known me since I was a young doctoral student who could barely communicate in Spanish – and Rose Walker. But in particular Claire Anderson, who has been a friend for twenty years, since we were first introduced – virtually – as the only two people Ruba Kana'an knew who were researching the art of tenth-century al-Andalus. Our exchanges, collaborations and friendship over the last two decades is genuinely one of life's joys!

My parents David and Bashiera Rosser-Owen and my sister Isla Rosser-Owen have had to endure me talking about this book on and off for two decades – I am grateful to them for their patience. My unorthodox upbringing, within the British Muslim convert community, with Ramadan trips across London to Peckham – not far from where

I now live – to visit Sufi sheikhs, forged the career that I now pursue. Bashiera came with me on my first ever trips to Madrid and Andalusía, and Isla was my travelling companion on two memorable research trips: our roadtrip in 2000 around northern Spanish museums and treasury collections, and into Narbonne where my French suddenly evaporated; and fourteen years later, to Córdoba where we had the privilege of staying in the apartment within the restored Mudéjar houses that comprise Casa Árabe.

Two ginger tom cats kept me company throughout the writing process, by sitting on print-outs, walking over keyboards and generally watching over me: the elderly Dante, and his young successor, Brabble. They will always be part of this book!

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As always, there is more I could have done, but at some point you have to just stop. As in the sentiment expressed by Ibn Khaldūn in the quote above, I commend this book to the reader, and ask for your patience and tolerance of its shortcomings.

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Primary sources are cited according to the same model as citations of secondary sources, i.e.: Author's surname, year of publication, page numbers. Full references for publications cited in this way are listed under the author's name in the Bibliography.

A number of primary sources, book and journals have been cited repeatedly throughout this study, and are abbreviated as follows:

<i>Anales</i>	<i>Anales Palatinos del Califa de Córdoba al-Ḥakam II, por ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī</i> (360–364 AH = 971–975 JC). Translated by Emilio García Gómez (Madrid, 1967)
<i>Bayān</i> II	Ibn ʿIdhārī, <i>Al-Bayān al-Mughrib</i> vol. II. Page numbers refer to Dozy's 1851 edition, and the reference in square brackets refers to Fagnan's 1904 translation
<i>Bayān</i> II (1951)	Refers to Colin & Lévi-Provençal's 1948–1951 edition
<i>Bayān</i> III	Ibn ʿIdhārī, <i>Al-Bayān al-Mughrib</i> vol. III. Page numbers refer to Lévi-Provençal's 1930 edition, and the reference in square brackets refers to Salgado's 1993 translation
<i>Bayān</i> III (appendix)	Refers to the translation of the chapters of <i>Bayān</i> III relating to al-Muzaffar, given in Lévi-Provençal's revision of Reinhart Dozy's <i>Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne jusqu'à la conquête de l'Andalousie par les Almoravides</i> (711–110) (Leiden, 1932), vol. 3, 198 ff.
<i>Dhikr Bilād</i> I	<i>Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus</i> , edited by Molina (1983), volume 1 (Arabic text)
<i>Dhikr Bilād</i> II	<i>Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus</i> , translated by Molina (1983), volume 2 (Spanish translation). The number given after the page number (designated by §) refers to the page number of the original manuscript, and allows

cross-referencing between the English and Arabic volumes of the edition

Al-Maqqarī	All references are to Gayangos' translation of Al-Maqqarī's <i>Naḥḥ al-Ṭib</i> , unless otherwise specified. Page numbers refer to Vol. II, Book VI, Chapter VII, unless otherwise indicated. Other references to Al-Maqqarī are given in parentheses. References to Gayangos' notes will just have the volume and page number
HEM	Lévi-Provençal's <i>Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane</i> (1950): volumes II = HEM II; volume III = HEM III.
BRAC	<i>Boletín de la Real Academia de Córdoba de Ciencias, Bellas Letras y Nobles Artes</i>

Exhibition Catalogues:

These are abbreviated as follows – full publication details are given here and in the Bibliography:

<i>Al-Andalus</i>	<i>Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain</i> . Exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1992)
<i>Les Andalousies</i>	<i>Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue</i> . Exhibition held at the Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris, 2000)
<i>Año 1000, Año 2000</i>	<i>Dos milenios en la Historia de España: Año 1000, Año 2000</i> , exhibition catalogue ed. P. Martín Llopis (Madrid: España, Nuevo Milenio, S.A., 2000)
<i>Art of Medieval Spain</i>	O'Neill, J.P., ed., <i>The Art of Medieval Spain AD 500–1200</i> . Exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 1993)
<i>Arte Islámico en Granada</i>	<i>Arte Islámico en Granada: Propuesta para un Museo de la Alhambra</i> . Exhibition catalogue, Palacio de Carlos V, Alhambra (Granada, 1995)

- Caravans of Gold* Bickford Berzock, Kathleen, ed. *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019)
- Esplendor: Catálogo* Viguera Molins, María Jesús, and Castillo, Concepción, eds., *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental. Catálogo de Piezas*. Exhibition catalogue, Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Granada, 2001)
- Esplendor: Estudios* Viguera Molins, María Jesús, and Castillo, Concepción, eds., *El Esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulmana de Europa Occidental*. Essays accompanying the Exhibition catalogue (Granada, 2001)
- Journal of the David Collection 2* (2005) *The Ivories of Muslim Spain: Papers from a symposium held in Copenhagen from the 18th to the 20th of November 2003. Journal of the David Collection 2* (2 vols) (2005)
- Maroc Médiéval* *Le Maroc médiéval: Un empire de l'Afrique à l'Espagne*. Exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre. Edited by Yannick Lintz, Claire Déléry and Bulle Tuil Leonetti (Editions Hazan and Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2014)
- Santiago-al-Andalus* *Santiago-al-Andalus: Diálogos Artísticos para un Milenio. Conmemoración del Milenario de la Restauración de la Ciudad de Santiago de Compostela tras la razzia de Almanzor (997–1997)*. Exhibition catalogue, Mosteiro de San Martiño Pinario (Xunta de Galicia, 1997)
- Trésors* *Trésors Fatimides du Caire. Exposition présentée à l'Institut du Monde Arabe du 28 avril au 30 août 1998* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1998)

Supplementary publication dates in square brackets indicate a new edition, eg Torres Balbás 1957 [1996].

Arabic translations are checked against the dictionaries by Hans Wehr and Edward Lane. I have used the Yusuf Ali translation of the Qur'an.

I have italicised all non-English words, except for those that have an accepted or widespread usage in the English language – for example, mihrab and minbar are not italicised, but *maqṣūra* is.

Maps



MAP 1 Map of the Mediterranean region highlighting locations mentioned in this book
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Introduction

But what shall we say of the stupendous buildings erected both in Africa and in Andalus during the administration of al-Manṣūr? What of his addition to the Great Mosque of Córdoba ... a work so highly meritorious in the eyes of God that it would, of itself, have procured him a place in Paradise! What of the magnificent palaces and gilded pavilions erected at his command, and which equalled, if they did not surpass, those constructed by the Sultans of the family of Umayya!

AL-MAQQARĪ, *Nafh al-Ṭīb*, II, 218



During the night of 27 Ramadan 392/9 August 1002, Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir – known to history as al-Manṣūr – died.¹ He had come to power because of the minority of the caliph Hishām II (r. 976–c. 1010), and continued to rule *de facto* even after Hishām had attained his majority. Al-Manṣūr’s rule lasted twenty-four years, during which time al-Andalus, within its borders, witnessed perhaps its greatest period of stability and prosperity, due in no small part to his always victorious twice-yearly campaigns. His rule and that of the dynasty he established – through the short-lived administrations of his two sons (1002–10) – is a key period in the history of al-Andalus, a period during which the Umayyad regime made important territorial and political gains in the Maghrib and Christian Iberia. It is only in recent years, however – and especially since the ‘Milenario de Almanzor’ in 2002, the year designated to commemorate the passing of a millennium since his death – that scholars have begun to approach the history of this period on its

own terms, rather than allowing inherited biases from medieval and twentieth-century historiographies, both Muslim and Christian, to inform their understanding.

A range of conferences and published proceedings have appeared since 2002,² as well as biographical monographs intended to bring al-Manṣūr’s story to a more general readership. Apart from the difficulties of tracking down these publications, they are mainly written in Spanish, apart from that by Philippe Sénac, which was originally written in French.³ Spanish scholarship all too often lies outside the reach of Anglophone scholars and consequently this historical period remains largely unknown. The papers within these conference proceedings that discuss material culture do not engage specifically with the ‘Āmirids themselves, but serve to provide a general picture of the state of al-Andalus at the turn of the millennium. Though Sénac is an archaeologist, his monograph is primarily historical, and while he mentions material remains from the ‘Āmirid period he does not fully engage with it as evidence. Ballestín Navarro’s 2004 study is based on a thorough re-examination of the anonymous historical text, the *Kitāb al-Mafākhir al-Barbar* (c. 1312), in particular for what it tells us about the Umayyads’ and ‘Āmirids’ relations with the Maghrib. Echevarría’s 2011 publication, though targeted at a general readership, is deeply informed by good scholarship and provides a very useful state of the question. Bariani’s 2003 monograph is the encapsulation of

1 *Bayān* II (1951):301.

2 The key conferences and resulting publications are Valdés Fernández 1999; Martínez Enamorado and Torremocha Silva 2001; Torremocha Silva and Martínez Enamorado 2003; Garrot Garrot 2004, a book which is impossible to find, even in the main libraries in Madrid; Del Pino 2008. A Portuguese conference – Colóquio Internacional Almançor Ibn Abi ‘Āmir e a Península Ibérica, held in Évora, 27–29 November 2002 – apparently remains unpublished.

3 Sénac 2006. This was translated into Spanish in 2011.

her years of scholarship on the political history of al-Manṣūr's rule: as well as revisiting well-known historical sources, she engaged with lesser-known, previously unpublished texts, to present new interpretations of key events, such as Hishām's accession and the rupture with Ṣubḥ. Oddly, these texts and her interpretations have not been taken up by later historians. Bariani is also one of the few scholars to attempt to engage with the material evidence of the Āmirid period, for example in her 2002 article on the reconstruction of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira from historical sources. However, as with all the studies mentioned here, the artistic and archaeological evidence is primarily illustrative: for example, both Bariani and Sénac use on their book covers a painting of 'R. Almanzor' by Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664), without providing any context for this anywhere inside their books.⁴

This use of an artwork as pure illustration, without engaging with it or its particular context and meaning, remains the mode in which the material culture of the Āmirid period is considered. An appreciation of the dynasty's rich cultural environment, the arts and architectural projects which they sponsored, and the messages of power which these arts expressed, remain largely absent from the studies of this period. Discussion of material culture is never properly integrated into the historical arguments presented, which they fully complement – it remains in the background. It is not for lack of evidence that this aspect of the Āmirid period has been neglected: not only was al-Manṣūr the only non-Umayyad patron of an extension to the Great Mosque of Córdoba, which was also the largest ever added to that monument; but he constructed a palace-city comparable in scale and magnificence to the caliphal foundation, Madīnat

al-Zahrā'; while a considerable number of extant objects and associated fragments, made from luxurious materials such as ivory and marble, and often on a spectacularly large scale, can be associated with the Āmirids through the inscriptions they bear. On the other hand, the material evidence presents a number of difficulties: no ruins of the palace-city remain above ground, and its exact location has never been convincingly established; only one of the surviving objects bears an inscription naming al-Manṣūr himself; and, as we will see in Chapter 5, the messages in his mosque extension are not as clear as those of the previous building campaigns in that monument. However, by drawing together these different strands, in combination with a consideration of the Āmirid court and the surviving poetry that was sung in the *ḥājibs'* praise, the evidence exists for a contextualisation of Āmirid artistic and cultural patronage.

The principal reason why no such analysis has ever been undertaken is perceptual. Al-Manṣūr – in the guise of the folkloric construct 'Almanzor' – has come to represent a sort of bogey-man for the Spanish, the punishment with which to threaten children who don't behave.⁵ Spanish scholars, too, can be emotive on the subject: Pérez de Urbel called al-Manṣūr an 'evil genius',⁶ and the ambiguity of his relationship with the caliph's mother, Ṣubḥ, has tarred him with the salacious brush of the Arabian Nights. This approach persists to the modern day: most histories of

4 This painting represents 'Almanzor' as part of a cycle of paintings of the Infantes de Lara, probably commissioned by the house of Arias de Saavedra who claimed descent from the Lara family: see Delenda and Ros de Barbero 2010, 210–11, 473 (cat. 11-253). I am extremely grateful to Akemi Herráez Vossbrink for discussing these paintings with me.

5 I am grateful to Dr Roger Boase of Queen Mary's, University of London, for discussing this aspect of Spanish folklore with me, which he knows through his experience at the Catalan village of Sant Martí d'Empúries. This region preserves an inherited memory of al-Manṣūr's frequent campaigns in that region, not least his spectacular campaign against Barcelona in 985.

6 In his *Historia del Condado de Castilla* (Madrid, 1945), 11, 677, cited by Bariani 2001, 407. Fray Justo Pérez de Urbel y Santiago was a conspicuous Francoist, the first abbot of the Benedictine abbey of El Valle de los Caídos, where he was buried in 1979, four years after the death of Francisco Franco (d. 1975). His political bias thus deeply informed his writing of history. My thanks to Xavier Ballestín for this information.

al-Andalus will employ the concepts of ‘dictatorship’, ‘usurpation’ and ‘ambition’ in descriptions of the ‘Āmirid period, and an issue of the magazine *El Legado Andalusi*, dedicated to the ‘Milenario de Almanzor’, was entitled ‘El tirano ilustrado’ (‘The tyrant illustrated’).⁷ Reinhart Dozy said of al-Manṣūr that ‘we find it impossible to love him, and difficult even to admire him’.⁸ There is also a tendency to describe al-Manṣūr in terms of other authoritarian rulers: he has been called a ‘César Andaluz’, and likened to Attila, Machiavelli, Richelieu, Napoleon, even Kruschev!⁹ However, most persistent in twentieth-century Spanish scholarship are the parallels between al-Manṣūr and the Fascist dictator, Francisco Franco (r. 1936–75): one frequently encounters the *ḥājib* of a millennium before referred to by Franco’s titles – ‘el Caudillo’ or ‘Generalísimo’ – and an apologist historical novel written in 1946 by Luis Antonio de Vega (*Almanzor*) even drew explicit parallels between the two ‘beneficent dictators’.¹⁰ Al-Manṣūr has become legendary, even novelised, in a way that the Umayyad amirs and caliphs of al-Andalus have not.¹¹

In terms of cultural studies, al-Manṣūr has been characterised as an *anti*-cultural figure, the only art he patronised being the art of war. One of the main reasons for this characterisation is his purge of al-Ḥakam II’s famous library, a cultural crime of which he has never been acquitted. This incident is often cited as one of the ways in which al-Manṣūr sought to undermine the high culture of the caliphs,¹² indulging in a deliberately ignorant act, but is never properly contextualised. In fact, one of the most important ways in which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (r. 912–61) had articulated the legitimacy of his new caliphate a generation earlier was by claiming to defend Sunni Islam against the rise of Shi’ism under the Fatimids and Buyids.¹³ Any departure from the Maliki norm was ruthlessly suppressed. When al-Manṣūr became *ḥājib*, he took up the mantle of the Umayyad defence of orthodoxy as an element in the articulation of his own power. This important religious dimension to al-Manṣūr’s *ḥijāba*, including the tactics he employed to build support among the ‘ulamā’, provide an important context for his purge of al-Ḥakam II’s library.

The act of purging the library, especially through burning the books, is anachronistically interpreted from the perspective of events in twentieth-century history. Modern reactions have thus been highly emotive, employing the language of the Inquisition – Lévi-Provençal even called it an ‘autodafé’.¹⁴ Again, it has been most consistently viewed in the light of twentieth-century

7 *El Legado Andalusi*, no. 10, año III, 2º Trimestre, July 2002.

8 Dozy 1913, 533.

9 Many of these are noted in the historiographical overview in Martínez and Torremocha 2001, esp. 36–51 on the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship. Ghazi 1962, 529, described al-Manṣūr’s political ethics as ‘khroustchevienne’, and at p. 534 called him ‘ce Richelieu andalou’.

10 Martínez and Torremocha 2001, 51. They quote a passage from this book which refers to al-Manṣūr’s suppression of ‘enemies from within’, and the need to maintain a strong interior all the better to triumph over one’s external enemies – clearly the use of a perceived historical ‘precedent’ to justify the horrors of the Spanish Civil War. Even otherwise sensible recent historians have called al-Manṣūr ‘caudillo’, such as Echevarría 2011 and Puerta Vilchez 2013a.

11 In addition to Simonet’s *Almanzor: una Leyenda Árabe* (1858; reprinted 1986) and De Vega’s *Almanzor* (1946), there are a plethora of millennial novels such as Ángel Espinosa Durán, *Almanzor, Al-Mansur, el Victorioso* (1998); Jesús Sánchez Adalid, *El Mozárabe* (2001); Magdalena Lasala, *Almanzor: el gran guerrero de*

al-Andalus (2002); José Luis Rodríguez Plaza, *El Esclavo de Almanzor* (2002). Sánchez Adalid has recently revisited the success of his earlier book and published *El camino mozárabe* (2013). His most recent novel, *Los Baños del Pozo Azul* (2018), turns his attention to the relationship between Şubḥ and al-Manṣūr, and the rupture between them.

12 For example, Sa’īd al-Andalusī 1991, 61, says ‘Abū ‘Āmir performed this act ... to discredit the doctrine of the caliph al-Ḥakam’.

13 See Safran 1998 and 2000.

14 Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, II, 218. In his *Civilisation Arabe en Espagne*, 98, it is described as ‘un geste théâtral de vandalisme’.

Fascism. This is clearly illustrated in the introductions to both books on the Cordoban ivories by José Ferrandis Torres (1900–48). His overview of the Āmirid period seems to resonate with personal responses to the political upheaval which Spain underwent throughout the 1920s, culminating in the rise of Franco and Civil War, and with his own nostalgia for the earlier liberal government:

“The political physiognomy of the Cordoban caliphate changed radically with the government of Almanzor. Cordoba had been the centre of worldly culture during the tenth century; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II had intervened personally in the aggrandisement of Arab Spain; they had encouraged liberty of discussion in philosophical problems and had created the best library in the world; the whole of Europe watched with envy the power of the Cordoban monarchs, Arab leaders adapted by an exquisite culture to the sweet and delicate life of Andalucía. With Hishām II, the government of Almanzor predominated, who being more intolerant persecuted the philosophers and burned their books; he supported militarism and rode with a personal guard ... Thus he impoverished Cordoba and left her to be the capital of a caliphate now converted into one of the many states of the Taifa kinglets.”¹⁵

This quotation from Ferrandis also reveals the historiographic tendency to see the cultural achievements of the first two Andalusī caliphs, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II (r. 961–76), as a ‘Golden Age’ – achievements that have shone so brightly, they have cast into shadow other periods of artistic production in al-Andalus. The art itself has become almost a metaphor by which modern scholars judge the caliphal period as a whole; in comparison, other periods are usually found artistically less interesting and culturally less significant. The development of Andalusī art historical studies in Spain has been accompanied

by the explicit perception that such a warrior as al-Manṣūr could not have engaged in cultural patronage. It is also often implied that he was an unwilling patron, forced into the construction of ‘pious works’ by al-Andalus’s strict Maliki jurists. The art of this period is expected to be degenerate, because of al-Manṣūr’s perceived disinterest in it; as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, objects or surviving architectural decoration have been attributed to the Āmirid period precisely because of what is considered to be their ‘impoverished’ style, technique, even material. As characterised by Juan Zozaya, ‘Āmirid art was a ‘shepherd’s style trying to copy a prince’s’.¹⁶

These views tend to perpetuate the damning sentence passed long ago by the two pioneers of Andalusī art history, Manuel Gómez-Moreno (1870–1970) and Leopoldo Torres Balbás (1888–1960). For Gómez-Moreno,

“[Hishām] was only a name for history, while accumulating infamies Almanzor established himself in tyranny, his pre-eminence as odious as it was based on militaristic impulse. He imposed force, without a care for the culture fomented under al-Ḥakam, and the fruit which Almanzor offered in exchange for his usurpation were conquering advances in Africa and the destruction of the Christian powers in the north of the Peninsula. However, he submitted himself to the fanatical exigencies of the Maliki sect, incarnated in the jurists, purging the incomparable library of al-Ḥakam because it did not seem orthodox, and he proposed to enlarge the Great Mosque even more, perhaps more than necessity to distract attention from public affairs.”¹⁷

While for Torres Balbás,

“It is amazing to think that in the brief space of some twenty years the artistic decadence was so

¹⁵ Ferrandis Torres 1928, 82.

¹⁶ Personal communication, November 2001.

¹⁷ Gómez-Moreno 1951, 162–5.

considerable that one sees the transition from the splendid, in all respects, work of al-Ḥakam II, to the routine and impoverished, in forms and technique, under the omnipotent minister. Faced with the inexistence or ignorance of a social or political event that could explain this decline, the suspicion arises that al-Ḥakam II was the great motivator of this artistic and cultural movement, since before his accession to the throne, and once he had gone, *there was no-one interested in its prosecution. Artistic preoccupations were strangers to the Maliki fanaticism and triumphant militarism of the author of the purge of al-Ḥakam II's magnificent library.* Probably the dispersal of the Cordoban ateliers which worked on Madīnat al-Zahrā' and the Mosque occurred before the siege and decadence of Cordoba and the destruction of the royal city in the first years of the eleventh century.¹⁸

These negative views have not been helped by the failure of scholars to study the 'Āmirid period on its own terms: it is usually only considered as a transitional stage through which the caliphate passed on its way to the Fitna, the civil war leading to the disintegration of the caliphal state into the disparate city-states of the eleventh century, known as the Taifa period. While individual objects, such as the Pamplona casket (Figures 120–127), are famous among Islamic art historians, they are usually considered as products of 'the caliphal period', rather than recognised as creations of a distinct historical and political context and patronage process. The 'Āmirid palace-city, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, is always understood in terms of the discourse of 'usurpation', while the Cordoba mosque extension is consistently perceived as stylistically inferior. Gómez-Moreno dismissed al-Manṣūr's mosque extension as a 'slavish copy' of al-Ḥakam's extension, 'with hardly anything new artistically',¹⁹ while Torres Balbás considered its decoration

'uniform and monotonous'.²⁰ But, as discussed in Chapter 5, the subordination of the 'Āmirid extension to that of al-Ḥakam II – expressing architecturally the continuity of his regime with that of the Umayyads – was al-Manṣūr's main message.

1 Sources and Historiography

These emotive modern responses derive entirely from medieval historiography, especially from the literal demonisation of 'Almanzor' by the Christian chroniclers of the 'Reconquista'. The thirteenth-century *Chronicon Mundi* of Lucas de Tuy introduces the apocryphal Battle of Calatañazor, in which Almanzor is represented as a servant of Satan, who weeps for his ultimate defeat by the Christians.²¹ The twelfth-century *Historia Silense* relates the famous epitaph, 'Mortuus est Almanzor, et sepultus est in Inferno' ('Almanzor is dead; he is buried in Hell').²² On the other hand, the main branch of Islamic historiography on this period derives from the writings of Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1076), 'the greatest historian of medieval Spain',²³ which projects a strongly pro-Umayyad view of the period, since he blamed the 'Āmirids for the eventual fall of the Andalusī caliphate. This historian devoted one or more of the sixty volumes of his *Matīn* to a history of the 'Āmirid dynasty, the *Akhbār al-Dawlat al-Āmiriyya*. Written around the middle of the eleventh century, it was based on his own eye-witness testimony and that of his father, Khalaf ibn Ḥayyān (951–1035), who was a vizier at

18 Torres Balbás [1996], 578–9, my italics.

19 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 162.

20 Torres Balbás 1956, 578.

21 Martínez and Torremocha 2001, 33. On the Christian historiography of al-Manṣūr, see Echevarría 2000; Bariani 2001; Bariani 2003, 225–233; Valdeón 2004; Echevarría 2011, 22–27.

22 *Historia Silense*, ed. Pérez de Urbel and González Ruiz-Zorilla (Madrid, 1959), 176, cited in Echevarría 2000, 104 n. 36, 114. A similar epitaph is found in the *Chronicon Burgense*, ed. Huici Miranda, in *Crónicas Latinas de la Reconquista*, 1, 1915, 34.

23 Menocal et al 2000, 114. His two great works, the *Muqtabis* and *Matīn*, totalled 70 volumes.

al-Manṣūr's court. This work, now unfortunately lost, was undoubtedly the common source for all later histories of the 'Āmirids, as Cristina de la Puente has discussed.²⁴ Several sources, for example, repeat the following sentence, which must have originated with Ibn Ḥayyān's lost history of the 'Āmirids: 'Hishām al-Mu'ayyad was left with no more marks of the caliphate (*rūsūm al-khilāfa*) than the invocation [of his name] on the minbars, and the inscription of his name on the products of the *ṭirāz* and the coinage (*sikka*).²⁵ The personal bias of al-Manṣūr's earliest historiographer has thus been transmitted by historians of al-Andalus all the way up to al-Maqqarī (c. 1577–1632).²⁶

Another fundamental eye-witness account for the early years of al-Manṣūr's career is the *Akhbār mulūk al-Andalus* by 'Īsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī about whom very little is known other than that he was a secretary in the caliphal court and died at the end of the year 989. Only four years (June 971 to July 975) from al-Rāzī's court annals have survived, reproduced by Ibn Ḥayyān in volume VII of his *Muqtabis*. These contain fascinating information about the daily life of al-Ḥakam II's court, and have recently been used as the basis for a book by Eduardo Manzano on the administration of court and state in the late tenth century.²⁷ These annals were translated into Spanish by Emilio García Gómez as the *Anales Palatinos del Califa de Córdoba al-Ḥakam II*, and formed the basis of a number of articles by him on aspects of Cordoba's topography and state ceremonial.

The second and third volumes of Ibn 'Idhārī's *al-Bayān al-Mughrib* provide the most extensive primary historical source on the 'Āmirids. This late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century history of al-Andalus and the Maghrib relied heavily on Ibn

Ḥayyān for information on the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is likely that Ibn 'Idhārī's direct source was actually the *Dhakhīra* of Ibn Bassām (d. 1147), which is responsible for preserving much of Ibn Ḥayyān's lost work through the verbatim quotation of long passages; both later works therefore preserve Ibn Ḥayyān's pro-Umayyad stance.²⁸ Many other medieval historians have transmitted sections of works which have not otherwise survived.²⁹ Among the most significant for the study of the 'Āmirids is a biography of al-Manṣūr by Ibn Sa'īd (d. 1286); the polymath, Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1374), a courtier from the Nasrid court in exile in Marinid Morocco – his *Kitāb A'māl al-A'lām* was written for the Marinid sultan al-Sa'īd II (r. 1358), who had succeeded to the throne in infancy and was thus interested in the precedents of other rulers who had begun their reigns as children, Hishām II being an obvious example;³⁰ the great historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406); and a number of anonymous works written in the Maghrib in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: the *Kitāb al-Mafākhīr al-Barbar* (c. 1312) which, as mentioned above, provides detail of al-Manṣūr's relations in North Africa; and the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus* (late fourteenth/early fifteenth-century), again indebted to Ibn Ḥayyān but containing information which does not appear in other histories. We also know of other works which have not survived, such as the history of the 'Āmirid dynasty written by al-Manṣūr's librarian Ibn Ma'mar al-Lughawī (d. 1032),³¹ and another work of Ibn Sa'īd dedicated to the splendours of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira.³² Echoes of these works can be found in unattributed anecdotes transmitted by other historians, in particular al-Maqqarī.

24 De la Puente 1997, 370–371. See also Molina 1994, 11; 'Ibn Ḥayyān', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; Chalmeta 1972.

25 *Bayān* 11:296 [translation, 459–460]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:180 [11:191]; al-Maqqarī 187 (*Analectes*, 1:258).

26 De la Puente 1997, 367–374. Al-Maqqarī often names Ibn Ḥayyan as his source.

27 Manzano 2019.

28 De la Puente 1997, 371; Molina 1994, 6–8 (on Ibn Bassām); 9 (Ibn 'Idhārī).

29 For a helpful overview of the historians who have written about the 'Āmirid period, see Ballestín 2004a, 17–21; Echevarría 2011, 13–22.

30 Echevarría 2011, 21.

31 Echevarría 2011, 17; Bongianino 2017, 35.

32 Sénac 2006, 46.

While such chronicles are essential for laying the building blocks for our understanding of a historical period, it can be difficult, as David Wasserstein has noted, ‘to penetrate beyond the smokescreen of great events to their motive causes and the processes underlying them.’³³ Such sources tell us almost nothing about the processes of cultural and artistic patronage, nor do they comment on material possessions or physical settings. It is therefore necessary to supplement the evidence of chronicles with other sources, most importantly (in this case) literary and poetic works as well as the material evidence itself. Key among the former are the surviving works of Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), another eye witness whose father Aḥmad (d. 1012) served in the ‘Āmirid court, and who actually lived in al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. Works such as his treatise on love, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma* (‘The Dove’s Neckring’), or the historical *Naqṭ al-‘Arūs* (‘Freckles of the Bride’), contain incidental anecdotes and details which help to build a fuller picture of the ‘Āmirid material world. Another form of eye-witness testimony derives from the panegyric and other poetry composed in honour of the ‘Āmirids by their large circle of salaried poets. Many poetic samples are preserved in the annals, but more importantly for the ‘Āmirid period is the surviving collection (*dīwān*) of one of al-Manṣūr’s ‘poets laureate’, Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭālī (958–1030). As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, Ibn Darrāj was present at many ceremonial and private gatherings of the ‘Āmirid court, as well as on the battlefield of some of al-Manṣūr’s campaigns, and he refers to these in verses composed for the occasion. His poems even contain evidence for embassies from the Christian rulers of Iberia for which we have no other historical data. An analysis of the imagery he and other ‘Āmirid court poets used in their verses provides an important framework within which to understand the visual imagery of the objects created contemporaneously and for these same patrons, as discussed in Chapter 8.

The modern scholarship on al-Manṣūr and the ‘Āmirid period has been primarily the work of Spanish scholars and, in addition to those monographic studies mentioned above, I am indebted to scholars such as Cristina de la Puente, María Jesús Viguera, Maribel Fierro, Alejandro García Sanjuán, Juan Souto, Susana Calvo Capilla, as well as the very many others who have gone before them and whose works are cited in the bibliography, for laying the groundwork for my own study. In the historical sections of this book, I will summarise the main issues and discuss what I see as the most relevant themes, but refer the reader who wants to find out more detail on the history of this period to these studies. Not many English-language scholars have engaged with this period on its own terms: special mention should be made of the historical works of David Wasserstein and the art-historical works of Cynthia Robinson, both dedicated to the beginnings and development of the Taifa period, so their studies approach the ‘Āmirid period from the perspective of what followed.³⁴ In general, most historians of whatever nationality treat the Umayyad period as if it ended with the death of al-Ḥakam II in 976, a shortcoming which I hope my own study will finally address.

33 Wasserstein 1985, 13.

34 It is unfortunate that the most recent book in English to treat this historical period presents a rather unreconstructed view of the ‘Āmirid *hijāba*, and makes no reference to any of the more recent Spanish studies. Richard Hitchcock 2014 is blatant about accusing al-Manṣūr of being ‘anti-intellectual’, stating that ‘The pursuit of philosophy and astrology was to come to an abrupt halt after [al-Ḥakam’s] death’ (p. 86). Further, in discussing the purge of al-Ḥakam’s library, that al-Manṣūr ‘would not have hesitated in condemning to the flames or the rubbish dumps works that had brought such renown to his predecessor’ (p. 97). Here Hitchcock indulges in a melodramatic interpretation of the sources and, while admitting that the act was primarily expedient, implies that al-Manṣūr revelled in an act of unmitigated tyranny, because fundamentally he was ‘anti-intellectual’.

2 The *Ḥijāba*

Deriving from ‘*hajaba*’, ‘to prevent, protect; conceal, screen’, the *ḥājib* – often translated to English as ‘chamberlain’ – was the man who placed himself between the caliph’s curtain (*sitr*) and those who desired admittance to the caliphal presence.³⁵ The incumbent of this office was thus the ‘Master of Ceremonies’ at state events, as well as the caliph’s ‘Protector’. It was a distinctively Umayyad office – it already existed at the time of Mu‘āwiya, but it fully evolved in al-Andalus.³⁶ It came to signify the same role as that of vizier in the Islamic East: the highest official in the State, with equal responsibility for the house of the ruler, and in particular the tutelage of his children, and the Chancery. He was the counsellor and confidant of the ruler, but also the person to whom he delegated authority, especially in a military capacity. The *ḥājib* was the only man authorised to impart or communicate the caliph’s orders.³⁷

By the time al-Manṣūr came to occupy this office in the 970s, these roles and responsibilities were well-established. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I (r. 756–88), the first Umayyad amir in al-Andalus, appointed five successive *ḥujjāb* during his reign, though the office seems to have been restructured under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822–52) so that by the emirate of ‘Abd Allāh (r. 888–912) the function of *ḥājib* was properly constituted as an institution of the state apparatus.³⁸ In the early years of his rule, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III continued the practice of appointing *ḥujjāb*, though the two men he named to this office were selected from among the patrician families of the Umayyad state. This had not been the norm hitherto and was no doubt a deliberate stabilising policy on the part of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, after the turbulent civil war years which preceded his accession.³⁹ Badr ibn Aḥmad

(*ḥājib* 912–921) was one of the highest dignitaries of the state at the start of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s reign; he was head of the cavalry, prefect of the guard, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s *qā'id*.⁴⁰ As Echevarría notes, al-Manṣūr was not the first state official to direct the Andalusi troops: the *ḥājib* of amir Muḥammad had also been head of the cavalry and, though not a *ḥājib*, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s freedman Ghālib became the most important general of the Andalusi armies under al-Ḥakam II.⁴¹

After Badr’s death the office of *ḥājib* was filled by Mūsā ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr (d. 933). But after the latter’s death, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān appointed no successor to the *ḥijāba*, probably because – as a consequence of declaring himself caliph – he was centralising more and more state authority in his own person. Instead of a single *ḥājib*, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān surrounded himself with a particularly large number of viziers, again a way of making roles in the state administration for members of the Cordoban elite.⁴²

The office was revived by his son al-Ḥakam II, who appointed as *ḥājib* his father’s freedman, Ja‘far al-Ṣiqlābī, on the very day he took office in 961. He held this office until his death in 971. Ja‘far’s *ḥijāba* is particularly well-documented thanks to the many inscriptions that survive in which he is named as carrying out the caliph’s orders, and to the important epigraphic study in which Manuel Ocaña reconstructed the development of Ja‘far’s

35 ‘*Ḥaḍjib*’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; Meouak 1994–5; Meouak 1999, 64–65.

36 Meouak 1994–5, 155.

37 Echevarría 2011, 45.

38 Meouak 1994–5, 157–8.

39 Fierro 2005.

40 Meouak 1995, 380–83. Badr established his own dynasty – his sons and grandsons held high office under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, al-Ḥakam II, al-Manṣūr and Sanchuelo, including the *kātib* who wrote documents condemning Ibn Masarra and poets under al-Manṣūr and Sanchuelo. Fierro 2005, 40, observes that the fact ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s close collaborator in early years was called Badr might be significant as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I’s success in al-Andalus owed much to the energy and devotion of his own manumitted slave called Badr.

41 Echevarría 2011, 174.

42 Meouak 1994–5, 160–2; Kennedy 1996, 85, who also observes that the number of Ṣaqāliba in the administration and military massively increases under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III.

career in great detail.⁴³ Al-Ḥakam came to rely profoundly on his *ḥājib* and following Ja'far's death, he was succeeded to this office by another Ja'far, al-Muṣḥafī, descendant of a Berber family that had settled near Valencia in the ninth century.⁴⁴ During 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's reign, many Berbers reached high office, and several members of the Banū al-Maṣāḥifa held positions at court, before and after Ja'far.⁴⁵ His father, 'Uthmān ibn Naṣr ibn Qawī (d. 325/937), had reached the level of vizier under 'Abd al-Raḥmān and may have been tutor to the young al-Ḥakam; it is possible that Ja'far al-Muṣḥafī was educated alongside the prince.⁴⁶

The political circumstances in which Ja'far al-Muṣḥafī was succeeded to the *ḥijāba* by al-Manṣūr will be discussed in Chapter 1, but it is important to acknowledge that there is a historical context in which al-Manṣūr acceded to this long-established office. Many of the roles he took early in his career have precedents among his forebears in this office, and they too were able to accumulate great riches which they used to engage in artistic patronage. Ja'far al-Ṣiqlābī had an official residence at the heart of the palatine core of Madīnat al-Zahrā', physically close to the caliph's private quarters, which has been identified and now partially reconstructed by archaeologists. He may also have had a private villa (*munya*) in the city's environs, from which architectonic elements with figurative decoration may be the only remaining trace. Ja'far al-Muṣḥafī also owned a lavish *munya*, al-Muṣḥafīyya, which passed into al-Manṣūr's possession after al-Muṣḥafī's fall from

grace.⁴⁷ Further, he or one of his ancestors may have founded a neighbourhood mosque in the city centre of Cordoba (*masjid al-Muṣḥafī min dākhil Qurṭuba*).⁴⁸ One of the two Ja'fars even minted coins struck with 'al-ḥājib' at the top and his own name, 'ja'far', at the bottom. These so-called 'Ja'farī dinars' were *mashhūr bi'l-Andalus*, 'famous throughout al-Andalus'. They start to be minted in 967, before al-Muṣḥafī comes to power as *ḥājib*, and thus might be best associated with al-Ṣiqlābī, as Martínez Enamorado argues;⁴⁹ however, they continue to be minted until 984, long after al-Ṣiqlābī's death. According to Ibn Ghālib, cited by Ibn Sa'īd, al-Muṣḥafī was the one who minted Ja'farī dinars.⁵⁰ The historical confusion might stem from the fact that both men had their names on the coins, as Meouak seems to believe. Nevertheless, this forms an important precedent for al-Manṣūr, who included his *kunya* 'āmīr on the coinage as soon as he was appointed *ṣāḥib al-sikka*. These two Ja'fars, as precedents for *ḥājib*al patronage, will be discussed further in Chapter 6; but for now it should be observed that the conditions in which al-Manṣūr came to the *ḥijāba* and then operated in this role did not come from nowhere: they had established historical precedents which must be taken into account.

3 Structure of the Book

The central thesis of this book is the ways in which al-Manṣūr and his two sons used their patronage of culture, literature, art and architecture to express the legitimacy – that is, the rightness – of their role as regents, *de facto* rulers on behalf of the caliph of al-Andalus. This is the first study to do this. The study of artistic and cultural patronage requires a multi-disciplinary approach, and the

43 Ocaña 1976; Martínez Enamorado 2006 gives a list of the offices he held. He says (p. 20), 'De alguna forma, el caso de Ja'far al-Ṣaqlābī sirve para alumbrar el camino a Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Āmir'.

44 Meouak 1999, 181. Ja'far's grandfather may have been one Naṣr al-Muṣḥafī al-Naqqāt, who was a reader of the Qur'ān and had even placed the diacritical marks in the text of the Holy Book (*yunaqqitu al-maṣāḥif*). It may be that they settled in Valencia because it was already emerging as the important book-producing centre that it became under the Almoravids in the twelfth century.

45 Meouak 1999, 163.

46 Meouak 1999, 182; Echevarría 2011, 43.

47 Meouak 1999, 181, citing *Nafḥ al-tīb*, 1, 471; Zanón 1989, 99.

48 Meouak 1999, 181, citing Codera ed., *Al-Takmila*, 1, 343.

49 Martínez Enamorado 2006, 42.

50 Meouak 1999, 189. Canto & Ibrahim 1995 believe them to have been minted by al-Muṣḥafī.

nature of the evidence employed here is varied: it encompasses history, poetry, numismatics, epigraphy, archaeology, architectural and art history. Though throughout I refer to the *ʿĀmirids*’ patronage, the focus is largely on the dynasty’s founder, al-Manṣūr. The political, cultural and artistic policies of his two short-reigning sons cannot be separated from those of their father; furthermore, the nature of the material evidence is such that, in isolation, neither the objects nor the architecture is sufficient to provide a complete picture. All three patrons must thus be studied in conjunction.

Chapter 1 examines al-Manṣūr’s origins and his rise to power, his accumulation of caliph-style titulature, and the ways in which he sought to confront the main issue of his *ḥijāba* – its legitimacy. It is a complex period, and this chapter brings together recent research in Spanish in order to make the full panorama of this historical period available for the first time to an English readership. The chapter has a chronological spine, while highlighting key themes of relevance to the later discussions. Though jihad is an important such theme, I do not discuss the *ʿĀmirids*’ military campaigns in detail, as these have been the most studied aspect of their administration and have accumulated a long bibliography.⁵¹ Aspects of their military activities will be touched on in other contexts and, for reference, the dates and names of al-Manṣūr’s campaigns are included in the Timeline provided in Appendix 2.

I do, however, aim to highlight the importance of North Africa at this period. Relations with Christian Iberia have dominated the historiography, as they have in general in the study of medieval Iberia, as if the clash of religions/cultures, or its polar opposite, the ideal of *convivencia*, were the only lenses through which to examine this region. As Amira Bennison notes, ‘Eurocentric historiography has tended to perceive the Umayyads

as oriented towards the Christian north and Byzantium’, but relations with North Africa and the Berber notables ‘are given considerably more space’ in al-Rāzī’s Annals than embassies from Byzantium or the Christian kingdoms.⁵² She notes that the Umayyads’ central foreign policy objective, especially under al-Ḥakam II, was the assertion of Umayyad Sunnism against Fatimid Shiʿism in North Africa, and this is the theatre in which Ibn Abī ʿĀmir – the future al-Manṣūr – first rose to a position of trust in al-Ḥakam’s court. As Xavier Ballestín notes, ‘the critical moments in his career did not happen in Cordoba or on the northern frontier, but in the Maghrib, both at the start of his career and when he reached the culmination of his power’.⁵³

Another important element of the context draws on Laura Bariani’s research into the mental and physical incapacity of the caliph Hishām II. Through careful examination of the Arabic primary sources, Bariani has demonstrated that the situation in al-Andalus at this period was decidedly more complex than the Ḥayyānī view of *ʿĀmirid* usurpation has allowed.⁵⁴ She argues that Hishām II was never mentally or physically capable of taking up the reins of power, even when he attained his majority. Rather than a simple scenario of usurpation, al-Manṣūr’s power was legally delegated to him by the caliph, with the crucial support of the queen mother, Ṣubḥ; but in order to protect Hishām against conspiracies to replace him with a more capable Umayyad relative, al-Manṣūr and Ṣubḥ needed to keep Hishām’s condition a secret. As such, the *ʿĀmirids*’ position is shown to have been fully legalised in Islamic law, even conforming to a recognised model of delegated authority. However, the *ḥājibs*’ ability to maintain that position derived from the ways in which they cultivated the loyalty of the ruling

51 For recent bibliography on al-Manṣūr’s campaigns and references to earlier works, see De la Puente 1999a and 2001; Echevarría 2000; Bariani 2003, 193–233 (part VI); Echevarría 2011, Chapter IV ‘El Poder de las Armas’.

52 Bennison 2007a, 74.

53 Ballestín 2004a, 14–15.

54 See the works by Bariani listed in the bibliography, especially Bariani 1998 and 2003.

elite, the affirmation of the religious elite, and fulfilled the traditional duties of the caliph.

Chapter 2 examines the adoption by the 'Āmirids of caliphal-style court ceremonial and their conduct of diplomatic relations with Christian Iberia and the Maghrib, as well as further afield, including Byzantium. In elaborate embassies staged at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, their clients and defeated enemies were made to participate in awe-inspiring displays of submission. Adopting caliphal ceremonial in this way sought to symbolise and strengthen the *hijāba*'s official representation. Al-Manṣūr also adopted a strategic policy of dynastic marriage, including with the key families of Christian Iberia, forming important bonds of kinship across the borders of different faiths. In this, he seems to have been deliberately following a long-standing policy among the Umayyad amirs. Through their sponsorship of a highly literary culture, the 'Āmirids carefully cultivated personal bonds with the Cordoban elite, which were crucial in the legitimisation of their political position (Chapter 3). These bonds were forged through the propagation of intimate poetic gatherings in the gardens of the 'Āmirids' palaces, and this intense literary patronage stimulated the development of what has been described as 'the greatest literary age of al-Andalus'.⁵⁵ The intense sponsorship of books and learning during the 'Āmirid period, if not necessarily by the *ḥājibs* directly, belies the notion that this was an anti-intellectual period.

The cultivation of a flourishing court was one of the principal means by which the 'Āmirids articulated their regency. However, the most striking manifestation of their power and position was the construction of a palace-city, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, which imitated both the form and function of the caliphal foundation at Madīnat al-Zahrā'. Just as 'Abd al-Raḥmān III had used the construction of his palace-city to epitomise the Umayyads' claim to the caliphate and to monumentalise the caliphal title he had adopted, so al-Manṣūr used architecture not just to emblematised his titlature

but also to convey his claims of continuity with the Umayyad regime. Chapter 4 reconstructs the appearance and infrastructure of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira from historical and literary texts, as well as some surviving architectonic elements that might be associated with it.

For art and architecture, the primary sources are naturally the objects and the monuments themselves. Chapter 5 provides a detailed study of al-Manṣūr's construction of an extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba, the Umayyad dynastic symbol *par excellence*, which has never received such focused attention. In contrast, most authors on the mosque skim over the 'Āmirid extension, as discussed above. But here is actually where we can retrieve the messages conveyed through al-Manṣūr's use of architectural patronage most clearly. By subordinating his extension to the Umayyad monument by imitating its architectural form, al-Manṣūr again laid claim to continuity with the caliphs, while at the same time making a literally monumental statement of the changed Realpolitik. The regents not the caliphs now exercised the regal role of constructing public works. However, the most explicit messages are those which he inscribed on the eastern façade of his extension: though no foundation inscription remains, the selection of particular Qur'anic passages, and their intertextual relation to passages used in the epigraphic programme of the mosque's interior, declared al-Manṣūr's intention to uphold the strictures of Malikism against heterodoxy. In this, again, he aligned himself with policies championed by the caliphs, and thus staked his claim to be the only effective power in the state.

The book's final chapters examine the ways in which the 'Āmirids used their patronage of the luxury arts to visualise their messages of power. Chapter 6 discusses what can be reconstructed of the structure and personnel of the caliphal luxury arts industry, in order to elucidate how processes of artistic patronage actually worked in tenth-century al-Andalus. It examines whether a branch of this industry was transferred to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, and looks at the precedents for artistic

55 Khadra Jayyusi 1992a, 326.

patronage among al-Manṣūr's predecessors in the office of *ḥājib*. It also discusses the highly strategic ways in which al-Manṣūr used objects, as display or as *khil'a*. The principal objects which form a corpus of 'Āmirid art' are compiled and discussed as a group for the first time in Chapter 7. These objects are selected on the basis of inscriptions that connect them directly to 'Āmirid patronage, or because of their strong stylistic associations with those so-inscribed. These objects include some of the most famous and spectacular creations to have survived from tenth-century al-Andalus, such as the Pamplona casket (2.1), or the marble fountain basins made for al-Manṣūr (1.2) and 'Abd al-Malik (2.3.1), but discusses them alongside less-well-known objects or those made for 'anonymous' patrons whose stylistic characteristics allow us to date them to this period. The discussion concludes with an attempt to outline the 'language' of 'Āmirid art, those elements that distinguish and characterise these objects and the architectonic decoration introduced in Chapter 4, from those of earlier (caliphal) or later (Taifa) periods.

Under the direction of 'Āmirid personnel, particular messages were expressed in these objects' iconography, which can be retrieved through a comparative study with the poetic imagery employed by 'Āmirid court poets. The discussion in Chapter 8 shows that al-Manṣūr and his sons deliberately employed images to project their self-perception as fulfilling the virtues of the ideal ruler. This message was strengthened by a meaningful relationship between text and image, and this chapter also examines inscriptions on 'Āmirid luxury arts, by discussing the semantics of particular epigraphic formulae and how these reinforce the messages of the iconography. Finally, the Conclusion draws these various methodological strands together, looking at the legacy of the 'Āmirids into the Taifa period, in particular how their legitimising strategies were perpetuated by their clients and descendants who came to rule Taifa states after the disruption of the Fitna years. It looks at some of the early examples of Taifa art – in particular, architectural construction in Málaga

and Toledo and the patronage of ivory carving by the Banū Dhū al-Nūn – for what these could say about styles, trends and techniques that had come to the fore in now-lost examples of 'Āmirid architecture, especially since the artisans who produced these works had likely worked at the 'Āmirid Dār al-Ṣinā'a before the Fitna.

The multi-disciplinary approach adopted in this study thus allows, for the first time, for an evaluation of the full spectrum of 'Āmirid cultural patronage. Indeed, it creates the field of 'Āmirid art. Moreover, by relating aspects of the 'Āmirids' cultural policies to those identified in studies of the articulation by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III of his caliphal legitimacy,⁵⁶ it can be seen that in many ways al-Manṣūr imitated a model of legitimation invented by that caliph. Janina Safran's studies have identified as fundamental elements in the articulation of 'Abd al-Raḥmān's caliphal legitimacy the ideological importance of his military activities, and his continued commissioning of regular campaigns throughout his reign (though he never again led the army personally after his rout at the Battle of Alhándega in 939); the development of his capital as a centre of learning and culture, which attracted men of talent from both Maghrib and Mashriq, and where he commissioned poets and historians to record his feats; the monumental construction in which he engaged at the Great Mosque of Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrā'; and the diplomatic relations which he developed with those states that bordered Andalusian interests (Christian Iberia, the Maghrib, Byzantium), and the consequent elaboration of an etiquette of court receptions and public ceremonies.⁵⁷ By these means, 'Abd al-Raḥmān established an Andalusian model of ideal kingship. As will be seen throughout the discussions in this book, this was a model which al-Manṣūr closely followed, since these were the very same means he employed to articulate the legitimacy of his *ḥijāba*.

56 Especially studies by Janina Safran and Maribel Fierro.

57 Safran 1998, 193.

Al-Manṣūr thus deliberately articulated his *ḥijāba* as if it were a caliphate, and sought to legitimise his position by engaging in the types of patronage that had traditionally been the preserve of caliphs. By employing the full range of available strategies, and by negotiating a delicate balance of power, al-Manṣūr and his sons were able to retain control of the *ḥijāba* for more than thirty years. It was a period when al-Andalus was at its most peaceful, secure and wealthy, and when some of

the most spectacular artistic creations of the tenth century were made. It is hoped that through this study, the ‘Āmirid *ḥijāba* may be recognised as a significant historical and artistic period in its own right, with its own political context and concerns, rather than viewed askance through a biased historiographical lens that presumes its inferiority to the caliphal period. In consequence, not only will its key historical events be fully acknowledged, but also its great cultural achievements.

Al-Dawla al-‘Āmiriyya: Constructing the ‘Āmirid State

Al-Manṣūr was a man of great strength [of character], indomitable, decisive, a good governor, worried for his subjects, and for the fortification and pacification of the frontiers, [concerned] to bring justice to its logical conclusions and to promote good works and virtues. His period was the best for al-Andalus [as it would have been] for any other country, in terms of order, good government, security on the roads, and the conservation of the rights of temporal power.

Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus 1:180 [11:191]



Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir was born in 326/938–9, the same year as ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s disastrous defeat at the Battle of Simancas-Alhándega: the later historian Ibn al-Abbār (1198–1260) describes his birth as the revenge brought by God upon the Christians.¹ Ibn Abī ‘Āmir was born on the family estate of Torrox, in the province of Algeciras. His family had come to al-Andalus at the time of its conquest, when his ancestor, ‘Abd al-Malik al-Ma‘āfirī, distinguished himself by capturing Carteya, the first city to fall to the Muslims in 711 – as Hugh Kennedy observes, this means the Banū Abī ‘Āmir had been in al-Andalus longer than the

Umayyads.² On his father’s side, he was a member of the Arab tribal group Qaḥṭān, while his mother was a member of the Banū Tamīm, of the tribe of ‘Adnān; thus ‘he found himself noble by one line and the other.’³ While they were members of the Andalusī nobility, they were not one of the patrician families (see the genealogy in Appendix 1).⁴ Several of al-Manṣūr’s forebears had held important posts in the Cordoban administration: his great-grandfather, Yaḥya ibn ‘Ishāq, was a distinguished doctor at ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s court, and held many important posts, rising to the rank of vizier; his grandfathers were both *qāḍīs*, his maternal uncle was chief-*qāḍī* of Cordoba from 992 to 1000 (during al-Manṣūr’s administration), and his father was a theologian and *faqīh*, who died in Tripoli on his way back from the Hajj. On his mother’s side, al-Manṣūr was related to the Banū Bartal, a family of distinguished theologians and *qāḍīs*. Al-Manṣūr’s early career continued this family tradition: he received a typical education in Cordoba for someone on their way to a career as a *qāḍī*.⁵ His first appointment in 355/966 was as assistant (*kātib*) to the chief-*qāḍī*, Muḥammad ibn al-Salīm, one of al-Ḥakam II’s most favoured councillors.⁶ Ibn al-Salīm brought him to the attention of the vizier, Ja‘far ibn ‘Uthmān al-Muṣḥafī, who introduced al-Manṣūr into the *ahl al-khidma*, the personnel at the direct command of the caliph al-Ḥakam II. Here al-Manṣūr’s natural talent coupled with the patronage of al-Muṣḥafī and the

1 Ibn al-Abbār 1963, 1, 272–3. My thanks to Xavier Ballestín for this information. The following biographical sketch is compiled from *Bayān* 11:273–274, 293–294 [translation 424–427, 455–456]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:175 [11:186]; al-Maqqarī 178–179. For information on al-Manṣūr’s formative years and early career, see also De la Puente 1997, Viguera 1999, Bariani 2003, 52–55, Ballestín 2004a, Fierro 2008 and Echevarría 2011, 33–43.

2 Kennedy 1996, 109.

3 *Bayān* 11:294 [translation, 456].

4 On the noble origins of the Banū Abī ‘Āmir, see Echevarría 2011, 38–9; Meouak 1999, 69–163.

5 Cf. *Bayān* 11:274 [translation 426–427], which includes a list of his teachers.

6 Echevarría 2011, 42. On Ibn al-Salim, see also Marín 2004, esp. 101.

umm al-walad, Şubḥ,⁷ led to a steady rise through the ranks of the administration: his appointment, aged 28, as steward (*wakīl*) to the heir apparent, was the making of his career. During the 360s/970s he accumulated a number of offices, and he appears frequently in the annals of al-Ḥakam’s reign in various significant and trusted roles (see the Timeline in Appendix 2 for a full list of the offices he held). While he was *qādi* of Seville, he is said to have ‘embellished and improved the city’ (*jamala-hā wa ḥasana-hā*), and this must have been his first exposure to architectural commissioning and construction.⁸

It is important to recognise from this quick survey of al-Manşūr’s early career that he did not rise from nowhere: stories of his ambition,⁹ of bribing his way into office with rich gifts (such as the model of the silver palace made for Şubḥ, Chapter 6),¹⁰ or by becoming Şubḥ’s lover,¹¹ betray a perception that al-Manşūr was motivated from the very beginning by greed for power. This teliological tendency in the historiography of al-Manşūr’s rise to power sees significance in every detail of his early career, indicating – sometimes explicitly – that he was marked for power from a young age. In fact, his early career progressed as would be expected for the son of a noble family.

7 On whom see Marín 1997.

8 *Dhikr Bilād* 11:176 [11:186–7]. The dates for his incumbence of that office are slightly different from those provided by other sources. The *Dhikr Bilād* also tells us that, as a result of his successful embellishment of Seville, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir was appointed supervisor of public works, *nāzir al-banā*, which is not noted by other sources. In this role he was responsible for constructing buildings, a job ‘in which he showed capacity and diligence’.

9 Cf. *Bayān* 11:276 [translation 429]; or al-Maqqarī, 175: ‘[Ibn Abī ‘Āmir] succeeded by his intrigues in usurping all the authority of the state’.

10 On the silver palace, see *Bayān* 11:268 [translation 416]; al-Maqqarī 179 (*Analectes*, 11:61); Ballestín 2004a, 63–69. On other gifts and favours presented to the women of the caliph’s harem: *Bayān* 11:268 [translation 417]; al-Maqqarī, 179 (*Analectes*, 11:62).

11 Cf. for example, Ibn Ḥazm 1953, 79–80; or Martínez-Gros 1992, 80.

As Ana Echevarría points out, the fact that al-Manşūr was nearly 30 when he was first appointed to a significant role in the royal household belies the ‘vertiginous’ rise with which some historians have credited him.¹² Moreover, he was supported and sustained by family ties and networks, as Eduardo Manzano has reconstructed.¹³ Through his great-grandfather’s links to the Banū Ḥudayr, al-Manşūr was connected with one of the old Andalusī families who held important positions in the caliphal administration, and as Manzano observes, it cannot be incidental that it was a member of this family – Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr – who lent al-Manşūr money when he was charged with embezzling from the mint.¹⁴

Manzano notes that it was unusual for someone trained in religious law, such as Ibn Abī ‘Āmir, to be made *ṣāhib al-sikka*, which was a direct appointment by the caliph. He also notes that, from this date, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir began to accumulate offices that do not have any logical interrelationship, and to receive orders that demonstrate that he had become a person trusted by the caliph to carry out whatever duty was needed: in September 971, for example, he was the man chosen to collect Ja‘far ibn ‘Alī al-Andalusī and his family, who had recently deserted the Fatimids.¹⁵ He was not the only member of the administration to hold multiple offices simultaneously. He may well have had family support, but his charisma, his skill and efficiency as an administrator, and apparent willingness to do whatever the caliph wanted of him, made him a stalwart within al-Ḥakam’s administration. His continued rise was thanks to being

12 Echevarría 2011, 43.

13 Manzano 2006, 482–6, tabulated in a genealogical chart (10.1) on p. 483. As he notes, it is exceptional that we can reconstruct this degree of genealogical information.

14 Manzano 2006, 486. The text (*Bayān* 11:268–9) merely mentions ‘Ibn Ḥudayr’ but the text’s editors have identified the person in question as this individual, as explained by Ballestín 2004a, 65–6.

15 Manzano 2019, 120–121.

reliable in the right place at the right time, on the unusual conditions surrounding the caliphal succession and later life and health of Hishām II, on his own talent at exploiting situations in his own favour, his clever diplomacy and political astuteness, and his brilliance on the battlefield. He also carefully cultivated the loyalty and support of different branches of the Cordoban state infrastructure whose approval he needed. In the following chapters we will see various instances of this, through his strategic use of gift-giving, whether to tribal chiefs in North Africa or women of the caliphal harem; the cultivation of personal relationships with high officers of the bureaucracy and members of the Cordoban elite through private *majālis* at al-Madinat al-Zāhira (discussed in particular in Chapter 3); through the clever kinship ties he propagated through marriage and concubinage alliances, in particular following the Umayyad practice of taking a Christian consort – though al-Manṣūr outdid even the caliphs in this, since his wife ‘Abda was a princess, daughter of the king of Navarra (Chapter 2). Al-Manṣūr also cultivated the religious leaders – the *‘ulamā’* – who legitimised the ruler within the Sunni theological system,¹⁶ and his ostentatious piety, including his purge of heretical texts held in al-Ḥakam II’s famous library, should be viewed within this context.

Moreover, as Manzano has discussed, al-Manṣūr was careful to give a greater role in government to the major families of the Cordoban elite – what Hugh Kennedy has called the ‘mandarin dynasties’.¹⁷ These families claimed descent from Umayyad *mawālī*, and had long occupied the most important posts in the administration (secretaries, treasurers, *aṣḥāb al-madīna*, etc.), as well as providing the corps of viziers, a ‘general purpose title given to the highest ranks ... One gets

the impression of an exclusive and very influential clique’.¹⁸ Family ties were crucial: uncles and brothers were frequently employed in the administration at the same time, sons succeeded fathers. During the reign of al-Ḥakam II, their importance as hereditary incumbents of high office and positions within the caliphal *shūra* was steadily undermined by the appointment of a freedman and then a Berber as the caliph’s *ḥujjāb* – the two Ja‘fars: al-Ṣiqḷābī and al-Muṣḥafī – and an increasing reliance on the Ṣaqāliba faction who entered the court bureaucracy in ever greater numbers. By the end of al-Ḥakam’s reign this rich and powerful group was said to number nearly four thousand. The big families lost the role they had enjoyed under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. As we saw above, al-Manṣūr already had family ties with the Banū Ḥudayr, and he was clearly conscious that he needed their support in order to maintain the new political status quo. Ultimately they supported him in his takeover of al-Muṣḥafī’s position as *ḥājib*, and in exchange they were able to make a comeback to their historic positions of power (if not necessarily influence).

We will see that al-Manṣūr was a shrewd politician who strove carefully to rule within the law, even that his position as *de facto* ruler of al-Andalus was fully legalised. But the most important issue of his *hijāba* was his constant need to demonstrate the rightness of his incumbency of that office, that is, his legitimacy to act and to continue to act as *de facto* ruler. Since he did not descend from the Banū Quraysh and could not be caliph through divine or theocratic right, al-Manṣūr needed to demonstrate and maintain his legitimacy in other ways. Once Ṣubḥ’s support was removed during the crisis year of 996–7, al-Manṣūr had only his own resources to sustain him in power, as well as the relationships he had so carefully built up over the previous thirty years.

16 Fierro 2005, 125–131.

17 Manzano 2006, 489–90; Manzano 2019, 105; Kennedy 1996, 85. The ‘Seven Families’ were the Banū Abī ‘Abda, Ḥudayr, Shuhayd, ‘Abd al-Ra‘uf and Futays.

18 Kennedy 1996, 85. On the office of *wizāra* in al-Andalus, see Meouak 1999, 58–63.

1 Succession Crisis

The crucial period in al-Manṣūr’s career began with the succession crisis after al-Ḥakam’s death in 976, the accession of his son, Hishām, aged only eleven at the time, and the evolution of a regency government.¹⁹ Securing the caliphal succession and the stability of the state was the main issue occupying the final years of al-Ḥakam’s comparatively short reign. Al-Ḥakam was still childless when, aged 46, he succeeded his father to the caliphate, though his favourite concubine, Ṣubḥ, bore him a son within a couple of years of his accession. This was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, born in 351/962–3, but who died in infancy when he was only seven or eight years old.²⁰ We do not know the condition of which he died, but the health issues that afflicted Hishām’s older brother, as well as his father, who was ill for about two years before he died, may well be significant when we come to discuss Hishām’s own health.

It seems that al-Ḥakam was all too aware that the succession of a minor would lead to the potential instability of the state, nevertheless he chose to enforce his young son’s inheritance. As Alejandro García Sanjuán discusses, Umayyad rule in al-Andalus had passed directly from father to son since the arrival of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, except for a couple of extraordinary circumstances.²¹ The other option for al-Ḥakam was to let the caliphate pass to one of his brothers, an idea that occurred to some of his courtiers as well, as the plot to replace Hishām with al-Mughāra, the middle of al-Ḥakam’s

three brothers, shows (discussed below). However, García Sanjuán observes that no Umayyad sovereign had willingly deprived his own son of the succession, and this seems to have been more important to al-Ḥakam than the future stability of the realm. Of course he could not have expected to die when he did, and perhaps hoped that Hishām would be older by the time the responsibility of rule fell upon him.

The succession of a minor was unprecedented in al-Andalus and al-Ḥakam foresaw that it was an unpopular move. García Sanjuán uncovers the propaganda campaign that was initiated soon after the death of al-Ḥakam’s first born son, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, to pave the way for designating Hishām as heir, though at the time he was only five or six years old.²² This began around 971 when the court poets began to promote a positive message of the heir at all the major ceremonial moments, including using the phrase *walī al-‘ahd* for the first time (in a poem by Muḥammad ibn Shukhayṣ recited at the ‘Īd al-Fiṭr celebrations in 972) and laying the groundwork for an oath of allegiance (*bay‘a*) to be sworn. This propaganda campaign had a physical manifestation as well. Also in 972, Ibn Ḥayyān tells us that al-Ḥakam ordered the restoration of the Dār al-Mulk at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, which had fallen into disuse, to be used as Hishām’s residence.²³ He appointed the grammarian Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Qaṣṭallī (d. 368/978) to be Hishām’s tutor,²⁴ and his classes took place in the palace’s eastern hall, in which he was joined by the sons of the viziers. Antonio Vallejo has noted that archaeology has

19 The sources are not particularly clear about the date of Hishām’s birth, but García Sanjuán 2008, 48, follows *Bayān* 11: 237, which says he was born 8 Jumāda I 354/11 June 965, making him 11 at the time he acceded to the caliphate.

20 García Sanjuán 2008, 47–8 places the date of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s death around 4 Ramadan 359/11 July 970.

21 García Sanjuán 2008, 61–2: ‘Abd Allāh (7th amir: r. 888–912) succeeded his brother, al-Mundhir (r. 886–8), who died while besieging ‘Umar ibn Ḥafṣūn in Bobastro, having only just come to the throne. In turn, ‘Abd Allāh was succeeded by his grandson, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, whose father had been assassinated by his own brother.

22 García Sanjuán 2008. This paralleled the way in which al-Ḥakam himself had been groomed for the caliphate from childhood: from the tender age of 4, his father had taken to leaving him in the palace at Cordoba with a senior vizier as his guardian when he left on campaign; in 927, at the age of 12, al-Ḥakam accompanied his father on campaign for the first time: Kennedy 1996, 99.

23 *Anales*, §60.

24 On this grammarian, see María Luisa Ávila, *Prosopografía de los Ulemas de al-Andalus*, https://www.eea.csic.es/pua/personaje/consulta_personaje.php?id=1964 (consulted 19/06/20).

revealed traces of the refurbishment of this palace, especially in its eastern range, constructed on top of a pre-existing bathhouse.²⁵ This physical refurbishment of the Dār al-Mulk – whose very name refers to the public image of power – may be considered as another propaganda measure full of symbolism. This had been the residence of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, founder of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ and of the caliphate, and it was thus easily identifiable as the ‘seat’ of the caliphal state. This refurbishment also facilitated the education of the young prince alongside the sons of the viziers and other important offices of state, creating an environment within which Hishām could be accepted as the caliph in waiting.²⁶

In 974, Hishām fell ill with smallpox for a month and half – something that may have had profound implications on his health in later life, as we will see – and his recovery was celebrated with an official reception at the Cordoban palace, at which all the grandees of the state were present.²⁷ This signals a greater presence of Hishām at court which underlines his status as heir. At the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā ceremony, Hishām sits at the same level as his father and receives for the first time the dignitaries of the state. This official presentation marks a phase in which Hishām starts to appear alongside al-Ḥakam in the acts and decisions of government, even acting for his father during al-Ḥakam’s first major illness at the end of the year 974. Vallejo has suggested that these double ceremonies were reflected in another physical intervention in the architecture of Madīnat al-Zahrā’, the unusual palatial model of two halls facing each other – the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III (the so-called Salón Rico) and the Central Pavilion,

which was constructed in front of it. Vallejo notes that this arrangement recalls the model created at the Fatimid capital of Maḥdiyya where the palace of the caliph ‘Ubayd Allāh and that of his son and heir al-Qā’im were located on either side of a great square. On the basis of this model, he hypothesises that during the great remodelling of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III in the 950s, he constructed the so-called Central Pavilion facing his new Salón (called in the sources the *majlis al-sharqī*) so that his son, al-Ḥakam, could participate in caliphal ceremonial and receive the respect appropriate to his status as designated heir.²⁸ He believes that this ‘double ceremonial’ took on an even greater importance during the caliphate of al-Ḥakam and the desperate need to assure the continuation of the dynasty after his death. During the celebration of Hishām’s recovery from smallpox in 974, the caliph is said to have given his audience in the *majlis al-sharqī*, identifiable as the so-called Salón of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, while the crown prince received salutations in the ‘western hall’, also called the ‘Hall of the Princes’ (*majlis al-ajrā’* or *al-umarā’*).²⁹ This was the last location on the ceremonial route, after which visitors descended again to the Dār al-Jund. Vallejo

25 Vallejo 2010, 486–490; Vallejo 2016, 440. He says that the demolition of a bathhouse in the eastern range of the residence and the construction of two large halls, connected by a tripartite arcade, might be associated with this remodelling mentioned in the sources. Vallejo and Montilla 2019, 6, Fig. 4 indicate the physical transformation (B) of the original space (A).

26 Vallejo 2010, 501.

27 *Anales*, §173–174; García Sanjuán 2008, 55.

28 Vallejo 2016, 442, 447–452; 454, 458 for the Maḥdiyya parallel. Fig. 4 represents the groundplan of this is part of the palace and the relationship between these buildings.

29 *Anales* §§198, 203. The manuscript is defective here so the exact Arabic phrase is not clear. Vallejo 2016, 442, cites Carmen Barceló in noting that editor of the Arabic edition of the text opted for *Majālis al-Umarā’*. On the other hand, *al-ajrā’* could be a possibility: Xavier Ballestín observes (personal communication) that *al-ajrā’* (sing. *jirū*) means ‘cubs’, of a lion or a dog. The name of this hall could then be understood as the ‘hall of the lion cub’, underlining the literary association between lions and the caliphate and the subversion of this image in the panegyric written for al-Manṣūr, discussed in Chapter 8. Though these buildings are most commonly referred to in the texts as *majālis al-sharqī* and *al-gharbī*, i.e. east and west, they are in fact aligned north-south. Vallejo 2016, 444–6, 458, argues that this designation is symbolic, indicating the Umayyad caliphate’s aspirations to rule both East and West.

believes this makes sense of the location of the Central Pavilion, and that its activation at this time was connected to al-Ḥakam's policy of assuring Hishām's succession.³⁰

Perhaps the precariousness of al-Ḥakam's own health initiates a new round of significant acts, which aimed to demonstrate that Hishām was sufficiently of age to succeed his father – for example, signing as first official witness to a legal document manumitting a hundred slaves in celebration of al-Ḥakam's return to health, something one can only legally do after puberty. Immediately the poetic propaganda underlined Hishām's maturity and experience.³¹

Nevertheless it seems that al-Ḥakam did not consider these measures enough to secure his son the caliphal succession, and this led to the unprecedented step of organising a *bay'a* ceremony for Hishām while the existing ruler was still alive.³² Normally such an oath of allegiance would mark the beginning of a new sovereign's term in office, but it is a strong indicator that al-Ḥakam feared his wishes about Hishām's inheritance would not be enacted after his death without this official certification. The caliphal succession was not automatic and required the ratification of the principal dignitaries of the state. Thus an official ceremony was organised at the start of the year 976, in which all the nobles and the people of the Umayyad state participated, and in which Ibn Abī ‘Āmir played a key role – he was one of two men (the other being Maysur, a *fatā* of Ja‘far al-Ṣiqlābī) charged with distributing the documents that all present had to sign in order to certify their oath. This role indicates that Ibn Abī ‘Āmir had already risen to a trusted position within the Umayyad administration, and that he was firmly identified with the Hishām faction.

The importance of this unprecedented state occasion seems to have been marked by the creation of the splendid casket now in the treasury of Girona cathedral (Figures 1–2). A wooden casket covered with silver-gilt and niello designs in *repoussé*, it was perhaps ordered as a gift from al-Ḥakam to his son in celebration of this occasion, since its inscription designates Hishām by the phrase *walī ahd al-muslimīn*.³³ This is one of very few objects to mention Hishām in an inscription who, compared to his father, is almost completely absent epigraphically (see Appendix 4.1–3 for the known inscriptions in Hishām's name).³⁴

A few months after the *bay'a* ceremony, al-Ḥakam died, and Hishām's position was rapidly secured by a second *bay'a*, at which the dignitaries of the state ratified their earlier oath to support Hishām as the new caliph. Despite all al-Ḥakam's precautions, however, he fell short of nominating a clearly designated regent. Perhaps he assumed that his *ḥājib*, al-Muṣḥafī, would act in this role until Hishām came of age.³⁵ Al-Muṣḥafī had acted as supreme authority in the government during the illness from which al-Ḥakam suffered in the last two years of his life,³⁶ but if there was an arrangement to place the caliphate in his hands for safekeeping, it was a private one as there was no public designation of al-Muṣḥafī as regent in either of the *bay'a* ceremonies. This meant that he had to move fast to secure his own position, and indeed

30 Vallejo 2010, 497–8, 501.

31 García Sanjuán 2008, 57–8.

32 *Bayān* 11: 249; Ávila 1980, esp. 80–81; García Sanjuán 2008, 60. On the institution of the *bay'a*, see Tyan 1954, 1, 315–352; Marsham 2009.

33 *Al-Andalus* cat. no. 9, pp. 208–209; Robinson 2007, 102 ff.; Labarta 2015, 2017.

34 Vallejo 2016, 436–7, on Hishām's absence from the epigraphic record.

35 García Sanjuán 2008, 69, notes that Ibn Ḥazm implicitly established 20 years of age as the minimum age for a new caliph, and he only mentions three cases where that age was not fulfilled: the third Umayyad, Mu‘āwiya b. Yazid (r. 683–684), the 18th Abbasid, Ja‘far al-Muqtadir (908–932), and Hishām 11 himself. In al-Andalus, the youngest ruler to succeed was his own grandfather, ‘Abd al-Rahmān III, who was not quite 22 years old when he became amir.

36 On al-Ḥakam's illness, see *Anales*, §§207–208 (pp. 244–246); on al-Muṣḥafī's position during the caliph's illness, see Meouak 1999, 185–189.



FIGURE 1
Casket made for Hishām II,
c. 976, silver gilt and niello;
Catedral de Girona
© COLECCIÓN CAPÍTOL
CATEDRAL DE GIRONA.
AUTOR 3DTECNICS

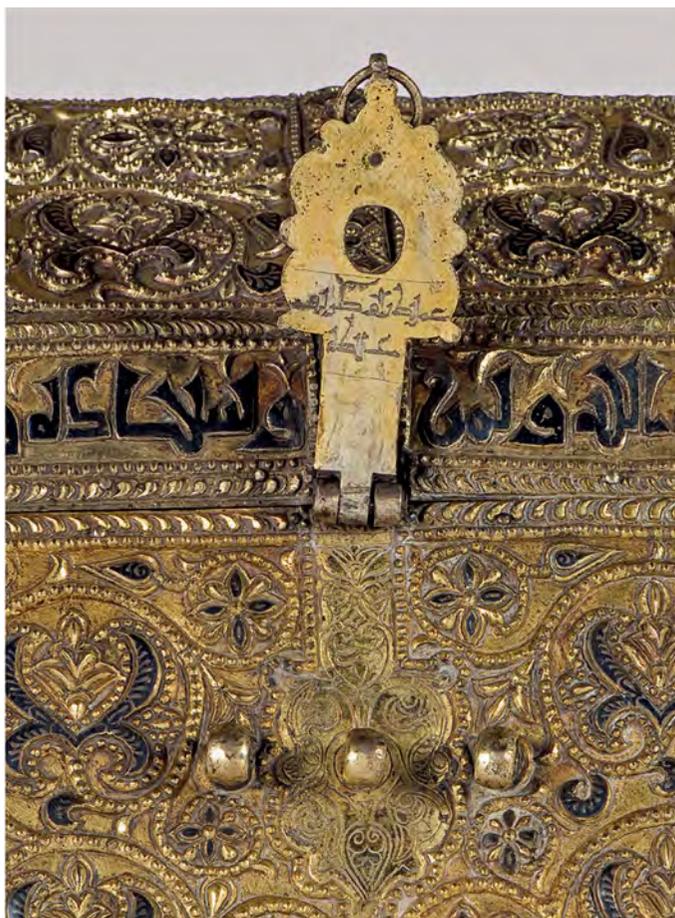


FIGURE 2
Detail of signatures under the lockplate, casket
made for Hishām II, c. 976, silver gilt and niello;
Catedral de Girona
© COLECCIÓN CAPÍTOL CATEDRAL DE
GIRONA. AUTOR 3DTECNICS



FIGURE 3
Medallion with musicians,
pyxis made for al-Mughīra,
dated 968, ivory; Musée du
Louvre, inv. OA 4068
© 2005 MUSÉE DU
LOUVRE / RAPHAËL
CHIPAULT

he did so by his ruthless quashing of a plot to make al-Ḥakam's younger brother, al-Mughīra, caliph in Hishām's place.³⁷ Al-Mughīra was the obvious choice to succeed al-Ḥakam, or at least to act as regent until Hishām's majority. He was said to have been 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's favourite son, and since his older brother, 'Abd al-'Azīz, had died a short while before al-Ḥakam (ill health seems to have run in the family), he was next in line. Al-Mughīra was in his early 20s and popular at court. His very existence threatened Hishām's chance at rule,

since even if he had become his regent, there was a clear risk of him superseding Hishām as caliph, as another Qurayshi with support at court, in particular among the Ṣaqāliba faction. Even the strongly pro-Umayyad historian, Ibn Ḥayyān, would later castigate al-Ḥakam for being too blinded by love for his son (possibly because of his love for Ṣubḥ) not to see that his heir should have been named from among his adult brothers.³⁸

Interestingly, García Sanjuán notes that the succession of a minor was not uncommon in

37 *Bayān* 11:281–282 [translation, 438].

38 García Sanjuán 2008, 70; Ávila 1980.

Iberia's Christian kingdoms, indeed that it was an 'accepted situation'.³⁹ While he gives no examples or further information, two queens who would have been familiar to the Cordoban caliphs provide interesting contemporary precedents. Toda of Navarra (fl. 928–59) was mother to García Sánchez of Pamplona, who was only six years of age at the death of his father. She ruled during his minority. Toda was also paternal aunt to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, through her mother's marriage to the Umayyad amir 'Abd Allāh (r. 888–912). As Glaire Anderson has recently discussed, relations between Toda and 'Abd al-Raḥmān can be documented at least since 933–4 when they negotiated a treaty. In the late 950s, Toda turned to the caliph to help her grandson, 'Sancho the Fat' (r. 955–57 and 960–67), regain the throne of León. He was treated in Cordoba for obesity, but died only a few years later.⁴⁰ His sister, Elvira of León (d. 986?) ruled during the minority of her nephew, Ramiro III. Elvira would also have been known to the caliph, this time al-Ḥakam himself, since she and her brother had negotiated the translation of the relics of San Pelayo from Cordoba to León, where they finally arrived in 967.⁴¹ It is highly possible that al-Ḥakam had witnessed from these precedents among his neighbours that regencies could work. It would be interesting to think about the possible influence of the contemporary politics of León or Navarra on that of Cordoba at this time.

The coup to replace Hishām with al-Mughīra was led by two of the most prominent *fityan* – Fā'iq al-Nizāmī, the *ṣāhib al-tirāz*, who had been a favourite of al-Ḥakam's and had moved into Ja'far al-Ṣiqlābī's residence at Madīnat al-Zahrā' after his death; and Jawdhar, Grand Falconer and *ṣāhib al-ṣāgha*, superintendent of the gold- and silver-smiths who, ironically, had been responsible

for Hishām's metal casket.⁴² Placing al-Mughīra on the throne would allow the Ṣaqāliba to maintain their influence, which was under threat now that al-Muṣḥafī was in a more prominent role. Mohamed Meouak argues that there was deep rivalry between the Berber and Ṣaqāliba factions at court,⁴³ and al-Muṣḥafī's suppression of this coup might also be seen in this light. Both al-Muṣḥafī's and al-Manṣūr's positions were tied to the advancement of Hishām: as Bariani notes, the *ḥājib* 'saw in [Hishām] the possibility of continuing to exercise power'.⁴⁴ However, al-Muṣḥafī left it to al-Manṣūr to perpetrate the solution, in the form of the assassination of all concerned, including al-Mughīra. This was not the only plot to unseat Hishām – as we will see (Chapter 5), in 979, a plot to assassinate Hishām and to replace him with another grandson of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III was ruthlessly suppressed by al-Manṣūr. A decade later, in 989, al-Manṣūr's eldest son, 'Abd Allāh, was involved in another conspiracy, which seems to have been motivated by power hunger rather than ideological objection to the 'Amirid *ḥijāba*.⁴⁵ In addition to al-Manṣūr's son, its ringleaders were the governor of the *thaghr al-a'la*, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tujībī, the governor of Toledo and great grandson of al-Ḥakam I, 'Abd Allāh al-Marwānī. Al-Manṣūr launched a campaign against Castile but 'Abd Allāh fled and sought refuge with García Fernández, al-Manṣūr's arch enemy. García eventually came to terms and surrendered 'Abd Allāh, who was murdered by al-Manṣūr's soldiers. This appears to have been an unpopular move, and required all al-Manṣūr's diplomatic skills to smooth it over. The other ringleaders were executed. Conspiracies such as these were always ruthlessly suppressed, since al-Manṣūr's legitimacy as regent depended on Hishām remaining caliph, as we shall see.

39 García Sanjuán 2008, 69.

40 Anderson 2014, esp. 22–27.

41 I owe this information to Therese Martin. The translation of San Pelayo's relics – and the objects that might have gone with them from Cordoba – are discussed in Rosser-Owen 2015a.

42 *Bayān* 11:277–279 [translation, 431–434]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:178–179 [11:189].

43 Meouak 1999, 165; De Felipe 1997, 177–180.

44 Bariani 1998, 89.

45 On which see *Bayān* 11:303–306 [translation, 470–475]; also discussed by Bariani 2003, Kennedy 1996.

Technically, Hishām’s accession as a minor was illegal in terms of the requirements established within Islamic law for the heir to the caliphate. Amalia Zomeño discusses the Islamic jurisprudence on ‘coming of age’.⁴⁶ In Islamic and especially Maliki law, until a boy reaches the age of 7, he is considered ‘incapable of conducting himself as an independent person and of looking after his possessions’.⁴⁷ After the age of 7, a male child is considered to have discernment (*tamyīz*), defined as the capacity to understand what is said to him and to respond in a coherent and reasonable manner. In principle, and in all Islamic legal schools, full legal capacity is attained with the onset of puberty (*bulūgh*).⁴⁸ However, full legal maturity (*rushd*), or the aptitude of an individual to administer his possessions, is considered to be between the ages of 15 and 18.⁴⁹ When a young man comes of age under the guardianship of his own father, he attains legal capacity automatically, without recourse to judicial mediation. However, the same does not occur when the minor is under the guardianship of a representative appointed by the father before his death (*waṣī*), or when a judge has appointed a guardian because the minor is fatherless (*muqaddam*). In these cases, a notarised document needs to be produced which officialises the emancipation (*tarshīd*) of the youth. In principle, the legal guardian is the only person with the legal right to decide on the capacity or lack thereof of his ward.⁵⁰ In Hishām’s scenario, the *ḥujjāb* appointed by al-Ḥakam could be seen in this role of legal guardian.

46 Zomeño 2004.

47 Zomeño 2004, 87. In Shafī’i law, this age is considered to be 9.

48 Zomeño 2004, 89.

49 Zomeño 2004, 90–1. She notes that 15 is widely accepted by the legal schools as the age of puberty on the basis of a story in which the Prophet Muhammad did not permit Ibn ‘Umar, when he was only 14 years old, to take part in the Battle of Uhud, while the following year, when he had turned 15, he was allowed to join the army.

50 Zomeño 2004, 92.

Where the succession of a ruler is concerned, García Sanjuán discusses the conditions listed by Islamic scholars of the tenth to fourteenth centuries, in which membership of the Banū Quraysh has a varying position of priority, but having attained puberty and being in full use of one’s reason are constants; other desiderata include wisdom, honour, bravery and good judgement.⁵¹ A ruler’s minority was sometimes considered legitimate grounds for deposition. Émile Tyan considers ‘majority’ to be reached about the age of 13, citing the example of the caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908–32), who became the youngest Abbasid ever to accede to the caliphate, aged 13 years.⁵² This might have been considered a precedent for Hishām, but doubts were raised at the time about his fulfilment of the legal requirements to be caliph: the *qāḍī* of Baghdad refused to swear *bay‘a* to ‘an infant’. Al-Muqtadir was deposed twice by rival candidates, and was later assassinated. His reign was a period of political and military weakness, from which the Abbasid dynasty did not recover.⁵³ Furthermore, the Baghdādī scholar al-Mawardī (d. 1058) goes so far as to say that physical defects should preclude rulership. If Hishām was indeed mentally and physically incapacitated, as Bariani has argued (though this may have only developed later in life) then Hishām’s position as caliph was doubly invalid (see 8 ‘Rupture’, below).

Nevertheless, Hishām’s succession received the tacit legitimisation of the ‘ulamā’, more than a hundred of whom attended his second *bay‘a* and ratified the oath of allegiance. As Hussain Monés posited, al-Manṣūr may have offered them inducements, since many of the important religious leaders were his family members.⁵⁴ García Sanjuán notes the tendency of Muslim jurists to take an appeasement policy, ‘inclined almost always to justify the *de facto* political situation and very rarely to question

51 García Sanjuán 2008, 66–70. On the conditions that a new ruler needed to fulfil, see also Tyan 1954, I, 375–378.

52 Tyan 1954, I, 356–361; Wasserstein 1985, 39, n. 45.

53 Fierro 2007, 55; Manzano 2019, 256–7.

54 Monés 1964, 84–85.

established power, based on the well-known precept that tyranny is better than anarchy'.⁵⁵ But not all religious leaders were content to provide this legitimation, and the case of Ibn al-Salīm – the supreme *qāḍī* of Cordoba, to whom al-Manṣūr had been apprenticed at the start of his career – makes patent the shadow of controversy that is otherwise hinted at in the sources. When Hishām began to lead the orations at his father's funeral, the grand *qāḍī*, Ibn al-Salīm, declared, 'The prayer for the *amīr al-mu'minīn* is not valid'. He left the row in which he was praying, went to the front of the congregation and stood behind Hishām to lead the prayer himself. At the end, he commented that Hishām's intention to pray for al-Ḥakam was firm but it was a mistake to put at the front of the community a child who had not yet reached puberty.⁵⁶ As García Sanjuán notes, Ibn al-Salīm's behaviour at al-Ḥakam's funeral had a clear political meaning: 'denying Hishām's capacity to act as imam, the *qāḍī* was, in fact, denouncing his legitimacy as ruler, because the caliph *is* the imam, he who leads and governs the *umma*'.⁵⁷ Though he was apparently the only one to speak out, Ibn al-Salīm's position as supreme *qāḍī* will doubtless have had some impact on the views of his colleagues. As a consequence, the sources say that al-Manṣūr developed 'a fierce hatred' for Ibn al-Salīm, and he constantly undermined the supreme *qāḍī* until his death a few months later.⁵⁸

García Sanjuán sees Hishām's succession as the beginning of the end for the Umayyad caliphate.⁵⁹ This situation destabilised the mechanisms of government and political control that had pertained in the Umayyad caliphate hitherto. It led

inevitably to the growth in power of al-Muṣḥafī, and the unprecedented development of a regency government.

2 Regency

In 976, the main protagonist in the regency was the *ḥājib* Ja'far ibn 'Uthmān al-Muṣḥafī, al-Manṣūr's antecedent in that office and a figure to whom not enough credit has been given by historians for his role in the succession and development of a regency government. Al-Muṣḥafī was from a Berber family that had probably settled in al-Andalus during the second half of the ninth century, in the region of Valencia.⁶⁰ Members of his family held offices in the caliphal administration. Ja'far's later fall from grace to some extent sounded the death knell of the role played by Berber groups as functionaries of the state.⁶¹ Ja'far's father 'Uthmān (d. 937) may have been tutor to the young al-Ḥakam II, and was elevated by 'Abd al-Raḥmān to the office of chief secretary and then vizier. Ja'far himself was described by Mohamed Meouak as 'one of the most brilliant auxiliaries of the Umayyad state during the caliphal period'.⁶² Meouak's biography shows him gradually rising up through the administration, and his constant closeness to al-Ḥakam. Al-Muṣḥafī's first appointment in 939 was as governor of Elvira and Pechina, and in 940–1 he became governor of the Balearic Islands.⁶³ He was appointed to the vizierate by al-Ḥakam three days after he became caliph, and he also became *ṣāhib al-madīna* of Cordoba.⁶⁴ In January 975, al-Muṣḥafī was the first official to be received by al-Ḥakam after he recovered from

55 García Sanjuán 2008, 75.

56 Ávila 1980, 99–100; Ballestín 2004a, 40–1.

57 García Sanjuán 2008, 75.

58 Ávila 1980, 99–100, citing *qāḍī* 'Iyād's *Tartīb*, 11:548.

59 García Sanjuán 2008, 76: 'A mi juicio, esta proclamación supuso, de hecho, el factor inicial que incidió en la crisis del califato, cuya primera manifestación fue, por lo tanto, de índole política e institucional' – by which he refers to the '*ulamā*'s silent appeasement of the situation.

60 Meouak 1999, 181. The most detailed account of al-Muṣḥafī's career is the biography given in Meouak 1999, 185–189.

61 Meouak 1999, 163, 165.

62 Meouak 1999, 185.

63 Meouak 1999, 185, gives the dates between 320/932 and 329/940–1, while Manzano 2019, 110, is more specific that this appointment occurs in 939.

64 Manzano 2019, 110.

his illness, and he accompanied him to the Friday prayer on 10 Rajab 364/26 March 975. The next day Ja‘far participated in transferring the caliph from Madīnat al-Zahrā’ to the capital. During this period of al-Ḥakam’s final illness, al-Muṣḥafī received the charge of *sulṭān*, i.e. control of the state, and was thus in the best position to control the succession; when Hishām became caliph, one of his first steps was to name al-Muṣḥafī *ḥājib*.⁶⁵ Al-Muṣḥafī also excelled as a poet: verses survive expressing his joy at the birth of Hishām, and he wrote many official documents whose content reveals ‘a florid style with an excellent knowledge of the Qur’ān and Arabic literature.’⁶⁶ As we will see in Chapter 3, he provided an important precedent for al-Manṣūr’s literary patronage.

Al-Muṣḥafī had been appointed to the highest position on al-Ḥakam’s *shūra* (council), over and above the big families who traditionally held an exclusive monopoly on the high offices of the civil administration and the army. The fact that al-Muṣḥafī did not belong to one of the ministerial families and, worse, was a Berber, was already enough to alienate the ‘mandarin dynasties’ from supporting him; but he compounded this situation by his ‘flagrant nepotism’, by starting to give posts that by tradition belonged to the great families to members of his own family.⁶⁷ He thus began to break down the cohesion and traditional power of this group, who felt their status threatened. He also reduced the number of posts that could be shared among the members of the corps of viziers (*qawm al-wuzarā’*).⁶⁸ Ballestín cites a passage from Ibn Bassām (following Ibn Ḥayyān), in which this status is played out through the interesting metaphor of carpets: ‘[Al-Muṣḥafī] placed his carpet on top of the carpets of his colleagues in the affairs of government ... and he substituted linen for silk

brocade, according to the precedent of custom ... He said: “Certainly I make them red with shame ... because I have given myself a better carpet than theirs ...”⁶⁹

Al-Muṣḥafī seized the opportunity of suppressing the al-Mughīra plot to firmly consolidate his role. It could perhaps also be interpreted in the light of his concern about the future of the Berber groups at court in the face of the irresistible rise of the Ṣaqāliba faction. However, in the process, and perhaps without considering the implications, he forged a new role for al-Manṣūr, as the man who takes action to carry out the unsavoury jobs. As al-Manṣūr started to play a greater role in government affairs, al-Muṣḥafī’s behaviour towards the ministers and the old families had the perhaps predictable effect that they started to look to al-Manṣūr as the means to recover their historic position of power. The support of the *qawm al-wuzarā’* in al-Manṣūr’s rise to power and his ability to maintain himself in office unchallenged for so long should not be underestimated. For his part, al-Manṣūr was careful to cultivate these groups publicly and privately throughout his time in office, as we will discuss in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3. As noted by Ibn ‘Idhārī:

“They distinguished Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir with their exclusive favour and they became his partisans in his dispute with al-Muṣḥafī and they were his allies. And thus they erected the building [of Ibn Abī ‘Āmir] and they steered him to greatness, until he attained all that he aspired to and succeeded in everything ...”⁷⁰

As Ballestín comments, it can be deduced from this text that the *qawm al-wuzarā’* took a unanimous and clear position of support for Ibn Abī ‘Āmir.⁷¹

65 Manzano 2019, 111.

66 Meouak 1999, 186; Manzano 2019, 111.

67 Ballestín 2004a, 121. Meouak 1999, 181–5, lists the various members of his family and the posts they held: his sons and nephew were all named to high offices during the reigns of al-Ḥakam II and Hishām II.

68 Ballestín 2004a, 121–122.

69 Ibn Bassam, *Dhakhīra*, VII, 59, cited by Ballestín 2004a, 122.

70 *Bayān* 11:290–1 cited by Ballestín 2004a, 118.

71 Ballestín 2004a, 120.

However, we should not underestimate the role of an influential though invisible partner in the regency government, that is Hishām's mother, Şubḥ, the *umm al-walad*. As the author of the *Dhikr al-Bilād al-Andalus* puts it, she 'held the control of the kingdom during the minority of her son, and the *ḥājib* al-Muṣḥafī and the viziers did not decide anything without consulting her, nor did they do anything except that which she ordered'.⁷² Through his position as steward to both Şubḥ and the young caliph, Ibn Abī 'Āmir gained an increasing degree of power as intermediary between them and the *ḥājib*: 'It was al-Manşūr ... who had access to Şubḥ and transmitted her orders to the *ḥājib* and the viziers ... Thus he came to be one of the viziers and the closest [of them] to the *sayyida*, ... since he was the only one who dealt with her'.⁷³ Al-Manşūr was made a vizier in Safar 365/October 976, and 'a colleague to [al-Muṣḥafī] in the administration of the kingdom'.⁷⁴ As we will see, Şubḥ maintained her support of al-Manşūr throughout the coming decades, and the degree of her influence becomes clear when she removed her support twenty years later, sparking the major domestic crisis of al-Manşūr's regency (see 8 'Rupture' below).

Al-Manşūr's new role as the strong arm of the state opened another crucial phase in his career – the start of his military role. Al-Ḥakam's reign had largely been a period of peace and prosperity in al-Andalus, since the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain had been subdued as much by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's victorious campaigns as by domestic problems.⁷⁵ This situation changed after al-Ḥakam's death: taking advantage of the political transition and the weakness created by Hishām's insecure rule, the Count of Castile, García

Fernández (r. 970–995), began to conduct raids on Muslim territory.⁷⁶ The Christians' new belligerence demanded a response, and it soon became clear that al-Muṣḥafī was not up to the task: he contented himself with ordering the destruction of a bridge over the Guadiana river, to impede their progress into Muslim territory.⁷⁷ Not only was a more effective defence necessary, but a military response provided an opportunity to restore the prestige of the caliphate, after the bruising events of the succession.⁷⁸ As with the al-Mughīra plot, al-Manşūr proved the only man willing to act decisively.⁷⁹ He was appointed *al-qā'id al-a'la*,⁸⁰ and on 3 Rajab 366/25 February 977 led a hand-picked army on his first raid, at Baños de Ledesma (prov. Salamanca).⁸¹ Victorious, he returned to Cordoba with 2000 prisoners.⁸² Thereafter al-Manşūr personally conducted at least two campaigns a year, in winter and summer, until his death: 'the raids of al-Manşūr numbered fifty-six and in none of them was he defeated; he was always the conqueror, triumphant and victorious (*manşūra*) in honour of his name'.⁸³ (A list of these campaigns is given in the Appendix 2).

These campaigns continued the policy of the two previous caliphs in that their principal objective was the maintenance of frontiers and the defence of existing garrisons without attempting a broader offensive or to conquer land. Maintaining borders led to peace and prosperity within al-Andalus, enhanced on a biannual

72 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:178 [11:189].

73 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:178 [11:189–190]. On Şubḥ, see Marín 1997, 439; Echevarría 2000, 99–100; Bariani 2005; Anderson 2012.

74 *Bayān* 11:270 [translation, 420]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:175 [11:185].

75 On 'Abd al-Raḥmān's campaigns, see Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, passim. On the political situation in Christian Iberia, see *HEM* 11:174–184.

76 Echevarría 2000, 102.

77 Echevarría 2011, 86.

78 Bariani 1998, 90.

79 *Bayān* 11:281–282 [translation, 438]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:179 [11:190].

80 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:179 [11:190].

81 *Bayān* 11:282 [translation, 439]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:186 [11:197]; al-'Udhri, §1; *HEM* 11:211–212.

82 Echevarría 2011, 86.

83 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:185 [11:196]. On the simple basis of multiplying the number of years that al-Manşūr was in office by two, the figure reached is actually 52, but the number given in the sources is unlikely to be totally reliable. On his campaigns, see Ibáñez Izquierdo 1990; Castellanos Gómez 2002.

basis by injections of booty, wealth and slaves.⁸⁴ As Hugh Kennedy discusses, for the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, the ‘purpose of these raids does not seem to have been to conquer Christian Spain and no effort seems to have been made to garrison and settle new areas. Some of the campaigns were launched, at least ostensibly, to protect Muslim communities on the frontiers in the face of Christian advances (for example, the 924 campaign which resulted in the sack of Pamplona), but sometimes the expeditions were undertaken for reasons which had much more to do with internal policies than threats from the north.’⁸⁵ In particular, ‘The obligation to lead the jihad against unbelievers was an important part of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s claim to be the legitimate ruler of all the Muslims of al-Andalus’, especially after he took the title of Commander of the Faithful (*amīr al-mu’minīn*, or caliph) in 929. As al-Manṣūr’s position grew more powerful, his military activity become one of the main ways in which he sought legitimacy for his role, as we will discuss further below.

3 The Maghrib

Al-Manṣūr had gained his military experience in the Maghrib.⁸⁶ As Xavier Ballestín has pointed out, ‘the importance of the Maghrib in this period has not received the attention it deserves, both in the career of al-Manṣūr and in the history of al-Andalus’. As he goes on to say, ‘In respect of al-Manṣūr, the critical moments in his career did not happen in Cordoba or on the northern frontier, but in the Maghrib, both at the start of his career and when he reached the culmination of his power.’⁸⁷ It is significant that al-Manṣūr’s first official role in the Maghrib, as *qāḍi al-quḍāt bi’l-idwa*, to which he was appointed in 973, involved

the distribution of money and gifts to the Berber notables, in order to carry out al-Ḥakam’s policy of *khil’a* during the war with Ḥasan ibn Qannūn.⁸⁸ Here al-Manṣūr first learned his diplomatic skills and the efficacy of gift-giving in securing bonds of loyalty.

Amira Bennison has pointed out that the departure of troops to North Africa and the arrival of Berber notables and returning commanders are given considerably more space in al-Rāzī’s annals than embassies from Byzantium or the Christian kingdoms, and that these receptions are ‘the most elaborate performances’ of court ceremonial. These ‘performances’ were related to the Umayyads’ ‘central foreign policy objective’, that is, the assertion of Umayyad Sunnism versus Fatimid Shi‘ism in North Africa, by means of campaigns against recalcitrant tribes and the special treatment of Berber notables willing to submit to Cordoba.⁸⁹

North Africa and its tribal confederations provided access to the all-important trans-Saharan trading network that brought West African commodities like gold, ivory, salt and slaves to the northern shores of Africa. This network had been important under the Romans, but the struggle between the two great Islamic powers of the Western Mediterranean, the Fatimids and Umayyads, and their competitive desire to access the immense riches that this trade provided, caused the scale of this network to explode in the tenth century.⁹⁰ The power-struggle between these two regimes was played out through their attempts to court the Berber tribes who trafficked these trade routes, and thus to guarantee their access to the rich West African gold reserves. Once they had declared their rival caliphates, both

84 Echevarría 2011, 86.

85 Kennedy 1996, 84.

86 Cf. *Anales*, §§128, 129, 145, 200.

87 Ballestín 2004a, 14–15. On the Umayyad intervention in North Africa, see also Vallvé 1967.

88 Ballestín 2004a, 85–88; Manzano 2019, 121.

89 Bennison 2007a, 74.

90 Devisse 1988, 387: ‘Of course it was when the Fatimids, the Umayyads and the Almoravids undertook coinage on a scale unprecedented in the Muslim West that the vitality of the trans-Saharan trade became apparent. For a full panorama of the significance of medieval trans-Saharan trade, see *Caravans of Gold*.

dynasties were swift to introduce the caliphal prerogative of minting gold coins. The first Fatimid dinars were minted at Qayrawān by ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī in 300/912, only three years after declaring his caliphate. In al-Andalus, no gold coins had been struck for 200 years, despite the independence of the Umayyad amirate from Abbasid control. However, in 929, the same year that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III declared his caliphate, he also struck his first dinars, in this way responding to the Fatimids’ audacity to strike coins, and asserting his own claim to rule Islam. This has led Jean Devisse to describe this period as an ‘ideological war of currency in the Muslim West’.⁹¹ Metallurgical analysis has shown the dinars minted by the Fatimids in North Africa to have been made from West African gold, and Ronald Messier concluded that the Fatimids’ energetic struggle with the Umayyads at this period was part of ‘a concerted effort to ... build up revenue for their proposed invasion of Egypt’.⁹² This picture contextualises the bitter territorial contests that the Umayyads, Fatimids and their Berber clients played out across North Africa in the late tenth century, as we will discuss in further detail below and in Chapter 2.

Again, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was the pioneer, and his caliphate saw the first sustained involvement by the Umayyads in North African politics.⁹³ This was driven by the Umayyads’ desire to quell the aggressive expansion of the Fatimids, who, having risen to prominence in the western Maghrib had, by the early tenth century, established themselves in Ifrīqiyya and pursued an aggressive campaign of territorial expansion, enlisting local dynasties, in particular the Idrīsids whose capital was at Fez. As in northern Iberia, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s policy in North Africa was not about conquest or occupation, though he did establish important Umayyad coastal bases to protect al-Andalus’s frontier and improve the movement of troops: Melilla, taken in 927; Ceuta – which became the Umayyads’ most

important base – in March 931; Tangier in 951.⁹⁴ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was more concerned with securing a network of alliances among the Berber chiefs, which would prevent the Fatimids from threatening al-Andalus – though the Fatimids were still able to sack the Andalusī port of Almería in 955;⁹⁵ and to recruit Berber soldiers – especially their superior cavalry – for his armies.

Another important element in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s North African policy was the desire to secure a reliable supply of gold, to allow him to strike dinars, one of the prerogatives of being caliph.⁹⁶ It is hardly a coincidence that Ceuta was conquered only two years after ‘Abd al-Raḥmān declared his caliphate, initiating a more active intervention in North Africa. Canto García has analysed the emissions of dinars throughout the reigns of the three Umayyad caliphs, and notes that the issue increases as the caliphate advances, so that they are most abundant during Hishām’s reign, i.e. during the years of al-Manṣūr’s *ḥijāba*.⁹⁷ During ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s caliphate, sourcing sufficient gold to mint dinars seems to have been a major policy objective, but there also seems to have been constant shortage. The gold was probably provided initially by melting down dinars minted by the Aghlabids and the Banū Midrār, independent rulers of Sijilmasa, who maintained relations with the Umayyads.⁹⁸

While dirhams were minted regularly every year and maintained a consistently high quality, it is significant that there are only certain years in which dinars were minted, implying that the gold supply was not regular or reliable in the early years of the caliphate. Again this seems to have

91 Devisse 1988, 396.

92 Messier 1974, 38–9.

93 Kennedy 1996, 95 ff.

94 Kennedy 1996, 96.

95 Kennedy 1996, 97. This foray against Almería was in retaliation for the Andalusī capture of a wealthy Fatimid ship in the waters between Sicily and Tunis, carrying a letter for the Fatimid imam al-Mu‘izz. After the sack of Almería, an Andalusī fleet was sent to ravage the Fatimid shores of northern Ifrīqiya. See Lirola Delgado 1993, 198–202.

96 Manzano 2006, 446.

97 Canto García 2004, 330.

98 Canto García 2004, 334.

been linked to competition with the Fatimids: as Messier observes, ‘a peak in production of dinars in one regime most often corresponds to a lapse in production in the other.’⁹⁹ As Canto García shows, in the last eleven years of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s reign, dinars were minted in only five of them; in the last six years, we see dinars in only one year. This same shortage seems to have continued into the start of al-Ḥakam’s reign, because it is only in 967 that the first dinar in his name is minted. This, perhaps significantly, coincides with the year Ibn Abī ‘Āmir was appointed *ṣāhib al-sikka*. There follows a steady annual gold emission, indicating the establishment of a ready gold supply, linked to the Fatimids’ relocation to Egypt.¹⁰⁰ Under Hishām and al-Manṣūr, there is an ‘undoubtable growth in dinar emissions’, especially during the 980s, and the gold standard maintains a frequency above 95 per cent.¹⁰¹ This more reliable supply is surely linked to the establishment of Umayyad suzerainty in the Maghrib. Canto García also observes that in these years, especially between 386/996 to 393/1003 (except for 388/988), a continuous system of fractions of dinars is in use, which also suggests a growth in the types of exchange and transactions in which a whole dinar is too high-value. He concludes that, as the caliphate advances, the dinar is implanted slowly and gradually as the unit of reference of the Umayyad monetary system,¹⁰² and this is only made possible by a stable and reliable gold supply from North Africa.

Maintaining a standing army in Morocco was extremely expensive, and instead the Umayyad policy was to look to local agents on whom they could rely to further their interests.¹⁰³ In this context, it becomes especially significant that the lord of the Miknāsa tribe, Mūsā ibn Abī l-‘Āfiyya,

was won over to the Umayyad side, and the historic gift sent to Mūsā in 934 – which includes the only mention in a primary source of the famous Cordoban ivories, as we will discuss further in Chapter 6 – was sent as a reward for a victory over the Fatimids.¹⁰⁴ The gift also included four banners, surely intended to display Mūsā’s new Umayyad allegiance (we will discuss the significance of banners in Chapter 8). Al-Rāzī’s annals are full of accounts of receptions of Berber chiefs at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, through which it is clear that the Umayyads ‘sought to overawe by wealth and splendour those they could not subdue by force.’¹⁰⁵ At the same time, these gifts conspicuously declared Umayyad support of these Berber chiefs, and helped to strengthen their power and prestige over possible rivals as well as their own communities.

By the end of his caliphate, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s North African policy had been largely successful, and he had established a network of alliances which al-Ḥakam used to establish a widespread dominance over Morocco. Al-Ḥakam was faced with a different situation, however, after the Fatimids moved their power base to Egypt in 970.¹⁰⁶ They were no longer quite so much in the Umayyads’ backyard, but they had left a deputy in Ifrīqiya, the Ṣanhāja Berber Zīrī ibn Manad (after whom the Zīrids took their name), who built up a major Ṣanhāja tribal confederation in opposition to the Zanāta tribes who in general were loyal to Cordoba. Rivalry between these two confederations became a major factor in the politics of the region in the late tenth century, because the control by these groups of the all-important trans-Saharan trade routes, governing the supply of gold and other luxuries, became a significant factor in the Umayyads’ projection of power in the Western Mediterranean. As presented in the primary sources, more important than any campaigns against the Christians of northern Iberia was

99 Messier 2019, 207.

100 Canto García 2004, 330–1. Messier 2019, 207, notes that Umayyad production spikes the year the Fatimids moved to Cairo and continued to soar for the next decade.

101 Canto García 2004, 332.

102 Canto García 2004, 335.

103 Kennedy 1996, 104.

104 Ibn Ḥayyān 1979, §§238–9.

105 Kennedy 1996, 103.

106 Kennedy 1996, 103.

al-Ḥakam's struggle against the Idrīsid ruler, Ḥasan ibn Qannūn. As was common among the North African tribes, they recognised the Umayyads or the Fatimids depending on what was politically expedient for themselves. Ḥasan had been a loyal partisan of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III until around 972 when he broke this trust for unknown reasons. Al-Ḥakam's overwrought response – by 'deploying all his military might against a leader who was not particularly relevant, who was not the first nor would he be the last to shift allegiances within the complex Maghribi theatre'¹⁰⁷ – and the portrayal of Ḥasan in the sources and by the propagandists as al-Ḥakam's archnemesis, indicate more than anything the powerful symbolism of Umayyad intervention in North Africa.

This was the background to Ibn Abī 'Āmir's career breakthrough in 973, when he was appointed as *qādī al-quḍāt*, supreme judge, of the Maghribi areas under Umayyad control, a post equivalent to *dhū'l-wizāratayn* in that it encompassed responsibility for both the civil and military administration.¹⁰⁸ As Ballestín notes, al-Manṣūr now received his instructions directly from the caliph, and became the main link between Cordoba and its Berber allies.¹⁰⁹ Al-Ḥakam even personally ordered 'his officers and army leaders that they should do nothing without first passing it by [Ibn Abī 'Āmir] for his assessment'.¹¹⁰ Based in Tangier, Ibn Abī 'Āmir was 'entrusted with shipments of money, jewels, ornaments and presents of honour (*khil'a*) which he was to distribute abundantly among those ... outstanding men among the Berbers who were inclined towards loyalty' to Cordoba.¹¹¹ During this posting, which lasted from July 973 to mid November 974,¹¹² he gained diplomatic skills and learned the importance of strategic gift-giving (*iṣṭinā'*) to build relationships and political networks. He was in charge

of various functionaries sent out from Cordoba, including men responsible for the soldiers' pay, as well as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr as *ṣāhib al-khizāna wa al-sikka*,¹¹³ a post surely indicating the importance of controlling and regulating the gold supply and turning it into coin. It was also during this mission that Ibn Abī 'Āmir came to know Ghālib, the Umayyad general whose support was later to be so significant to him, and to learn how to deal with the leaders of the Umayyad army, experience which prepared him for his campaigns against the Christians. He also engaged in architectural commissions, by ordering the construction of a defensive wall at Ceuta.¹¹⁴ As Ibn 'Idhārī recognised, this sixteen-month-long mission in the Maghrib 'was the beginning of his triumph'.¹¹⁵

Before he was recalled to Cordoba in November 974, Ibn Abī 'Āmir had already been reappointed *ṣāhib al-sikka* of the al-Andalus mint,¹¹⁶ an appointment which shows al-Ḥakam's absolute confidence in him, as well as acknowledging the importance of the North African gold supply into the Andalus mint. As discussed above, al-Manṣūr's first appointment as *ṣāhib al-sikka*, in 356/967, coincided with the commencement of dinar emissions in al-Ḥakam's name. Canto García has shown that the coins minted during Hishām's reign show an undoubtable growth in dinar emissions, and a greater use and circulation of these coins in al-Andalus. During this period, which coincides with al-Manṣūr's governorship of the caliphal mint, the dinar maintains a uniform quality and becomes definitively fixed as the standard of the Andalus monetary system. This had at its base the reliable import of African gold, which was accomplished thanks to al-Manṣūr's carefully maintained relations with North Africa.¹¹⁷

107 Manzano 2019, 177–8.

108 Ballestín 2004a, 57; Kennedy 1996, 109–110.

109 Ballestín 2004a, 54.

110 *Bayān* 11:268, cited in Ballestín 2004a, 86.

111 Ibn Ḥayyān 1965, 123, cited in Ballestín 2004a, 56.

112 Ballestín 2004a, 62.

113 Ballestín 2004a, 57–8.

114 Though this construction probably took place during al-Manṣūr's *hijāba* as it was still unfinished when he died: Ballestín 2004a, 136.

115 *Bayān* 11:269, cited in Ballestín 2004a, 60.

116 *Anales*, §183.

117 Canto García 2004, 332–4.



FIGURE 4 Dinar minted 388/998, Andalus mint, stamped with ‘*āmīr*’; Tonegawa Collection

From the date of Ibn Abī ‘Āmir’s first appointment as *ṣāhib al-sikka*, the *kunya*, ‘*āmīr*, designating him as the governor, appeared on every coin minted in al-Andalus until 972, when he was sent to the Maghrib (Figure 4).¹¹⁸ Once he was reappointed *ṣāhib al-sikka* in 363/974, ‘*āmīr* reappears on coins the same year, and occurs on the coinage every year until 996, when it significantly disappears as we will discuss below (8 ‘Rupture’ and 9 ‘Restoration’). By this late date, it is not likely that al-Manṣūr’s *kunya* on the coins still signified

his governorship of the mint, especially since it continued on the new type minted from 387/998 onwards, which introduced on the obverse the names of men who certainly were *aṣḥāb al-sikka*.¹¹⁹ Wasserstein is therefore probably correct in his assessment that ‘the presence of the name ‘*āmīr* [on the coins] reflects [Ibn Abī ‘Āmir’s] status both as a minister of the caliph and as effective ruler of the country’.¹²⁰

118 On Ibn Abī ‘Āmir’s appointment as *ṣāhib al-sikka*, see *Bayān* 11:267 [translation, 417]; for the first dinar emissions in al-Ḥakam’s name, see Canto García 2004, 333. Between 361/972 and 363/974, the office was held by Yahya ibn Idrīs and Aḥmad ibn Ḥudayr. Though al-Rāzī, *Anales* §51, tells us Yahya quit the office before a single dinar or dirham had been minted, a coin in Tübingen (inv. no. BA5 F1) minted at Madīnat al-Zahrā’ in 363/974 bears the name ‘Yahya’. On Ibn Ḥudayr, see Meouak 1999, 125–126. For al-Manṣūr’s reappointment as mint governor, cf. *Anales*, §183. The names of the *aṣḥāb al-sikka* had been introduced on to Andalusī coinage by ‘Abd al-Rahmān 111 as part of the monetary reforms with which he articulated his new caliphal role: cf. Canto García 1986–87; Canto García 1998, 3.

119 Martínez Salvador 1992, 424–426. The names which now appear on the coins minted in ‘al-Andalus’ (Cordoba) are: Mufarraġ in 387/998 (probably the same Mufarraġ al-‘Āmirī who is mentioned as *ṣāhib al-madīna* for al-Zāhira, at *Bayān* 111:34–35 [translation, 40–41]); Muḥammad from 387/998–391/1002; Tamlikh from 391/1002–392/1003, ‘Abd al-Malik from 393/1004 until 398/1009; and Burd in 399/1010. The ‘Abd al-Malik is probably al-Muẓaffar, since on issues from Maghribī mints it is occasionally paired with ‘*āmīr*, and once with al-Mu‘izz ibn Zīrī (ibn ‘Aṭīyya) on a coin minted in Madīnat Fās in 398/1009. My study of the numismatic evidence for this period derives from a sample of 139 coins, minted between 350/961 and 399/1010, now in the collections of the Ashmolean Museum and University of Tübingen.

120 Wasserstein 1993a, 42. Guichard 1995 examined ‘Āmirid inscriptions to show that instances of ‘al-Manṣūr’ were

As Ballestín concludes, after his return from the Maghrib, Ibn Abī ʿĀmir could only go higher.¹²¹

4 Conspicuous Piety

Al-Manṣūr's military successes played an immensely important role in the articulation of his *ḥijāba*, since through them he fulfilled the caliphal role of 'defender of the faith', and thereby grounded the legitimacy of his government in the security he provided for the state, which the caliph was not able to provide himself. This fundamentally religious role was given greater credence by his overtly pious actions, the most ostentatious of which was of course his massive extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba, discussed in Chapter 5. Al-Manṣūr carried with him on campaign a Qurʾān that he had copied himself (let us not forget he trained as a *kātib*), and in case of his death 'a linen winding sheet made of flax grown on the land he inherited from his father and woven by his daughters'.¹²² On each campaign he collected dust from enemy territory, to be mixed with perfumes and used to bury him after death (we can only speculate on what the casket that contained this dust was made from and how it might have been decorated). As Kennedy wryly observes, 'We can be sure that news of these private austerities was not kept from the wider Cordoban public, any more than it has been kept from us'.¹²³

never followed by 'bi-llāh', and coins, where he was always designated by 'un discret ʿāmir placé en dessous du titre califien' (p. 49). Guichard believed this 'prudence' in refraining from claiming 'un rapport direct avec Dieu' – which is what 'bi-llāh' signified – 'manifestait d'une certain façon son respect de la légitimité omeyyade' (p. 52 n. 4).

121 Ballestín 2004a, 60.

122 *Bayān* 11:288; De la Puente 1999a, 35; Kennedy 1996, 119.

123 Kennedy 1996, 119. Fierro 1987, 163, notes the case of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Khaṭīb, a poet who apparently wrote a poem in which he compared al-Manṣūr to the Prophet Muḥammad; he was punished with five hundred lashes, imprisoned and later banished from al-Andalus.

Apart from his regular campaigns against the Christians, al-Manṣūr's most notorious religious act was his purge of al-Ḥakam's famous library.¹²⁴ Al-Ḥakam's library functioned as a scriptorium, for the copying and production of manuscripts, by such men as the team who worked on the translation and commentary of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*. As Umberto Bongianino has discussed, 'The immense palatine library of al-Ḥakam II (*al-khizāna al-ʿilmīyya*) was first and foremost an active centre for the copy and collation of written texts from all over the Islamic world and beyond, and was consequently based on the work of local and foreign scholars, scribes, and bookbinders ... Even before his accession to the throne ... al-Ḥakam had gathered in his service "the most skilful experts [*al-ḥadhdhāq*] in the art of copy [*ṣināʿat al-naskh*], and the most famous specialists in vocalisation [*al-ḍabṭ*] and in the art of bookbinding [*al-ijāda fī-l-tajlīd*]" ... In the caliphal library, under the supervision of the eunuch and chief librarian Tālid al-Khaṣī, worked numerous Andalusis whose excellent handwriting and bookmaking skills are recorded in biographical dictionaries'.¹²⁵ The knowledge of literary and poetic texts from elsewhere in the Islamic world all speaks to the importance of books and learning at the Umayyad court. There is good reason to believe that copies of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* and the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* existed in al-Ḥakam's library, and it has been argued that illustrated books such as *Kalīla wa Dimna* may have stimulated the introduction of particular motifs into the artistic repertoire of al-Andalus (see Chapter 8, Figure 173).

As discussed in the Introduction, al-Ḥakam's library has become a symbol of the cultural refinement of his caliphate, and his patronage of learning and the sciences has been seen by Susana Calvo as a key element in establishing his own legitimacy

124 On the purge, see *Bayān* 11:315 (translation, 487–488); Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī 1991, 61–62. More generally on al-Ḥakam's library, see Lévi-Provençal, *HEM* 11:218; 111:498–499; Wasserstein 1990–1991.

125 Bongianino 2017, 34.

of rule.¹²⁶ However, it is important to properly contextualise the purge. In Shi‘ism – as represented by the Umayyads’ enemies, the Fatimids – the repository of religious knowledge and the interpretation of Islamic law was embodied in the ruler himself, as the infallible imam-caliph;¹²⁷ however, in Sunnism, this role was played by the ‘*ulamā*’ and *fuqahā*’ – the religious scholars who, in al-Andalus, followed a strict Maliki doctrine. The council of Maliki jurists (*shūra*) was led by the chief *qāḍī* (the *qāḍī* of Cordoba) and was consulted on important legal matters; the chief *qāḍī* was appointed by the ruler, but this appointment often merely acknowledged the *status quo*.¹²⁸ This group exercised control and power over the arbitration and interpretation of religion,¹²⁹ defining the boundaries of legal and religious scholarship and practice, and thus playing a determining role in legitimising the power of the Sunni ruler.¹³⁰ We have already seen the decisive role that the Andalusi religious scholars played in the controversy surrounding Hishām II’s succession, and there are numerous other instances in the history of this period where we see the ruler carefully negotiate his relationship with the religious scholars. As Maribel Fierro has written, Malikism was the backbone of the Islamic system in al-Andalus and, while the amir could act as a brake to its most extremist elements, at the same time he could not do without its support.¹³¹

Under the Umayyad caliphs, Malikism became the official state doctrine, and was used to curb the influence of Fatimid propaganda and to contain internal currents of heterodoxy, such as those propounded by followers of the Andalusi Neoplatonic philosopher, Ibn Masarra (d. 931). These doctrines were seen by the Maliki jurists as coming too close to the esoteric views of Ismailism: as Stroumsa notes, ‘the main cause of Umayyad anxiety was ... the possible affinity of Ibn Masarra’s mystical Bāṭinism with the political Bāṭinism of the Fatimids.’¹³² Such views were ruthlessly suppressed: a series of decrees accusing Ibn Masarra’s followers of ‘reprehensible innovation and heresy’ was read in the congregational mosques of Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahrā’ in the late 950s, culminating in the burning of Masarrī books and writings in the courtyard of the Cordoba Mosque in 961.¹³³ In Fierro’s view, this persecution of the Masarrīs was seized on by the caliphs as an opportunity to proclaim Malikism as the official doctrine of the caliphate.¹³⁴

Book burning, as Janina Safran has stated, ‘was an act of censorship and intimidation’; it was also ‘a symbolic enactment of the continuous partnership between ruler and jurists, [to safeguard] the community and the faith in ways particular to the negotiation of power by each regime’.¹³⁵ Al-Ḥakam’s library was viewed by some as a ‘centre for the spreading of ideas and for the infiltration of ... new ways of thinking in Spain’:¹³⁶ one Abū al-Khayr, ‘who derived some heretical views from a book in al-Ḥakam’s library’, was crucified on the caliph’s order.¹³⁷ The nature of the works selected

126 Calvo 2012 and its English version, Calvo 2014.

127 Fierro 2005, 127.

128 Safran 2014, 151.

129 De la Puente 2001, 17.

130 García Sanjuán 2008, 74.

131 Fierro 1987, 174; Fierro 2005, 120–131. Fierro writes (pp. 129–30), ‘For Sunnis, the religious scholars are those responsible for the interpretation of revealed law, and interpretation inevitably gives rise to differences of opinion, thus to religious pluralism ... ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s Sunnism was also proved by the fact that he allowed scholars to criticise him, thereby differentiating himself from the impeccable and infallible imam of the Fatimids. Mundhir ibn Sa‘id, who was a brilliant preacher, censured the caliph for missing the Friday prayer during the construction of Madinat al-Zahrā’ and also for the materials used in building it. This criticism did not impair ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s

status, on the contrary it was enhanced, for only a pious, devout and orthodox caliph would allow a scholar to upbraid him”. On the Andalusi caliphs’ policy of ‘governing by consent’, see also Manzano 2019, 235–242.

132 Stroumsa 2014, 87.

133 Stroumsa and Svirī 2009, 202; Safran 2014, 149. The decrees were read in 952, 956 and 957.

134 Fierro 1996c, 99, 105.

135 Safran 2014, 148.

136 Wasserstein 1990–1991, 103.

137 Wasserstein 1987, 371–372. See Fierro 1987, 149–155 for the charges against Abū al-Khayr.

for weeding suggests how threatened the religious establishment felt by the idea of philosophy and rational thought.

It is likely that al-Manṣūr had ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s precedent in mind when he engaged in the purge of al-Ḥakam’s library, and was thus another way in which he aligned himself with the model of kingship established by the first caliph. It is significant too that it was on the eastern façade of the Cordoba mosque where al-Manṣūr added inscriptions that reiterate anti-heterodox messages from the mosque’s internal epigraphic programme – the eastern wall of the mosque being where Ibn Masarra’s books were put to the flames.¹³⁸ This will be discussed further in Chapter 5. We do not know exactly when the purge took place, but scholars concur that it probably occurred soon after al-Manṣūr assumed the office of *ḥājib*. Safran speculates that it might have been motivated by a specific event: the conspiracy in 979 to depose Hishām II in favour of another Umayyad, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh.¹³⁹ The purge asserted al-Manṣūr’s newly claimed authority before the jurists of Cordoba, and enlisted the support of those *fuqahā’/‘ulamā’* who had been most intransigent on the succession of Hishām while still a minor.¹⁴⁰

We actually do not know much about the details of the purge or the books involved, which suggests that it was the act itself that was the most meaningful aspect. Our information primarily relies on Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī (1029–70),¹⁴¹ who informs us that al-Manṣūr ordered the ‘ulamā’ most expert in matters of religion (*ahl al-‘ilm bi-l-dīn*) to extract from al-Ḥakam’s library books on ancient sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-qadima*) that treated logic (*mantiq*), astrology (*‘ilm al-nujum*) and other non-Islamic sciences (*‘ulūm al-awā’il*, ‘the sciences of the ancients’). They were to spare books on medicine

(*ṭibb*) and mathematics (*hisab*) as well as those sciences that were considered licit (*al-‘ulūm al-mubaha*), i.e. language, grammar, poetry, history, jurisprudence and hadith. Once the selection was made, the censored books were burnt or thrown into the wells of the palace,¹⁴² and covered with earth and stones. Ṣā‘id explains that people who dedicated themselves to the censored sciences were suspected of heresy (*al-ilhad fi l-sharī‘a*), and Ibn ‘Idhārī explicitly states that the censored books were *kutub al-dahriyya wa al-falāsifa*, ‘books of materialists and philosophers’.¹⁴³ This seems to evoke the earlier purge of works by Ibn Masarra, considered the first Andalusī-born philosopher.¹⁴⁴ At the same time there is an undercurrent of criticism of al-Ḥakam II, who assembled this collection. Why? Calvo has written about al-Ḥakam’s patronage of the ‘ancient sciences’ – including philosophy and astrology – as a legitimising strategy for his caliphate, another way of looking to the Iberian Peninsula’s Classical past to define his own caliphate as something different from those of the Fatimids and Abbasids.¹⁴⁵ But this also brought him into conflict with the ‘ulamā’, especially when he wanted to use scientifically accurate calculations to reorientate the qibla of the Great Mosque of Cordoba.¹⁴⁶ The whole weight of Andalusī Maliki religious tradition was against the reorientation of their venerated ancestral mosque. Perhaps the ‘ulamā’ felt they had not had enough control during the caliphate of al-Ḥakam II and, given the worrying instability of the succession crisis, the library purge provided a means for them to regain this control, by sending a warning against excessive liberalism of thought.

138 Safran 2014, 151.

139 Safran 2014, 152–3.

140 Fierro 1987, 162.

141 Ṣā‘id al-Andalusī 1991, 163–4; 2000, 142–143; Fierro 1987, 161–2.

142 The library was most likely located at the ancestral palace in Cordoba, since Ibn Ḥazm describes it as the *khizānat al-‘ulūm wa’l-kutub bi-dār Banī Marwān*: see Calvo 2012, 154.

143 *Bayān* 11:292–3 [translation, 487–8], cited in Fierro 1987, 161.

144 Fierro 1987, 162; Stroumsa 2014, 86.

145 Calvo 2012, 154.

146 Calvo 2012, 153.

While the censored books themselves are only generically described, we do know the names of the religious scholars who selected the books to be purged. They are all men who held prominent posts throughout the ‘Āmirid *ḥijāba*, and whom we will encounter again: Ibn al-Makwī (324/935–401/1010), *mushawar* (member of his *shūra*) of the *qāḍī* Ibn al-Salīm (al-Manṣūr’s first mentor), since 975 – Calvo notes that he accepted the job because it ‘gave him the opportunity to consult rare books that could only be found there’;¹⁴⁷ ‘Abd Allāh al-Aṣīlī (d. 1001); Abū Bakr al-Zubaydī; Aḥmad ibn Dhakwān; according to Lévi-Provençal, the chief *qāḍī*, Ibn Zarb, must have participated too, though Safran observes he is notable by his absence.¹⁴⁸

The library purge aligned al-Manṣūr with some of the strictest and most orthodox of the Maliki religious scholars in al-Andalus, while binding them more closely to his regime. Al-Manṣūr did not have the automatic right to rule that a member of the Umayyad family or the Banū Quraysh would have, so he was heavily reliant on the religious scholars to authorise his position as *ḥājib*. He was always careful in his dealings with the *fuqahā’/‘ulamā’*, and adopted other strategies for maintaining their support. He constantly showed deference to the chief *qāḍīs*, Ibn Salīm and Ibn Zarb – for example, in the matter of allowing congregational prayers at the al-Zāhira mosque, as we will discuss in Chapter 4. Indeed their very appointments embodied deference to the continuity of the status quo, as Safran points out:¹⁴⁹ Ibn al-Salīm was al-Ḥakam’s last appointed *qāḍī* of Cordoba, and even though he objected to the accession of Hishām II, he remained in post until his death. Ibn al-Salīm had acknowledged the preeminent jurist, Ibn Zarb, as his successor, and this was approved by al-Manṣūr, though as chief *qāḍī* he was to rule against al-Manṣūr’s personal interests on several occasions. It was only after

Ibn Zarb’s death in 991 that al-Manṣūr chose his own man, his maternal uncle Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya ibn Zakariyya ibn Bartal. According to Ibn Khaldūn, al-Manṣūr also increased the salaries of the *‘ulamā’*.¹⁵⁰ As Cristina de la Puente points out, al-Manṣūr ‘never committed the political error of openly opposing the *‘ulamā’* in matters of religion’.¹⁵¹ His continued role as *ḥājib* depended on their support and legitimation.

On the other hand, as Fierro discusses, al-Manṣūr’s regime also saw an increase in the repression of dissidents, including the trial and even expulsion of those who ‘occupied themselves with philosophy and other un-Islamic sciences or dedicated themselves to theological polemic’ – she says that ‘until this moment, we have not seen so many expulsions of ulemas’.¹⁵² One case was a rare trial for apostasy (*zandaqa*) of a group of scholars and poets interested in theology, philosophy and logic;¹⁵³ in another instance, some scholars became involved in a debate on the existence of miracles of the saints and al-Manṣūr sent them into exile – they were later pardoned.¹⁵⁴ Fierro interprets these hardline treatments as part of al-Manṣūr’s policy to maintain Maliki orthodoxy to the extent of eliminating any ‘possible factors of internal division’ – though ‘the elimination of “dissidents” in religious and intellectual terms also supposes a way of curbing possible political “dissidents”’.¹⁵⁵

We should not overestimate the impact of al-Manṣūr’s purge on al-Ḥakam’s library. Though Sa‘īd al-Andalusī tells us that few books remained, some thirty years later – if we place the purge c. 979–80 – we are told that the rest of the library was dispersed during the Fitna. The *fatā al-‘āmīrī*, Wāḍiḥ, ‘auctioned’ the books, and the library was still so big that it took six months to remove all the books from the Cordoban palace. Whatever

147 Calvo 2012, n. 86, citing Peña Jiménez 1994, 359 and 366.

148 Fierro 1987, 162; Safran 2014, 152.

149 Safran 2014, 152.

150 García Sanjuán 2008, 76, n. 82, citing Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, IV, 176.

151 De la Puente 2001, 17.

152 Fierro 1987, 169–170.

153 Fierro 1987, 163–5; Fierro 1992, 900–1.

154 Fierro 2001, 475, 481.

155 Fierro 1987, 165, 170.

remained was pillaged when al-Mahdī's forces entered Cordoba at the start of the Fitna.¹⁵⁶ The notion that the library's contents were decimated by al-Manṣūr's purge thus seems to be an exaggeration: a considerable number of its volumes obviously survived.

As De la Puente defines it, the library purge could also be characterised as an act of jihad. Jihad is combat against an enemy of another religion, but it is also struggle against heresy within one's own religion, and the struggle to propagate Islam within the faith of each Muslim – it thus has an important individual dimension, and any form of struggle on behalf of Islam is an act of piety.¹⁵⁷ Jihad in its outward facing form – the struggle to expand or defend Islam in the *dār al-ḥarb* – reached unprecedented levels under al-Manṣūr, though the legal authority to declare jihad and organise a war in the name of Islam was again a religious one.¹⁵⁸ This religious dimension is symbolised most vividly by the ceremony of the knotting the army's banners in the Great Mosque of Cordoba, at the beginning and end of a campaign, as we will see in Chapter 5. Again, al-Manṣūr relied on his relationship with the *'ulamā'* to support his authority to declare jihad, and it is significant that a number of Andalusī *'ulamā'* campaigned in jihad themselves.¹⁵⁹

The intensity of al-Manṣūr's campaigning was in inverse proportion to the power of the caliph, but his regular victories brought about an unprecedented level of peace and security within al-Andalus, that in turn justified his right to continue

to lead jihad against the Christians. According to the author of the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus*, he converted himself into the standard of jihad in the eyes of his subjects, by liberating Muslim captives in enemy territory, and acting as defender of strict Islamic orthodoxy.¹⁶⁰ He presented to the Cordoban people the military and moral strength that Hishām lacked, and this public display of the fulfilment of Islamic precepts helped him to legitimise his government.¹⁶¹ Of course there was also an active and deliberate propaganda campaign to promulgate his heroic battlefield deeds and maintain public approbation for his rule: al-Manṣūr always travelled with a company of poets, who sang of his triumphs, as discussed in Chapter 2. In this way, jihad was a fundamental tool of al-Manṣūr's strategies of legitimation, and the military campaigns against Christian Spain should be seen as much as a reflection of internal politics as of foreign affairs. We will see this above all when we discuss below al-Manṣūr's most glorious campaign, that against Santiago de Compostela in 998.

5 The Rise to Power

Conceding to Ibn Abī 'Āmir the crucial role of military leadership was the beginning of the end for al-Muṣḥafī. Compounding the situation was the fact that his relations were not good with 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's freedman (*mawla*) and warlord, Ghālib, then governor of the northern frontier at Medinaceli (prov. Soria). As al-Manṣūr took charge of the regency's military role, campaigning successfully three times in 977,¹⁶² he began to build a close relationship with Ghālib. The latter commanded the frontier army whilst Ibn Abī 'Āmir controlled the troops from the capital; they campaigned together, and were promoted at the

156 HEM III:318 & n. 1; Wasserstein 1990–91, 103.

157 De la Puente 1999a, 26–7.

158 De la Puente 1999a, 34. Fierro 2005, 127, observes that during 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's reign, jihad against the Fatimids had higher value than jihad against the Christians.

159 De la Puente 1999a, 30. She notes (p. 37) that this intellectual minority 'voluntarily participated in the struggle against the Christians', and that 'the deaths of numerous ascetics on the field of battle is noted during al-Manṣūr's *ḥijāba*, whose biographies give prestige to that of the chamberlain himself' (she gives some names and examples in n. 52).

160 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:180 [11:191], cited in De la Puente 1999a, 35, n. 43.

161 De la Puente 1999a, 35.

162 *Bayān* 11:283, 285 [translation, 440–441, 443]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:186 [11:197].

same time to *dhū'l-wizāratayn*, the ‘double vizierate’ of the sword and the pen,¹⁶³ which effectively made them the most powerful men in the state. This also signified a realignment within the regency government, to al-Muṣḥafī’s detriment. It is likely that Ṣubḥ was behind the appointments that continued to promote al-Manṣūr. Around this time, he was made *ṣāhib al-madīna* of Cordoba, ousting al-Muṣḥafī’s own son, ‘Uthmān.¹⁶⁴ The following year, on 1 Muḥarram 368/8 August 978, the marriage of al-Manṣūr to Ghālib’s daughter, Asmā’, sealed their alliance.¹⁶⁵ Again, this was at al-Muṣḥafī’s expense, since he had planned to marry Asmā’ to his son, ‘Uthman, in order to improve his own relations with Ghālib.¹⁶⁶ The wedding was paid for by the caliph himself, and the bride was even prepared by the women of the royal household, signifying Ṣubḥ’s patronage of the marriage;¹⁶⁷ the wedding was of a ‘pomp and magnificence whose equivalent one would have to travel far to find’.¹⁶⁸

Asmā’ was al-Manṣūr’s second wife, but he used marriages strategically from the beginning of his career. As Ana Echevarría has pointed out, there is no reference to a marriage from within his own clan (endogamy), which could have happened before he entered public life. His first marriage was to a woman of unknown name who would

certainly have advanced his position socially and facilitated introductions for him at court. She accompanied him on his rise, between about 967 and 972, after which references to her disappear.¹⁶⁹ His second marriage in 978, to Asmā’ bint Ghālib, was more calculated: Echevarría calls it ‘a fundamental piece in al-Manṣūr’s strategy against al-Muṣḥafī’.¹⁷⁰ Asmā’ can probably be identified with the lady known in the sources as al-Ḍalfā’, the mother of ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muḥaffar; she became al-Manṣūr’s principal wife, and was important enough to have her own entry in biographical dictionaries. As a result, we have more information about her than his other wives. She involved herself in politics, and after al-Manṣūr’s death she hired a *faqīh*, with whom she communicated from behind a curtain, to keep her informed of current events. This allowed her to warn her son of the conspiracy of ‘Īsā ibn Sa‘īd al-Yaḥṣubī (below), and she also financed the Umayyad party to rise up against Sanchuelo, whom she blamed for poisoning ‘Abd al-Malik. During al-Manṣūr’s absences on campaign, al-Ḍalfā’ was entrusted with guarding the ‘Āmirids’ personal treasury; at the Fitna, she was evicted from al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, but was able to move to another residence (presumably one of the ‘Āmirids’ *munyas*), and to maintain her fortune until her death in 1008. As we will see in Chapter 2, with his marriage to ‘Abda, daughter of king Sancho Abarca of Navarra, al-Manṣūr continued to be highly strategic in his use of marriage alliances and kinship ties.

As a wedding present, Hishām promoted Ibn Abī ‘Āmir to *ḥājib*, so that he ‘shared its duties with Ja‘far’.¹⁷¹ Al-Maqqarī comments that ‘these marks of distinction increased the power and influence of al-Manṣūr, and doubled the number of his followers and adherents until, compared with him, [al-Muṣḥafī] became a mere cipher’.¹⁷² Only a

163 *Bayān* 11:283, 285 [translation, 440, 443]; Dozy 1913, 480; *HEM* III:21–22. This title was one of those introduced by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III on the Abbasid model, when in 939 he appointed Aḥmad ibn Shuhayd to this office (on whom see Meouak 1999, 136–138).

164 *Bayān* 11:283–284 [translation, 441]; Dozy 1913, 482. On ‘Uthmān ibn al-Muṣḥafī, see Meouak 1999, 183.

165 *Bayān* 11:285 [translation, 444], who tells us that Asmā’ was endowed with a dazzling beauty and had a cultivated spirit. She always remained very well considered by her husband, who kept her until the end of his days’.

166 Echevarría 2011, 88.

167 Echevarría 2011, 88.

168 *Bayān* 11:285 [translation, 444]; al-Maqqarī, 182–183 (*Analectes*, 11:62). Echevarría 2011, 88, says the nuptial celebrations were considered ‘the most grandiose in the history of al-Andalus, taking into account the fact that the marriages of the caliphs were not celebrated in public’.

169 Echevarría 2011, 104. This wife was a relative of Khālid ibn Hishām, a freedman of the future caliph. She is only mentioned in *Dhikr Bilād* 11:186, referred to as *umm*.

170 Echevarría 2011, 105–7.

171 *Bayān* 11:285 [translation, 444]; al-Maqqarī, 183.

172 Al-Maqqarī, 183.

few months later, on 13 Sha‘ban 368/15 March 979, al-Muṣṣḥafī fell from favour and was relieved of his duties as *ḥājib*.¹⁷³ Together with his sons and his nephew, Hishām, he was arrested on allegations of embezzlement. Their goods were sequestered. Hishām al-Muṣṣḥafī – ‘who was, of all the family, [al-Manṣūr’s] most relentless enemy’ – was executed.¹⁷⁴ Al-Muṣṣḥafī himself was ‘so ruined and impoverished that he was compelled to sell [al-Manṣūr] his *munya* in al-Ruṣāfa, which was one of the most magnificent residences in Cordoba.’¹⁷⁵ The fact that al-Muṣṣḥafī owned his own *munya* becomes significant when we consider the precedents for artistic patronage among al-Manṣūr’s antecedents in the *ḥijāba* (Chapter 6). Utterly humiliated and destitute, al-Muṣṣḥafī finally died in 983 in the prison at Madīnat al-Zahrā’.

Soon after al-Muṣṣḥafī’s disgrace, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir’s relations with Ghālib soured. The reasons are obscure: according to the sources, Ghālib accused him of degrading the dynasty in order to arrogate all power to himself, though this smacks of historical hindsight; in turn, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir accused Ghālib of jealousy and of trying to engineer him out of government.¹⁷⁶ The two literally came to blows while they were campaigning together in the spring of 980.¹⁷⁷ Though this period is usually seen as a struggle for political supremacy between the two generals, it was nothing less than civil war. Their armies clashed for the remainder of 980 and throughout 981. Initially, it went well for Ibn Abī ‘Āmir, but in the spring of 981 he was badly defeated, in a campaign later called the ‘dissolution of the Ma‘āfiris’, after the tribal

name of his ancestors. It is likely that Ghālib had recruited Christian support for this campaign, since we know that Castilian troops, led by García Fernández himself, were with his army in the summer of that year.¹⁷⁸

In response, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir undertook important reforms of the Cordoban army.¹⁷⁹ Following measures that had already been used by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II, he recruited troops personally loyal to himself, without existing loyalties to tribe, the Umayyads or to al-Andalus. In particular, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir encouraged Berber warriors, especially from the Zanāta tribe, to cross the sea and join the Andalusī army;¹⁸⁰ as we will see in the campaign against Santiago de Compostela, Christian soldiers and noblemen also fought in his army. Ibn Abī ‘Āmir also continued a process that had begun under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, of dismantling the *jund* system which the Umayyads in al-Andalus had maintained since the days of the conquest; he reorganised the tribal basis of these regiments, ensuring that in each *jund* every tribal group was represented, to prevent the inter-tribal feuding that had hindered the army’s efficiency hitherto.¹⁸¹ According to Kennedy, he thus created a fully professional army, many of whom were Berbers and Ṣaqāliba, and he also devoted great care to how the army was rewarded.¹⁸² These developments made heavy demands on the fiscal system, and needed to be well organised; it also required further campaigning to generate revenues from booty. These troops also had to be housed, and recent excavations in the suburb of al-Ruṣāfa, to the northwest of the madina of Cordoba, have identified ‘a residential quarter [which] emerged *ex novo* and on a strictly orthogonal street grid, in

173 Bariani 1998, 92, citing Ibn Bassām, IV:1:65; *Bayān* II (1951):266, 277; Ibn Khaqan 1983, 163. On the fall of al-Muṣṣḥafī and for anecdotes of his life, cf. *Bayān* II:285–291 [translation, 444–452]; al-Maqqarī, 183; and Dozy 1913, 484–487.

174 *Bayān* II:285 [translation, 444]; al-Maqqarī, 183. On Hishām ibn Muḥammad al-Muṣṣḥafī, see Meouak 1999, 184–185.

175 Al-Maqqarī, 183. On *munyas* and their ceremonial role in the Cordoban landscape, see Anderson 2013.

176 Bariani 1998, 92.

177 Ávila 1981.

178 Al-‘Udhri, §11, cf. Ruiz Asencio 1968, 60–61; Bariani 2003, 114.

179 *HEM* III:80–85.

180 *Bayān* II:298–299 [translation, 463–464]; Bariani 2003, 122–3; Ballestín 2004a, 137; Echevarría 2011, 119–136.

181 This had been the reason for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s defeat at al-Khandaq (Alhándega) in 939: see Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 321–335 (§§292–303).

182 Kennedy 1996, 116.

contrast with that observed in the rest of the suburb. Its houses are strikingly regular, and can be arranged in four basic groups ... [The] insertion of the suburb in an area that contained other military installations [the site of Turruñuelos, discussed in Chapter 4] suggests that this quarter was inhabited by Berber troops serving the *ḥājib*¹⁸³ – though this identification remains speculative.

This period also saw a massive increase in the importance of cavalry: Ibn al-Khaṭīb no doubt overestimates when he says that the cavalry of al-Manṣūr’s army numbered 12,000,¹⁸⁴ but this nevertheless gives a sense of the increasing scale and importance of this sector of the army. As Manzano notes, al-Manṣūr’s government was marked by a ‘radical change of rhythm’ in the twice-yearly campaigns which he led himself;¹⁸⁵ Manzano believes that his ‘lightning campaigns’ would not have been possible if he were not able to rely on an ample cavalry as the principal nucleus of his army.¹⁸⁶ The importance of horses in the culture of the period is seen in the lists of gifts sent between Cordoba and the Maghrib, as discussed by Ballestín, which include horses as well as luxurious tack.¹⁸⁷ The horses themselves are frequently described in detail, such as one example of ‘a sorrel horse, golden chestnut, with a white patch on the forehead and mottled black and white on his four legs. This horse used to belong to Ibn Abī ‘Āmir and bore a saddle and a bridle of fine silver’.¹⁸⁸ This high appreciation for horses is also seen in their representation on the Cordoban ivories, including as an example the casket made for ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abī ‘Āmir, where some of the horses are even branded *‘āmīr*, to associate them with the *ḥājib*’s stable (Figure 126E, Chapter 7 2.1). Another site excavated in recent years, and connected with the suburb mentioned above that might have

housed Berber troops, has been identified as ‘an enormous stables, complemented by surrounding areas of pasture and various auxiliary buildings’ – again the archaeologists suggest a chronology for this in the ‘Āmirid period, though this is entirely speculative.¹⁸⁹

Finally, Echevarría notes that Ibn Abī ‘Āmir created a new base for the Andalusī fleet at Alcáçer do Sal on the Portuguese coast, which served as a warehouse and a point of concentration for the combined land-sea attack on Santiago de Compostela.¹⁹⁰

Ibn Abī ‘Āmir’s army reforms enabled him to inflict a crushing defeat on Ghālib’s troops in July 981, in which the octogenarian general was killed.¹⁹¹ Ibn Abī ‘Āmir turned to his advantage the fact that Ghālib had sought help from the Christians, claiming to have defeated an enemy of the caliphate. He spent some months pursuing retributive campaigns against Ghālib’s allies, enabling him to represent himself as ‘a new bastion of the caliphate and a warrior for Andalusī Islam’.¹⁹²

6 Al-Manṣūr

At the end of November 981, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir finally returned to Cordoba, now ‘supreme master of all the affairs of the state and of the [Umayyad] dynasty’.¹⁹³ This opens a new phase in his career, and it is from this point on that we can really begin to speak of the articulation of his *ḥijāba*. He emblematised his new position by adopting the honorific title (*laqab*), al-Manṣūr, by which he is known to history. This was pronounced after the caliph’s name from the minbars of all the mosques in the Umayyad realm: ‘Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir

183 León and Murillo 2014, 25, fig. 14; Murillo et al 2010b, 612.

184 Echevarría 2011, 123.

185 Manzano 2019, 232.

186 Manzano 2019, 144.

187 Ballestín 2006.

188 Ballestín 2006, 65–6.

189 Murillo et al 2010b, 612.

190 Echevarría 2011, 134.

191 The ‘Victory Campaign’, according to al-‘Udhri, §12, cf. Ruiz Asencio 1968, 61; Ibn Ḥazm 1974, 120; *Bayān* 11:299 [translation, 464]; Cañada Juste 1992, 376.

192 Ibáñez Izquierdo 1990, 686–688; Bariani 1998, 94.

193 *Bayān* 11:291 [translation, 452].

was thus the equal of the caliph in all these honours, and was treated like [the caliph], and there was no difference between them'.¹⁹⁴

The adoption of a *laqab* has been the main argument for al-Manṣūr's designs on the throne, of his seeking to replace the caliph in name as well as in fact, though more recent historical studies of his career take a more nuanced position. The practice of attaching *alqāb* to a ruler's name as 'marks of sovereign dignity' had been initiated by the Abbasids.¹⁹⁵ It was introduced into al-Andalus by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III when he claimed the caliphate in 929 and took the title 'al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh' ('Victorious for the Faith of God'), apparently in deliberate reaction to the title adopted by his Fatimid rival 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdi', 'the little Slave of God and Messiah' (r. 909–934). Caliphal titles were most frequently accompanied by the qualifier 'bi-llāh', indicating the ruler's exclusive relationship to God, as seen in the titles adopted by al-Ḥakam II ('al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh', 'he who is made victorious by God') and Hishām II ('al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh', 'he who is supported by God'). This was the tradition followed by al-Manṣūr when he chose his *laqab*, though, as Pierre Guichard showed, he refrained from explicitly suffixing this title with 'bi-llāh', which would have been overtly caliphal in style.¹⁹⁶ Guichard believed that this 'prudence' indicated al-Manṣūr's respect for the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliph,¹⁹⁷ rather than his desire to supplant him.

Contrary to Dozy's remark that taking a throne-name was 'a practice that had hitherto been confined to the caliph alone',¹⁹⁸ al-Manṣūr was not the first *ḥājib* in al-Andalus to adopt one: Ja'far ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣiqlābī, *ḥājib* of al-Ḥakam from the mid-960s until his death in 360/971–972, had gone by the honorific title 'Sayf al-Dawla', 'Sword of the State'; it is under this title alone, no doubt because of its pre-eminence, that he occurs in the

inscriptions in al-Ḥakam's extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba.¹⁹⁹ Though less militaristic in tone, fifty years earlier 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's *ḥājib*, Badr ibn Aḥmad, had borne the title 'Mudabbir al-Dawla', 'Councillor of the State'.²⁰⁰ The qualification 'dawla', 'state', was likely seen as more appropriate for a *ḥājib*, rather than 'dīn', 'religion', which would indicate theocratic authority. Al-Manṣūr himself was designated 'Sayf al-Dawla' on the new backrest carved for the Andalusiyīn minbar (Figures 5–7, Appendix 4.4) and a foundation inscription from Lisbon (Appendix 4.6), both dated 985, and as we will see this was the title taken by his son 'Abd al-Malik. Al-Qalqashandi called such titles 'names of the sword' and said that they were borne by the most important *qā'id*s and men of arms; they represented the public recognition of their feats on the battlefield, or their victories and triumphs in the practice of jihad.²⁰¹

Nevertheless, al-Manṣūr's *laqab* was undeniably more 'caliphal' than those of his predecessors. Its meaning – 'the Victorious' – had a direct application to his military successes, specifically his defeat of both al-Muṣḥafī and Ghālib: indeed Echevarría has suggested he took this title in specific opposition to Ghālib's, whose name had meant 'the Conqueror'.²⁰² There is even deeper significance to the choice of *laqab*. It derives from the same root (*n-ṣ-r*) as the titles taken by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ('al-Nāṣir') and his son ('al-Mustanṣir'), and must have deliberately sought to evoke the titlature of the first two Andalusī caliphs. This aspect of al-Manṣūr's title reflects the motivation for his major architectural project, the construction of the largest extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba. As we will discuss in Chapter 5, this extension was a literally monumental statement of both continuity with and subordination to

194 *Bayān* 11:299–300 [translation, 465].

195 Tyan 1954, I, 483–488; 'Laqab', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.

196 Guichard 1995.

197 Guichard 1995, 52 n. 4.

198 Dozy 1913, 498 n. 1.

199 *Bayān* 11:249 [translation, 385–6], confirmed by six inscriptions from the year 353/964–5, cf. Ocaña 1976, 221–2. Cf. Bariani 1998, 94 n. 12; Echevarría 2011, 95. An inscription recently found at Madīnat al-Zahrā' refers to Ja'far as 'sayf-hu': Martínez Núñez 2015, #35.

200 Meouak 1994–5, 161; Meouak 1995, 381.

201 Bariani 2003, 207.

202 Echevarría 2011, 95.

the Umayyad regime. The messages encoded in al-Manṣūr’s *laqab* are complex, and do not end there: a discussion of the semantics of ‘Āmirid epigraphy on the luxury arts, in Chapter 8, will elucidate a further aspect of his titulature, as it relates to that of Hishām.

The *laqab* triumphalised al-Manṣūr’s new position as the supreme power in the State. In the same year he transferred his residence and various offices of the State to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, the palace-city he constructed to the east of Cordoba in 978–9.²⁰³ As discussed in Chapter 4, this construction marked a significant aspirational change in al-Manṣūr’s career: in the same way that the construction of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ had been for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III the ‘architectural equivalent of giving himself caliphal titulature’,²⁰⁴ so al-Madīnat al-Zāhira became the physical symbol of the neutralisation of al-Manṣūr’s political rivals. That this symbol was clearly understood by his contemporaries is shown by the author of the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus*: ‘When he moved to al-Zāhira he gave himself the title “al-Manṣūr”’.²⁰⁵

7 The Culmination of Power

Al-Manṣūr’s turbulent ascent, between 976 and 981, was followed by a long period in which he established himself not just as *de facto* ruler but as *sovereign* of al-Andalus: that is to say, after his victory over Ghālib, he adopted a truly regal attitude to his administration. Increasingly elaborate protocol was adopted at the ‘Āmirid court, now installed at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, in which viziers and even members of the Umayyad dynasty were required to kiss al-Manṣūr’s hand as if he were the caliph, and to address him with new honorific titles, including ‘al-sayyid’ and ‘mawla’, both meaning ‘lord’.²⁰⁶ In this period of stability and prosper-

ity for the state, earned through the success of al-Manṣūr’s military campaigns and diplomatic activity, his court flourished and became a centre for poetry and learning. In addition to his architectural projects, al-Manṣūr and his sons commissioned luxury objects that furnished their gardens and apartments.

As Echevarría notes, it was precisely during al-Manṣūr’s period of ‘maximum personal power’ that his military campaigns reached the height of intensity.²⁰⁷ Richard Hitchcock calculates that between 980 and 986, al-Manṣūr was away from Cordoba on campaign for an average of 100 days each year.²⁰⁸ While Echevarría interprets this as a constant need to demonstrate to the people of Cordoba that ‘the power of force’ resided in him,²⁰⁹ this degree of absence must also mean that al-Manṣūr felt secure in his own role and in the infrastructure he had put in place to govern in his absence. His successful campaigning, which brought booty and captives to Cordoba and maintained the prestige of the Umayyad state, also secured peace and prosperity within al-Andalus’s borders; this stable and wealthy internal situation in turn secured support for al-Manṣūr from all sectors of Cordoban society, and hence his continued legitimacy.

Hitchcock, more cynically, sees the campaigns as ‘window dressing, designed as propaganda for the areas of al-Andalus through which he passed’, reminding the Muslim inhabitants in the regions beyond the capital ‘that he remained in charge in Cordoba’, by travelling with ‘a splendid retinue of

203 *Bayān* 11:294 [translation, 457]; *HEM* 11:220–222.

204 Ruggles 2000, 92.

205 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:181 [11:192].

206 Bariani 2003, 173–4, discusses another title ‘malik karīm’, ‘generous king’, which is also attributed to al-Manṣūr at this date. The title ‘malik’ implies absolute

dominion over one’s subjects which can only belong to God, while ‘malik’ and ‘karīm’ are two of the 99 names of Allāh. The title ‘al-malik al-rahīm’ which the Buyids attempted to adopt was denied them by the Abbasid caliph because it employed two of the names of Allāh. Bariani does not believe that the strict Maliki jurists would have allowed al-Manṣūr to adopt such a title. However, a letter to his grandson, ‘Abd al-Azīz, the Taifa ruler of Valencia who also called himself al-Manṣūr, is addressed ‘al-malik al-karīm’. She believes that Ibn ‘Idhārī confused the two al-Manṣūrs.

207 Echevarría 2011, 150.

208 Hitchcock 2014, 96.

209 Echevarría 2011, 119.

distinguished men, even (*sic*) in the fields of poetry and learning'.²¹⁰ Kennedy proposes a more nuanced view of this effect of military campaigns, in discussing the military career of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III. Not only did intensive jihad fulfil the caliph's obligation as 'Commander of the Faithful', it had a useful practical role as well: 'like the progress of a medieval European monarch, it enabled the ruler to keep in touch with important people who never usually came to court'. 'Abd al-Raḥmān's expedition of 924 was a 'progress' through the eastern regions of al-Andalus ..., and in this way the expedition provided the amir with an important way of demonstrating his leadership.²¹¹ While al-Manṣūr had a direct personal knowledge of the Maghrib from his experiences at the start of his career, he did not have the same direct experience of the situation within the Iberian Peninsula until he began his regular campaigns, and this may have been one reason why he chose to lead the campaigns himself.

The 980s were also a period of intense activity in the Maghrib. Even though the Fatimids had moved their capital to Egypt a decade earlier, the Umayyads still had their delegates, the Zīrids, to contend with. Buluqqīn ibn Zīrī (r. 979–985) engaged in vigorous attempts to win territory in the Maghrib al-Aqṣā for the Fatimids. His main targets were Sijilmasa and Fez, the two most important cities on the northwestern route for trans-Saharan trade – as we saw above, the desire to control access to West African gold was a major driver of the competition between the Umayyads and Fatimids in the last decades of the tenth century. Sijilmasa, located at the point where the desert meets the mountains, was the most important terminus of trans-Saharan trade, and was described in the twelfth century as the 'gate of gold'.²¹² It also had a particular importance for the Fatimids, as it was where the first Ismaili Mahdī had based

himself while his *dā'ī* (and successor) 'Ubayd Allāh established support among the Kutāma tribal confederation and built them into a disciplined army.²¹³ The Fatimids were the first dynasty to strike dinars at Sijilmasa, c. 922.²¹⁴ In 979, only a month and a half after Ibn Abī 'Āmir became *ḥājib*, Sijilmasa was conquered for the Umayyads by Khazrūn ibn Fulfūl, one of the leaders of the Banu Khazar of the Zanāta tribal confederation.²¹⁵ Ballestín believes that Ibn Abī 'Āmir was the inspiration behind this campaign, and the conquest of Sijilmasa brought immense prestige to him and to al-Andalus: now the Umayyads claimed authority over one of the 'extremes of sub-Saharan trade and over a city of incalculable wealth, point of encounter of all the merchants from the Maghrib and the Bilād al-Sudān', as well as a city of crucial spiritual significance to the Fatimids.²¹⁶ This conquest humiliated the Fatimids and their representatives in the Maghrib: Khazrūn sent back to Cordoba the head of its ruler, which became the first trophy to be publicly displayed by the new caliph. Ibn Abī 'Āmir invested Khazrūn with authority over Sijilmasa, a role he continued until his death and then passed to his son Wānūdīn it was only when the Almoravids conquered Sijilmasa in 1055 that the authority of this branch of Umayyad delegates ceased.²¹⁷ In 378/988–9, dinars were struck at Sijilmasa for the Umayyads.²¹⁸

The other major power struggle between the Umayyads' and Fatimids' delegates was for Fez,

210 Hitchcock 2014, 97.

211 Kennedy 1996, 84–5.

212 Messier 1974, 38. It was described in the anonymous *Kitāb al-Istīṣār* of c. 1192 as 'the gate of gold': see Gaiser 2013, 44.

213 Bloom 2007a, 18; Ballestín 2004a, 145.

214 Messier 2019, 205: 'The name of the mint was not stamped on the coins, but those dinars are identified by their specific fabric and style, which match those of later Sijilmasa dinars.'

215 Ballestín 2004a, 139–40 n. 82, 144.

216 Ballestín 2004a, Section 2.6.2. of his book (pp. 140–46), follows the account in the *Kitāb Mafākhīr al-Barbar*.

217 Messier 2019, 207, though he notes that 'Spanish mints produced no more gold currency after 1012, when the Umayyad dynasty spiraled into civil war and eventual collapse. At this time the Banī Khazrūn ... assumed direct control of Sijilmasa and struck gold and silver currency of their own'.

218 Devise 1988; Messier 2019, 207: the Umayyads held Sijilmasa until 995.

the city founded by Idrīs ibn Idrīs ibn ‘Abd Allāh (d. 213/828), ancestor of Ḥasan ibn Qānūn, which had been the Idrīsīd capital throughout their struggles against Umayyad suzerainty. Fez, located to the north of the Atlas, was also the next major stopping point for trans-Saharan trade on the route to the northwest, towards al-Andalus. In reprisal for the loss of Sijilmasa, Buluqqīn ibn Zīrī launched a fierce expedition during which he conquered Fez for the Fatimids; this marked the moment of the Fatimid empire’s greatest expanse. In the words of Henri Terrasse, now ‘the *khutba* was said in their name from the shores of the Atlantic all the way to Mecca and Damascus.’²¹⁹

Buluqqīn marked the significance of this conquest by commissioning a splendid new minbar for the congregational mosque of Fez’s *Andalusi* quarter – surely a deliberate and pointed message to the Umayyads. This minbar was installed in 980, just fourteen months after Buluqqīn’s conquest of the city (Figures 5–7). The new minbar in the Andalusiyyīn Mosque was a potent marker of the triumph of Shi’ism: henceforth, the *khutba* was pronounced in the name of a Shi’i caliph, where it had formerly been said in the name of the Sunni Umayyads. The naming of the caliph in the *khutba* or Friday sermon was another prerogative of caliphal rule, and the minbar in a congregational mosque was a physical representation both of the ruler and of the Prophet Muḥammad whose ‘successor’ (*khalīfa*) he was. Minbars were highly symbolic objects,²²⁰ and the Fatimids heightened this symbolism by including specifically Shi’i formulae in their *khutbas* and inscriptions, which would have been heretical to the Umayyads. The pronouncement of the *khutba* in the name of a Shi’i caliph from a new Fatimid minbar in a previously pro-Umayyad mosque was a potent marker

of the establishment of Fatimid domination in the region.

But the triumph was shortlived. Just five years later, the Umayyad army, led by al-Manṣūr’s cousin ‘Aṣqalāja, reconquered Fez, seizing the Andalusiyyīn quarter first, while the Qarawiyyīn quarter remained in Fatimid hands for another year.²²¹ At this point, the Andalusiyyīn minbar became an explicit site of conflict between the rival caliphates. ‘Aṣqalāja expressed the Umayyad victory by removing the minbar’s backrest, with its heretical inscription naming the Fatimid caliph, and installing a new backrest, dated just three months after the reconquest, dedicated in Jumāda II 375/October 985. The new backrest named the Umayyad caliph and *ḥājib*: its inscription – the physical manifestation of the names pronounced in the weekly *khutba* – states that ‘the *ḥājib* al-Manṣūr Sword of the State (*ṣayf al-dawla*)’ ordered this backrest to be made on behalf of ‘the Imam ‘Abd Allāh Hishām al-Mu’ayyad bi-llāh’ (Appendix 4.4). This makes this the earliest dated object with a direct ‘Āmirid association, and this will be discussed further, along with the physical aspects of the minbar, in Chapter 7 (1.1). This explicitly Umayyad-ising backrest thus symbolised the final victory of the Umayyads over the Fatimids in the western Maghrib; as Terrasse stated, ‘it marked the culminating point of the struggle between the Umayyads and Fatimids in Morocco.’²²²

The Fatimid backrest may have been sent to Cordoba as a trophy. Taking minbars as trophies seems to have been established precedent by this point, as had happened with the Asilah minbar a decade earlier.²²³ This Atlantic port was another of the strategic locations fought over by the Umayyads and Fatimids. When it was conquered by the Umayyads in 972, their general discovered in the congregational mosque a minbar naming the Fatimid caliph: its backrest, where this inscription would have been located, was sent to Cordoba

219 Terrasse 1942, 37.

220 Fierro 2007, especially p. 160: “Bringing the minbar out of the closet on Fridays ... amounted to announcing the ‘presence’ of the Prophet Muḥammad in the most solemn of Muslim rituals, the Friday prayer”.

221 Terrasse 1942, 38.

222 Terrasse 1942, 39.

223 Terrasse 1942, 39.



FIGURE 5
Side view of the minbar from the Andalusiyin Mosque, Fez, dated 980 and 985
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as a trophy of war, and the rest of the minbar was burned. Buluqqīn's commission of a new minbar for Fez in 980 may also have been reprisal for the destruction of that earlier Fatimid minbar. As Maribel Fierro has noted, the prominence given in the historiography to the destruction of these Fatimid minbars is in marked contrast to that given to the *creation* of a new minbar for the Great Mosque of Cordoba,²²⁴ commissioned in the 960s by al-Ḥakam II, and described in great detail by all the sources on this period. These circumstances and parallels all point to the potency of minbars as

symbols of sovereign authority, in the terrestrial as well as the spiritual realm.

The Umayyad reconquest of Fez marked the end of their bitter struggle with the Fatimids. Buluqqīn had died in 373/983–4, and his son was incapable of pursuing his father's policies; Ḥasan ibn Qānūn died in 985. The remaining Idrīsids had been neutralised by the Umayyads during al-Ḥakam's policies. From 376/986–7, there was thus no threat to the authority of Cordoba from the Fatimids or Zīrids, thanks to al-Manṣūr's careful policy of cultivating their leaders. A new Umayyad governor, Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wadūd al-Sulamī, was sent from Cordoba and established his capital at Fez, which also marked a radical shift from

224 Fierro 2007, 153.



FIGURE 6
Recarved Umayyad backrest of the minbar
from the Andalusiiyīn Mosque, Fez, dated 985
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the earlier policy of maintaining frontier garrisons at the coast (at Ceuta). Al-Sulamī was given a free hand and no expense was spared to recruit the Berber leaders to the Umayyad fold.²²⁵

At this time, Zīrī ibn ‘Aṭīyya, lord of the Maghrāwa tribe, emerged as the pre-eminent Berber leader.²²⁶ As we will discuss further in Chapter 2, in 380/990–1 Zīrī was summoned to Cordoba to meet al-Manṣūr and to be integrated within the Umayyad fold by having bestowed upon him presents of honour (*khil‘a*); he also received a ministerial office with its commensurate monthly salary.²²⁷ But apparently Zīrī did not like to be constrained in this bureaucratic way, and the sources record that his first act on returning to the Maghrib was to put on his turban – symbolising a rejection of the forced Arabisation he had been subjected to in Cordoba. Zīrī also declared, ‘ana amīr ibn amīr’, reminding his listeners that he had his own authority to rule, and did not need to have it delegated to him from Cordoba. Nevertheless, when al-Sulamī died on the battlefield in 381/991,

Zīrī was appointed the Umayyad’s new governor, so that for the first time the prestige and authority of Cordoba now resided in a Berber. Zīrī was energetic in pursuing the Umayyad cause, especially where it allowed him to extend his own dominion and authority. Soon after his appointment as governor, two high ranking Zirids – Abū’l-Bahār ibn Zīrī ibn Manād al-Ṣanhājī, uncle of Manṣūr ibn Buluqqīn, and his son-in-law Khallūf ibn Abī Bakr – abandoned the Fatimids and came over to the Umayyads, and were shown great favour by al-Manṣūr, receiving presents of honour and a power-sharing role in the Maghribi lands now loyal to Cordoba.²²⁸ But soon afterwards they turned coats and went back to the Fatimids. Such treachery could not go unpunished, and al-Manṣūr sent Zīrī against them. Zīrī’s victories led him to occupy Tlemcen and the Zirids’ former regions stretching to ‘the farthest Sus and the Zab’.²²⁹ This was the dramatic victory which Zīrī reported to al-Manṣūr in 992 and accompanied with a massive gift

225 Ballestín 2004a, 159–161.

226 Ballestín 2004a, 163 ff.

227 Ballestín 2004a, 168–172, following *Kitāb al-Mafākhīr*; qv *Bayān* 11:299.

228 On this episode, see Ballestín 2004a, 177–185; Idris 1962, 1, 79–82; *HEM* 11:266.

229 Idris 1962, 1, 81–82 gives a date of Shawwal 382/30 November–28 December 992 for the end of the campaign, and gives 15 Sha‘ban 383/5 October 993 for Abū’l-Bahār’s flight to Ifrīqiya.



FIGURE 7 Side panel of the minbar from the Andalusīyyīn Mosque, with Zīrid inscription and the date 980
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(which arrived in 994) representing all the luxury commodities of the lands of which he – and thus al-Manṣūr – was now master. These diplomatic exchanges and their significance are discussed in Chapter 2. But while Zīrī was al-Manṣūr’s most powerful and trusted asset in the Maghrib, he was also his biggest threat, as became all too evident during the crisis of the *wahsha*.

8 Rupture

The support of the ‘mandarin dynasties’ and community of Maliki religious scholars, successful

campaigning against the Christians in Northern Iberia and the pro-Fatimid Zīrids in North Africa, recruiting Berber leaders into the Umayyad fold, and the peace, security and wealth that these campaigns delivered, all established al-Manṣūr’s legitimacy to act on behalf of a caliph who was too young and inexperienced to act in these roles himself. But at a certain point it seems that he attempted to *legalise* his position. Laura Bariani has analysed a little-known passage recorded by Ibn Ḥazm, transmitted on the eye-witness testimony of his father, who was one of al-Manṣūr’s viziers. This suggests that around 381/992 al-Manṣūr may have sought to actually make himself caliph.²³⁰ He summoned a meeting of the *shūra* – the council of religious scholars – to seek their opinion. They largely concurred with the opinion of Ibn al-Makwī, that ‘only he who does not possess the reality [of power] is concerned with titles’ – and as we know from subsequent history, al-Manṣūr did not proceed with trying to make himself caliph. The passage also includes a significant exchange between al-Manṣūr and the chief *qāḍī*, Ibn Zarb, with whom the *ḥājib* often clashed:²³¹

“Muḥammad ibn Yabqa ibn Zarb then demanded of al-Manṣūr, ‘And what is going on with the caliph?’

Al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir responded, ‘He is not fit to exercise his duties.’

Ibn Zarb answered, ‘If that is how things stand, let us observe him and put him to the test.’

Al-Manṣūr asked, ‘Perhaps you intend to interrogate him on questions of Islamic jurisprudence?’

Ibn Zarb replied, ‘No, rather on questions of politics and the governance of the kingdom.’

Then al-Manṣūr demanded, ‘And if it turns out that he is not up to the task?’

230 Ibn Ḥazm 1981, 86–87; Bariani 1996b; Bariani 1998, 95–96.

231 Ibn Zarb was grand *qāḍī* of Cordoba from 978 to 992: cf. *Bayān* 11:270, 311 [translation, 419, 483]; Ávila 1980, 104. He issued the *fatwa* against al-Manṣūr introducing the Friday prayer at the al-Madinat al-Zāhira mosque (on which see Chapter 4): cf. Ávila 1980, 107–109.

Ibn Zarb declared, “Then let [the new caliph] be sought among the Quraysh!”

The implications of Hishām’s fitness will be discussed further below. As a whole, this incident is interesting for its implication of al-Manṣūr’s concern to rule within the law, and to consult and abide by the rulings of Cordoban *fuqahā*, as we shall see in other instances. The passage is also significant for what it implies about al-Manṣūr’s self-perception of his role as *ḥājib*: that he really was caliph in all but name. If the incident actually happened, it has important implications for the ways in which al-Manṣūr articulated this role.

In the early spring of 996, al-Manṣūr faced the only serious internal crisis of his administration. The ensuing period, known in the sources as the ‘*waḥsha*’ or ‘rupture’, marks another crucial period in the development of his role as *ḥājib*. Aided by her brother Rā’iq and several Ṣaqāliba, al-Manṣūr’s erstwhile supporter, Ṣubḥ, stole 80,000 dinars from the caliph’s private treasury, removing them hidden inside jars of honey, with which she planned to finance an uprising against al-Manṣūr.²³² The *ḥājib* discovered her plot and summoned the viziers to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira where he told them that the caliph, overly concerned with his religious devotions, had not noticed that the women of his harem had been embezzling from his treasury. The viziers agreed to transfer the whole treasury from the caliphal palace at Cordoba to safe-keeping at al-Zāhira, though this would make Hishām completely dependent on al-Manṣūr. At this moment the *ḥājib* fell ill,²³³ and it seems his opponents within al-Andalus took advantage of the temporary political confusion to open up the way for rebellion. Zīrī ibn ‘Aṭīyya, al-Manṣūr’s powerful North African governor, chose this moment to revolt against al-Manṣūr while apparently remaining

loyal to Umayyad suzerainty: one source says that in the subsequent campaign, the battle cry of Zīrī’s troops was ‘For Hishām!’, while that of the ‘Āmirid troops was ‘For al-Manṣūr!’.²³⁴

Al-Manṣūr’s son, ‘Abd al-Malik, took control of the situation by gathering 2000 men at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. On 3 Jumada 1 386/24 May 996, they presented themselves at the Cordoban palace to begin transferring the treasury. They were joined by a gathering of notables, including Ibn Ḥayyān’s father, who asked Hishām to state his position for or against al-Manṣūr: the caliph affirmed that he was ignorant of the palace intrigues, condemned the enemies of al-Manṣūr, and gave approval that the treasury be transferred to al-Zāhira. The total amount transferred approximated six million dinars and took three days to move; all the while, Ṣubḥ rained down insults on ‘Abd al-Malik.²³⁵

Why did Ṣubḥ decide to break with the man she had supported for the twenty years since al-Ḥakam’s death? It may have been a reaction against the accumulation of too much power in al-Manṣūr’s hands, and possibly against the ways in which he was articulating that power. However, this dramatic event raises questions about the status of the caliph himself. By this date, Hishām was in his early 30s – if we accept 15 as the age of majority (as per the discussion above), he would have attained this around 980; but he had never emerged from behind his *ḥājib* to take up his position at the forefront of the state. The *waḥsha* provided a significant opportunity to do so, and this may have been what Ṣubḥ intended. It also seems that the Cordoban notables would have been willing to facilitate the transition, but Hishām’s own decision was against it. This weakness of the caliph is explained by contemporary historians in terms of usurpation, because of the deliberate seclusion in which al-Manṣūr had maintained him all his life.²³⁶ Hishām is characterised as a bright young thing whose abilities were repressed by the

232 For details and discussion of this event, see Bariani 1996a, whose source is Ibn Ḥayyān *apud* Ibn Bassām, IV:1:70–72; Marín 1997, 440–1. On Ṣubḥ’s brother Rā’iq, see *Anales*, §§61, 122, 165, 198.

233 Perhaps suffering from gout again: cf. Arjona Castro 1980.

234 Bariani 1998, 98.

235 Bariani 1996a, 46–47.

236 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:179, 181 [11:190–192]; cf. *HEM* 11:224.

overload of religious devotions imposed on him by al-Manṣūr and his mother, in order to remove him from the affairs of state.²³⁷ Maribel Fierro has interpreted Hishām's religious devotion in a more nuanced way, as 'an effort to overcome his *deficient legitimacy*'. He is said to have devoted himself to collecting relics associated with pre-Islamic prophets – such as Noah's ark, the horns of Isaac's ram, the hoofs of 'Uzayr's ass, the legs of Salih's she-camel – an activity which Fierro links with the Umayyads' concern to establish a connection between themselves and the line of pre-Islamic Prophets, to establish their right to the caliphal succession.²³⁸

Bariani's reconsideration of the historical sources has advanced a new interpretation of Hishām's absence from government, which hinges on his unfitness to rule. The most striking picture is provided by various anecdotes about Hishām contained in the biographical dictionary by Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥijārī (d. 550/1155).²³⁹ Hishām emerges from these anecdotes as someone not in full possession of his faculties; in the terminology employed by al-Ḥijārī he was *tajalluf*, 'stupid', 'idiotic', even 'crazy'. In fact, more specifically, al-Ḥijārī states that Hishām suffered from both physical and psychological problems, saying that the caliph 'grew up with motor problems; at that same time he could not move the left part of his face ... Moreover, the older he grew, the more intellectual capacity he lost: anyone who observed him with attention would have no doubt that under the semblance of a human there lay the soul of an ass'.²⁴⁰

Bariani consulted a specialist in diseases of the nervous system with this information, who diagnosed the caliph's symptoms as indicative of possible damage to the left hemisphere of his brain, which could explain both motor problems and impaired intellectual ability.²⁴¹ These disabilities could have resulted from the attack of smallpox that Hishām is known to have suffered for about a month in 363/974.²⁴² As we saw above, his older brother, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, obviously suffered from weak health himself, causing him to die in infancy; al-Ḥakam and his brother 'Abd al-Azīz were both afflicted with health issues that caused their deaths (al-Ḥakam from hemiplegia). Health does not seem to have been particularly good in al-Ḥakam's family. Al-Ḥijārī's observation that Hishām's condition degenerated as he aged would also explain why there is no hint of incapacity in al-Rāzī's annals, which detail his considerable involvement in the life of the court, especially during al-Ḥakam's final illness²⁴³ – though as García Sanjuán has discussed, there were clear propaganda reasons for this presence being emphasised by the chronicle. It would also explain why Hishām was kept hidden from his subjects, rarely appearing in public, and when he did leave the palace he was veiled and hidden among the women of his harem.²⁴⁴ His condition would have been kept secret out of respect for his person as well as the office of the caliphate. Most significantly, it would

237 Bariani 1998, 100. Cf. *Bayān* 11:270 [translation, 419]: '[Hishām] was brought up to devotion and the retired life; he devoted himself to reading the Qur'an and the study of religious knowledge'.

238 Fierro 2007, 162, n. 53 (my italics). Fierro even speculates that 'some of the ivory caskets preserved from this period ... [could] have been used as containers for these relics'. See also Fierro 2015, 132–3.

239 Bariani 1998, 99–102, especially n. 25 on al-Ḥijārī's work, *Al-Muṣhib fi fadā'il (or gharā'ib) al-Maghrib*, completed in 530/1135. See also Bariani 2003, 186–189.

240 Bariani 1998, 102.

241 See Bariani 1998, 102 n. 30.

242 *Anales*, §173–174.

243 For example, Hishām celebrated his recovery from smallpox by holding 'a brilliant reception' at the caliphal palace in Cordoba, which all the 'dignitaries of the state' attended (*Anales* §174). Thereafter, he makes several public appearances, with (*Anales* §§215, 224, 238) or without (*Anales* §§198, 237) his father, and even on occasion conducts business for al-Ḥakam during the latter's illness (*Anales* §222).

244 Bariani 1998, 103. Echevarría 2011, 102, who seems to treat the al-Ḥijārī text with caution, observes that the veiled caliph is a motif present in eastern court ceremonial, and this in itself should not be taken as a reason for thinking the caliph was ill.

explain why, once he attained his majority, his regent retained control of the government.

The sources that describe Hishām as ‘stupid’ or ‘unwell’ also refer to al-Manşūr as his *kāfil*, his ‘protector’ or ‘legal guardian’.²⁴⁵ Other legal terminology is echoed in the words the sources use to describe al-Manşūr’s relationship with the caliph, such as *hajara ‘ala*, ‘to place someone under guardianship’, or ‘declare someone legally incompetent’; *taghallaba ‘ala*, ‘to be master over’; *istawla ‘ala*, ‘to requisition, confiscate’.²⁴⁶ Such terms are used in the eleventh-century legal writings of al-Mawardī, in a passage where he discusses the legality of restrictions imposed on a caliph’s liberty of action:

“[Such restrictions] can be of two types: the placing under tutelage (*hajr*) and the enslavement through force. The placing under tutelage occurs when one of [the caliph’s] auxiliaries dominates him (*yastawla ‘alay-hi*), and appropriates for himself exclusively (*yastabidd*) the exercise of power, but without giving a public manifestation of insubordination or disobedience.”²⁴⁷

The second type of appropriation of power is considered legal if the operator of the ‘usurpation’ conforms to the dictates of religion and justice – as we have seen, above, al-Manşūr most certainly did. It would seem, therefore, that al-Manşūr’s retention of the *hijāba* after Hishām attained his majority was permitted by the legal conditions of the day.

In many respects, the evolution of al-Manşūr’s position continued a process that had begun under al-Muṣṣḥafī. During the debilitating illness of the last two years of al-Ḥakam’s life, al-Muṣṣḥafī found himself in a position of sole power, and he engineered the murder of al-Mughīra and the accession of Hishām in order to retain control of that position. Had he not lost the support of

Şubḥ and fallen victim to al-Manşūr’s own rise, we might be discussing the articulation of *his hijāba*. But since the caliph’s condition was kept a secret, the historiography of this period found it easier to represent al-Manşūr as the forcible usurper of a sequestered caliph, and al-Muṣṣḥafī’s crucial role in this development was forgotten.

9 Restoration

A luxurious procession marked the close of the *waḥsha*:²⁴⁸

“In the year 387/997–8, [Hishām] al-Mu’ayyad mounted a horse one Friday with al-Manşūr behind and al-Muṣṣḥafī [ibn al-Manşūr] walking in front. Al-Mu’ayyad wore a white turban,²⁴⁹ with plumes [blowing] in the wind,²⁵⁰ and he bore in his hand the sceptre of the caliphs. After having conducted the prayer in the congregational mosque in Cordoba, contrary to his custom of not attending the Friday prayers in public, he directed his horse towards al-Zāhira with his mother Şubḥ. Never had such a magnificent day been seen in Cordoba. When they reached al-Zāhira, the *bay’ā* [to Hishām] was renewed,²⁵¹ on the condition that he delegate all power to the ‘Āmirids and that they be the administrators of the kingdom.”

²⁴⁸ *Dhikr Bilād* 1:184–185 [11:196].

²⁴⁹ White was the dynastic colour of the Umayyads: Fierro 2011, 82.

²⁵⁰ According to Bariani 1998, 103 and Bariani 2003, 189, Hishām wore a hat from which a woven veil descended in front of his face, so as to hide the fact that its left side was paralysed.

²⁵¹ The repetition of the *bay’ā* is not rare in Islam when the ruler wishes to make a public statement of confirmation in office; it is also renewed in moments of crisis, which is surely how it is to be read in this case: cf. Tyan 1954, I, 351–352.

²⁴⁵ Echevarría 2000, 99 and 101, who takes her information from Bariani’s unpublished thesis (1996c).

²⁴⁶ Bariani 1996c, 176–190; Bariani 1998, 88.

²⁴⁷ Bariani 1998, 87–88; Bariani 2001, 418.

This procession, which treated the Cordoban people to a magnificent spectacle and a rare sight of their caliph, ended with the renewal of the *bay'a* in a public show that equilibrium had been restored after the instability of the *wahsha*. But more importantly, there was a full, public and formal delegation to al-Manṣūr and his heirs of the power to administer the affairs of state, of 'the ability to order and veto [and] entrusting all power to him and to his sons after his death'.²⁵² This surely had an important stabilising effect on the people of Cordoba; the whole event would no doubt have been carefully orchestrated, with a rigorous protocol, to demonstrate that al-Manṣūr's exercise of power had the public sanction of the caliph.²⁵³ It also demonstrated that caliph and *ḥājib* had recognised their mutual dependence on each other: Hishām's presence in the procession showed al-Manṣūr's understanding of the need to maintain the caliph as a 'constitutional screen',²⁵⁴ since the Āmirid *ḥijāba* could not exist without him; while the public and formal delegation of powers to al-Manṣūr recognised that he was the best qualified man in the state to rule in Hishām's name. This was a legal delegation of powers, but while it legalised al-Manṣūr's position, but it did not necessarily *legitimise* it in the eyes of all present. One of the main themes of this book is al-Manṣūr's need to demonstrate that he continued to be the right man for this job. While it may not be surprising that al-Manṣūr continued as *ḥājib* through the 980s, it is a different matter that he exercised that office for 26 years, until his death, that he made the office hereditary, and that he used cultural and artistic patronage to articulate his position as if he were a caliph. As we will discuss in the following chapters, one of the most important ways that he made visible the legitimacy of his regime was through his patronage of arts and culture.

The true gravity of this period is reflected in the fact that, for the first and only time in al-Manṣūr's

administration, no campaign was launched against the Christians in 996, and, after 22 consecutive years, his *kunya* *ʿāmir* disappeared from Andalusi coinage. However, this hiatus was followed the next year by al-Manṣūr's most audacious campaign against the Christians – a combined land/sea expedition against Santiago de Compostela – and by launching a war against Zīrī ibn Aṭīyya, in which al-Manṣūr emerged victorious. Al-Manṣūr reestablished the strength of his position by an overwhelming show of force.

The ostensible motivation for the Santiago campaign was to punish Bermudo II of León for his decision to stop paying tribute to Cordoba, but it necessitated an incursion of Muslim troops into Christian territory on a level unprecedented since the conquest of al-Andalus – Umayyad troops had never been this far north.²⁵⁵ De la Puente reconstructs the details of the campaign from the historical sources: al-Manṣūr, accompanied only by cavalry, departed Cordoba on 23 Jumada II 387/3 July 997 and arrived at Santiago amazingly speedily, just over a month later, on 2 Sha'bān/10 August. They joined up with infantry units in Oporto who had left earlier by ship from Alcacer do Sal (Qaṣr Abī Dānis), south of Lisbon. Santiago had been abandoned by its inhabitants. It was burned and the basilica razed, though the tomb of the apostle James and the monk who guarded it were left untouched. Afterwards the Umayyad army continued the expedition as far as La Coruña, from where they began their return towards Lamego (inland, more or less level with Porto), reaching further into Christian territory than ever before. The sources consistently cite the amount of booty and slaves that this campaign generated: al-Manṣūr ordered the bells of the cathedral to be carried to Cordoba on the shoulders of his prisoners-of-war, 'to be suspended [as lamps] from the ceiling of the Great Mosque'.²⁵⁶

252 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:185 [11:196].

253 Ballestín 2004a, 201–2.

254 Bariani 1998, 103.

255 De la Puente 2001.

256 Al-Maqqarī, 196. This seems to have been a tradition in the Islamic West: bells converted in the Almohad and Marinid periods into lamps, 'as signs of victory over

Umayyad troops also seized the basilica's bronze doors, which were likewise transported to Cordoba, and installed on the mosque's roof, to 'reinforce its rooves'.²⁵⁷

Such booty had important religious and symbolic value. The choice of the church of Santiago as the destination for this campaign was not random. As the historiography – including the various poems composed about the campaign by Ibn Darrāj – makes clear, the Muslims understood Santiago's special significance within Iberian Christianity. As Ibn Ḥayyān commented, 'The church of that town is for [the Christians] what the Ka'ba is for us: they invoke it in their sermons and go there on pilgrimage from the furthest countries, [even] from Rome'.²⁵⁸ The contemporary historiography presents al-Manṣūr's utter destruction of the city and the surrounding regions as the defeat of the whole of Christendom, a clamorous victory for Islam. The attainment of such a longed-for objective would cause men of religion to forget whatever doubt they may have had over the reclusion of the caliph. As De la Puente comments, 'The Santiago campaign granted to Ibn Abī ‘Āmir more than any other victory the qualification "al-Manṣūr bi-llāh"'.²⁵⁹ This was symbolised by the capture of such religiously significant booty as church bells and doors, and their equally symbolic appropriation within the Umayyad congregational mosque: as Jennifer Pruitt identifies, this 'overtly connect[ed] architectural destruction and construction'.²⁶⁰ She also speculates that the Santiago campaign had an impact

beyond the shores of the Iberian Peninsula: that the Fatimid caliph al-Hākim (r. 985–1021) might have consciously imitated al-Manṣūr's use of jihad as a legitimising policy when he destroyed the churches in his own realm, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, after 1007. She comments, 'al-Hākim's destruction of churches thus may be seen ... as part of a larger claim for legitimacy beyond the confines of the Fatimid empire, establishing al-Hākim's caliphate as a rival to those in Cordoba and Baghdad ... As the Umayyads were on al-Hākim's doorstep, tales of their own successful destruction of the holy shrine may have inspired his own demolition of the Holy Sepulchre'.²⁶¹ The Holy Sepulchre 'acted as a proxy ... for the Byzantine empire',²⁶² in the same way that the church of Santiago was ostensibly a stand-in for the kingdom of León.

Despite the religious spin later applied to this ambitious campaign, its major motivation was surely to boost al-Manṣūr's prestige, bruised after the events of the *wahsha*, and to 'reaffirm his greatness and skill in the affairs of the state'.²⁶³ It also provided a distraction for the Cordoban people, and a welcome injection of booty into the Cordoban economy. As De la Puente has emphasised, al-Manṣūr's raids against the north of the Peninsula were primarily important for what they tell us about his *internal* policies. The extent of adhesion of his subjects depended in large measure on his military victories and above all on those obtained over the Christians. The peace and security of the inhabitants of the caliphate ensured that no-one would question the legitimacy of his power. It is also significant that the panegyric poetry composed to celebrate the victory of the campaign praises above all the actions of the *ḥājib*'s two sons, 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and their bravery in the battle, 'making them responsible for the victory'. The propagandistic vehicle of court poetry highlights

the Christians', now hang in the Qarawiyyīn mosque in Fez. See *Al-Andalus*, cats. 55 and 58; *Maroc Médiéval*, cat. 276.

257 This is an odd idea and has not to my knowledge been satisfactorily explained. Could this have referred to bronze plating from the Santiago doors which were incorporated in some way into the tiling of the Cordoba roof?

258 *Bayān* 11:316 [translation, 491]; al-Maqqarī, 193–196 (*Analectes*, 1:413–414), who gives his source as Ibn Ḥayyān.

259 De la Puente 2001, 19.

260 Pruitt 2020, 122.

261 Pruitt 2020, 122–3.

262 Pruitt 2020, 111.

263 Bariani 1996a, 53.

the strength of al-Manṣūr's offspring in the face of the weakness of the caliph, but also emphasises the rightness of maintaining the control of government in 'Āmirid hands.²⁶⁴

Next, al-Manṣūr turned his attention to punishing the rebellion of Zīrī ibn 'Aṭīyya against his authority. The year after the resounding 'Āmirid victory over Santiago, al-Manṣūr launched a war on Zīrī, by sending his general Wāḍiḥ together with his own son, 'Abd al-Malik, at the head of Umayyad troops to the Maghrib. Wāḍiḥ was to spare no expense in distributing presents of honour to win back the Berber chiefs, and indeed a contingent of Berber leaders met Wāḍiḥ on his arrival at Tangier.²⁶⁵ The Umayyad armies confronted Zīrī on 19 Shawwal 388/14 October 998, in a battle that 'reached epic proportions', and again 'Abd al-Malik is the one credited in the historiography as being responsible for the resulting victory. Zīrī was wounded and fled the field. As Ballestín comments, 'This was the moment of greatest apogee for the 'Āmirid *dawla*, and no-one would dare to challenge al-Manṣūr's exercise of power, now transmitted to his son and heir 'Abd al-Malik'.²⁶⁶ It is significant that it is after this victory that 'Abd al-Malik intervenes in the al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque (Chapter 7 2.5). Sometime later, Zīrī, partially recovered from his wounds, attempted to recover his former position with the 'Āmirids by launching an attack against Bādīs ibn Manṣūr, the grandson of Buluqqīn ibn Zīrī, and writing to al-Manṣūr to inform him of his victories and solicit his pardon, asking that he be allowed to govern the Maghrib again in the name of the Umayyads.²⁶⁷ But death surprised them both before al-Manṣūr could pardon him. However, 'Abd al-Malik invested Zīrī's son, al-Mu'izz, with the government of the Maghrib, with the exception of Sijilmasa where Umayyad authority was still exercised by Wānūdīn, the son of Khazrūn ibn Fulfūl. Thus 'Abd al-Malik

began his *ḥijāba* by continuing his father's successful policy in the Maghrib.

A further indication of the gravity of the *wahṣha* can be found in the numismatic evidence of the period. As we saw above, al-Manṣūr's *kunya*, 'āmir, had appeared on almost every issue minted in al-Andalus since his appointment as *ṣāhib al-sikka* in 356/967, until the year 996. In 385/996, after 22 consecutive years, 'āmir disappeared from the Andalusi coins. By this late date, it is unlikely that his *kunya* on the coins signified al-Manṣūr's governorship of the mint. According to David Wasserstein, 'the presence of the name 'āmir [on the coins] reflects [his] status both as a minister of the caliph and as effective ruler of the country'.²⁶⁸ As we will see in Chapter 4, it is unlikely that al-Manṣūr moved the mint to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira with the other organs of government in 981, since the *sikka* was a fundamental caliphal prerogative.²⁶⁹ However, 'āmir on the coins clearly had a symbolic potency since it was considered worth replacing: Zīrī ibn 'Aṭīyya began issuing dirhams in his own name at the Madīnat Fās mint in 388/998.²⁷⁰ When 'āmir reappeared on Andalusi coins in 998, it was combined with the names of the *aṣḥāb al-sikka* on the obverse, where they remained until al-Manṣūr's death (Figure 4).²⁷¹

These details betray the reality of the political upheaval of this period. If the *wahṣha* was sparked by Ṣubḥ's reaction to al-Manṣūr's accumulation of too much power, these changes in the profile of the coinage symbolised an important and public *retraction* of authority by the *ḥājib*. Significantly, when al-Manṣūr realised he was stretching the legal boundaries of his position, he made a concession. Al-Manṣūr's great skill as a politician was recognising and negotiating the fine line between

264 De la Puente 2001, 16.

265 Ballestín 2004a, 202.

266 Ballestín 2004a, 202.

267 Ballestín 2004a, 204.

268 Wasserstein 1993a, 42.

269 There are no coins which feature al-Madīnat al-Zāhira as the mint name, and from the moment al-Ḥakam returned to Cordoba at the end of his life, on his doctors' advice (*Anales*, §§214–215), the mint remained 'al-Andalus' until the outbreak of Fitna.

270 Miles 1950, 64.

271 Martínez Salvador 1992, 424–426.



FIGURE 8
Tombstone of Jum‘a ibn
F.tūḥ ibn Muḥammad
al-‘Āmirī, dated 985,
marble; Victoria and Albert
Museum, A.92-1921
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT
MUSEUM, LONDON

the legality and the legitimacy of his position. Unfortunately for the survival of the ‘Āmirid dynasty, al-Manṣūr proved wiser than his sons.

Al-Manṣūr died in Ramadan 392/August 1002, aged nearly 66 years, while returning from his final campaign. He was buried ‘in the spot where he died, in his palace at Madīnat Salīm’ (Medinaceli, the capital of the *thaghr al-a‘la*).²⁷² His son, ‘Abd al-Malik, led the armies home to Cordoba, where

Hishām ‘treated the son as he had the father’,²⁷³ and ‘appointed him as replacement in the offices of *ḥājib* and general, confided in him the direction of the kingdom, and invested him with the attributes of rule’.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Al-Maqqarī, 221.

²⁷³ Al-Maqqarī, 221.

²⁷⁴ *Dhikr Bilād* 1:195 [11:205].

10 Inheritance

‘Abd al-Malik continued his father’s policy of summer and winter campaigning, and earned his *laqab* ‘al-Muẓaffar’ in Muḥarram 398/October 1007, after a successful expedition against Clunia (León).²⁷⁵ Meaning ‘the Triumphant’, ‘al-Muẓaffar’ consciously evoked his father’s title, and continued to stress the importance of the ‘Āmirids’ military role in the articulation of their *ḥijāba*. Hishām also granted him the title ‘Sayf al-Dawla’, ‘Sword of the State’, after his campaign against León in 1004, and Ibn ‘Idhārī calls him ‘the first among the princes of al-Andalus to join together two honorific names (*laqabān*)’.²⁷⁶ But al-Muẓaffar also took a third royal name, the *kunya* Abū Marwān, which was bestowed on him by the caliph ‘as a proof of [his] esteem’.²⁷⁷ As Makariou comments, ‘one cannot imagine a more Umayyad *kunya*’.²⁷⁸ This might imply that al-Muẓaffar actually sought to make himself one of the caliphal family, as his brother Sanchuelo did a few years later; on the other hand, it may indicate a claim to be the *protector* of the Umayyad caliph.

As we will see in later chapters, al-Muẓaffar was the eager patron of a literary circle, but his fondness for wine and leisure, and the angina from which he suffered,²⁷⁹ caused him to withdraw from the practice of government. He left the governance of the state to his vizier, ‘Īsā ibn Sa‘īd, who manoeuvred to his own advantage and engaged the support of a grandson of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, which revived the Umayyad party. Though Ibn ‘Idhārī saw al-Muẓaffar as the last bulwark of stability in al-Andalus before the descent into Fitna,²⁸⁰ his neglect of the fine political balancing act which al-Manṣūr had established and maintained sowed the seeds of the state’s fragmentation. It is probable that, had he lived, the Fitna would still have

broken out. However, after suffering attacks of angina, he died on 16 Ṣafar 399/20 October 1008, during a summer campaign against Castile.²⁸¹ After an all-night vigil at al-Zāhira, the *ḥijāba* passed to his younger brother, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, though many harboured suspicions that he had poisoned his brother in order to seize power for himself.²⁸²

‘Abd al-Raḥmān was known as ‘Shanjul’ or ‘Sanchuelo’, after the diminutive form of his maternal grandfather’s name, Sancho Abarca, king of Navarra (on this relationship, see the ‘Āmirid genealogy in Appendix 1, and the discussions in Chapter 2). Echevarría calls him ‘a pathetic colophon to his father’s dreams of greatness’.²⁸³ He managed only four and a half months in power, and since the ‘Āmirid treasury was in the hands of ‘Abd al-Malik’s mother, al-Ḍalfā’, who believed Sanchuelo had poisoned her son, he had no access to funds, weakening his position yet further.²⁸⁴ Echevarría concludes, ‘If anything contributed to the fall of the caliphate it was Sanchuelo, who was not supposed to succeed his father’.²⁸⁵

He continued the practice of adopting *alqāb*, but his combination of choices had almost aggressively caliphal implications. At his investiture ceremony, Sanchuelo asked to be called the *ḥājib al-a‘la al-Ma‘mūn* (‘the Trustworthy’) *Nāṣir al-Dawla* (‘Defender of the State’). Ibn ‘Idhārī records that the people disapproved of Sanchuelo’s *alqāb* because he did not possess any of the necessary qualities for rule.²⁸⁶ The first of these names evokes the Abbasid caliph, al-Ma‘mūn (813–833), while the phrase ‘al-ḥājib al-a‘la’ evokes the Buyid title *imārat al-umarā’*.²⁸⁷ However, following the name ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, the *laqab* ‘Nāṣir al-Dawla’ had a deliberate reference to the first Andalusī

275 *Bayān* III:16–18 [translation, 23–24]. Cf. Scales 1994, 39.

276 *Bayān* III:17 [translation, 24].

277 *Bayān* III (appendix): 198.

278 Makariou 2001, 50, 59.

279 *Bayān* III:3, 24 [translation, 11, 31].

280 *Bayān* III:36 [translation, 42]; *HEM* II:283.

281 *Bayān* III:21–24, 36–37 [translation, 28–30, 42–43]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:195 [II:205]; *HEM* II:282; Scales (1994): 39.

282 *Bayān* III:38 [translation, 43].

283 Echevarría 2011, 229.

284 Echevarría 2011, 230.

285 Echevarría 2011, 237.

286 *Bayān* III:38, 41–42 [translation, 44, 46–47].

287 On Buyid titlature, see Madelung 1969.

Umayyad caliph, another ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, who had borne the title ‘al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh’. While ‘al-Dawla’ signified secular power as opposed to ‘al-Dīn’, which signified spiritual authority,²⁸⁸ Sanchuelo nevertheless used his titles to establish a hypothetical succession between himself and the great rulers of the past.

But he went further. After only a month in office, Sanchuelo convinced the childless Hishām, now in his 40s, to name him as his heir.²⁸⁹ This act could be seen as the ultimate evolution of the ‘Āmirid *ḥijāba*, but it stepped so dramatically outside the legal boundaries that al-Manṣūr had been at such pains to maintain that it also fatally undermined it. Nevertheless, Sanchuelo was supported by the Cordoban elite: the chief *kātib*, Aḥmad ibn Burd, drew up the succession diploma (*risāla*),²⁹⁰ which was signed by the grand *qādī*, Ibn Dhakwān (in office 1001–1010),²⁹¹ as well as 29 viziers and 186 *fuqahā*.²⁹² How the ‘Āmirids had cultivated such a level of loyalty from the Cordoban elite will be discussed in Chapter 3. Though Sanchuelo did not meet the condition of Qurayshi kinship, Ibn Burd’s text emphasised his fine qualities, his ‘father and brother without equals’, and the fact that occult signs had caused Hishām to seek his heir among the Banū Qaḥṭān, the tribe from which the ‘Āmirids were descended.²⁹³

Thus on Saturday 11 Rabī‘ 1 399/13 November 1008, the act of succession was publicly declared and Sanchuelo officially became the *wālī ‘ahd al-muslimīn*.²⁹⁴ Copies of the document were

sent to all the provinces of al-Andalus so that Sanchuelo’s name would thenceforth be read from the minbars after that of the caliph.²⁹⁵ The next day, Sanchuelo held a reception at al-Zāhira at which the notables of Cordoba congratulated him, and he proudly wore the *thawb al-khulafā’* with which Hishām had presented him. Sadly, there is no indication in the sources of what this clothing looked like. He appointed his son, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, *ḥājib*, though he was only two years old, and gave him the title ‘Sayf al-Dawla’ that his uncle, ‘Abd al-Malik, had earned in battle.²⁹⁶ This was open mockery of both caliphate and *ḥijāba*, and it was also political suicide: it definitively alienated the Umayyad faction at court, since it threatened to supplant the Umayyad dynasty forever. Furthermore, Sanchuelo’s close association with the Berbers threatened to upset the equilibrium between racial groups in al-Andalus that seems to have been only superficially maintained through al-Manṣūr’s political astuteness: Sanchuelo’s capricious decision to instruct his court on pain of punishment to abandon their customary dress in favour of Berber costume, especially the wearing of turbans, is described by Ibn ‘Idhārī as ‘the worst thing that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān did’.²⁹⁷

The Umayyad faction now decided the only way to preserve Umayyad rule in al-Andalus was to remove Hishām and replace him with another of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s grandsons. They may have finally recognised their complicity in the development of this political situation, by permitting Hishām to remain on the caliphal throne though he was unfit. Now they chose Muḥammad ibn Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār, and set in motion the ‘extinction of the ‘Āmirid *dawla*’.²⁹⁸ Four months later Sanchuelo was dead, killed in a misguided military campaign; Muḥammad had deposed Hishām, been declared caliph, and had taken the title ‘al-Mahdī’, ‘the Rightly-Guided’,

288 See ‘Laḳab’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition; Sublet 1991, 91–94.

289 *Bayān* III:43–48 [translation, 48–52].

290 On whom, *HEM* II:295, 298; III:26. Ibn ‘Idhārī preserves the text of the succession *risāla*, which was composed in rhymed prose, no doubt originally transmitted by Ibn Ḥayyān. Cf. also *HEM* II:291–297; Scales 1994, 43 n. 21, 43–46.

291 On whose involvement in Sanchuelo’s *wilāyat al-‘ahd*, see *HEM* II:295, 303, 306–307, 311, 319.

292 *Bayān* III:46 [translation, 51]; *HEM* III:16 n. 2.

293 See the full text of the *‘ahd* at Wasserstein 1993a, 22–24, and Scales 1994, 48–49.

294 *Bayān* III:43 [translation, 48].

295 *Bayān* III:46 [translation, 51].

296 *Bayān* III:47 [translation, 51].

297 *Bayān* III:48 [translation, 52].

298 *Bayān* III:67 [translation, 68].

which seemed to promise a new and better age. Al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, the physical symbol of the ‘Āmirid *hijāba*, had been looted for three days by al-Mahdī’s mob, dismantled and razed, so that ‘the radiance (*zāhir*) of her name was turned into ruins.’²⁹⁹ The turbulent events of this short period caused the Ifrīqīyan historian al-Raḡīq to remark:

“The strangest of the things I have witnessed among the vicissitudes of this world took place from mid-day of Tuesday 14 Jumāda 11/14 February 1009 to midnight of Wednesday 14 Rajab/14 March 1009... In this time, the city of Cordoba was taken and the city of al-Zāhira was destroyed; one caliph was deposed, after a long reign ... and one caliph was declared, who previously had no claim ...; the *dawla* of the Banū Abī ‘Āmir disappeared and the *dawla* of the Banū Umayya returned ...; and great viziers fell and their opposites were elevated.”³⁰⁰

Al-Andalus had started on the road to Fitna: during al-Mahdī’s nine-month-long caliphate, racial animosity between Berbers and Ṣaqālība on one

hand, and the Arabs on the other, built to such a height that the former sought their own pretender in Sulaymān (later ‘al-Mustā‘īn’), another great-grandson of ‘Abd al-Rahmān III.³⁰¹ The period of civil war that ensued rocked al-Andalus for the next twenty years, until the caliphate was abolished and centralised government fragmented into city-states ruled by the so-called Taifa kings, *mulūk al-ṭawā‘if* (see Conclusion).³⁰² Once civil war and decentralisation took hold in al-Andalus, North Africa began to slip from Umayyad control. Sanchuelo’s brief rule marked ‘the beginning of the end of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba.’³⁰³ His determination to make himself caliph in name as well as in fact, and his accumulation of grandiose titles, finally made the ‘Āmirid *hijāba* top-heavy, since the person did not live up to the office. With historical hindsight, al-Manṣūr’s ability to negotiate the line between the legality and legitimacy of his office is revealed as particularly skilful. He also applied this unique skill to the other ways in which he articulated the power of his office, as we shall explore in detail in the remainder of this book.

299 *Bayān* III:64 [translation, 67]. For the full section on al-Zāhira’s destruction, cf. *Bayān* III:62–65 [translation, 65–68].

300 *Bayān* III:74 [translation, 74]. Al-Raḡīq’s *Tarīkh Ifrīqiya wa’l-Maghrib* was a source frequently used by Ibn ‘Idhārī. He was chief *kātib* and diplomat under three consecutive Zirid rulers in Ifrīqiya, and died *circa* 418/1027–28. He would thus have had the opportunity to witness the events in al-Andalus at first hand. See Salgado 1993, xviii, 45 n. 228.

301 For the full history of this period, up to the death of al-Mustā‘īn and the declaration of ‘Alī ibn Ḥammūd as caliph in 406/1016, see *Bayān* III:66–119 [translation, 68–108].

302 On whom see principally Wasserstein 1985; Wasserstein 1993a.

303 Scales 1994, xi.

Appropriating Diplomacy: The ‘Āmirid Court

Then [al-Manṣūr] launched various incursions and struck unexpectedly at the Christians with many devastations, until the furthest countries of the polytheists were subjected to him, entering in this way into peace on his terms; until there came to him the ambassador from the Lord of the Christians (*malik al-rūmī*) and that of Castile, with gifts, courtesies and rare presents, each one of them begging to make a treaty (*aman*) with him and trying to obtain his favour.¹

IBN AL-KARDABŪS 1986, 85 (§§63–64)



The cultivation of a flourishing court was one of the principal means by which the ‘Āmirids articulated their *hijāba*. Through their conduct of diplomatic relations with their Iberian and North African neighbours, the ‘Āmirids perpetuated a caliphal-style court ceremonial, which had an important symbolic role in their official representation. It also provided a function for the traditional Cordoban elite who feared the weakening of their status from the rise of Ṣaḡāliba and Berber factions at court. This group was crucial in the legitimisation and maintenance of the ‘Āmirids’ political position and, through their patronage of

literature, in both public and private spheres, the regents formed personal bonds of friendship with this elite group. Nevertheless, the ‘Āmirid court has received very little attention. Studies of court life in al-Andalus have focused on the period of the first two caliphs or some of the Taifa courts.² This neglect reflects the perception in the historiography that the ‘Āmirid period was not one of cultural creativity or innovation.³

This study of the ‘Āmirid court is divided across two chapters: the first examines Andalusī models of court ceremonial, the ‘Āmirids’ conduct of diplomatic relations, including gift-giving and dynastic marriages, and the ways in which they exploited a ceremonial that had become ‘emblematic of Umayyad legitimacy’.⁴ The following chapter will discuss the patronage of literature, especially poetry, at the ‘Āmirid court. These different aspects reveal some of the ways in which the ‘Āmirids chose to represent themselves, in both public and private spheres. While later chapters focus on ‘Āmirid artistic patronage, an examination of these ceremonial modes of representation will aid our understanding of how this dynasty chose to represent itself visually.

1 Though the phrase ‘Lord of the Christians’ (*al-malik al-rūmī*) often means the Byzantine Emperor, in this case it probably refers to the King of Navarra, Sancho Abarca, who is also called *al-malik al-rūmī* in the passage by Ibn al-Khaṭīb cited in full below.

2 There are many studies of the caliphal court, which will be referenced in the discussion below. For ceremonial at the Taifa courts, see especially Robinson 2002.

3 Another reason for this neglect is that the Arabic sources that contain the most information on the ‘Āmirid court have not yet been translated into European languages, and since cultural historians are not necessarily also Arabists, this evidence is somewhat inaccessible. The primary sources which provide interesting information on this period include Ibn Bassām 1989, al-Ḥimyārī 1997, Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1934, and the *dīwān* of Ibn Darrāj 1969 – of which only Ibn al-Khaṭīb has been translated from Arabic in its entirety.

4 Safran 1999, 193.

1 The 'Ceremonial Idiom'⁵

The Andalusi court was governed by ceremonial. Even the most superficial reading of al-Rāzī's *Annals* shows that on a daily basis the life of the caliph and court was conducted according to an elaborate and regimented protocol, which invested each event with the magnificence befitting a great ruler. Much of the time these events were mundane (such as, appointments or promotions in the civil service),⁶ calendrical or religious (the two *ʿids*, or al-Ḥakam's custom of granting alms to the poor at the start of Ramadan, for example),⁷ domestic,⁸ or military.⁹ These fixtures in the court schedule were punctuated by a constant flow of ambassadors, from al-Andalus's Christian neighbours in northern Iberia or her Berber clients in the Maghrib, and occasionally from further afield, including the Byzantines and Ottonians.¹⁰ Nevertheless, we know comparatively little about how such receptions were organised and orchestrated, since the contemporary sources do not provide much detail: as Lévi-Provençal bemoaned, 'There is no document [for al-Andalus] equivalent to the precious [Byzantine] *Book of Ceremonies*'.¹¹ However, in recent decades, scholars have advanced our understanding considerably, through Miquel Barceló's important study of the structure of *ʿid* receptions at Madīnat al-Zahrā';¹² Amira Bennison's discussion of the way in which

the whole urban structure of the city of Cordoba was implicated in the reception of envoys from North Africa;¹³ and Glaire Anderson's study of the suburban villas (*munyas*) as an essential part of the landscape employed in the elaboration of an increasingly complicated court ceremonial.¹⁴ Discussions of panegyric poetry have also commented on ceremonial, in particular Suzanne Stetkevych's study of the Andalusi *qaṣīda* as 'the symbolic language of ceremony'.¹⁵

In relation to the ʿĀmirids, the texts provide only sketchy and occasional information, and unfortunately tell us little specific about ceremonial under al-Manṣūr. There are, however, two promising windows through which to look: al-Rāzī's *Annals* for the formative period of his career; and the *dīwān* of the ʿĀmirid poet laureate, Ibn Darrāj, for the period of al-Manṣūr's *hijāba*. As we will see below, Ibn Darrāj's poems also provide important historical evidence for diplomatic relations under al-Manṣūr.

What these sources reveal about ceremonial at the ʿĀmirid court is that it closely and no doubt intentionally followed the model introduced into al-Andalus by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III. The style of court ceremonial that we observe in al-Andalus prevailed in all the major political centres at that time, precisely because it had become 'one of the insignia of dynastic rule'.¹⁶ The Abbasids and Fatimids employed this same 'ceremonial idiom' to 'assert their leadership of the Muslims and express their distinctive claims to legitimacy'.¹⁷ As Janina Safran has discussed, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's use of ceremonial was a key element in the articulation of his own claims to be the legitimate caliph: 'he used ceremony to enact his legitimacy, translating into visual and symbolic form the claims he stated and repeated in the texts of letters, announcements

5 Sanders 1994, title of Chapter 2.

6 *Anales* §§43, 51, 67, 70, 77, 220, 228.

7 *Anales* §§7, 59, 111, 231, 238.

8 For example, al-Ḥakam's meeting with his son's new teacher (*Anales* §141); or commiserating with Ziyād ibn Aflaḥ on the death of his brother (*Anales* §212).

9 For example, preparations for campaign, cf. §§9, 64; the reception of representatives of the *ajnad*, cf. §27; parades and triumphs, cf. §§38, 203, 224.

10 Cf. *Anales* §49 for the arrival of an envoy from the Byzantine Emperor, John Tzimisces (r. 969–976). There is also the famous anomaly of the embassy of John of Gorze from Otto I to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III in 953–956, on which see below.

11 *HEM* II:141.

12 Barceló 1995, republished in English as Barceló 1998.

13 Bennison 2007a, 74. She notes that they used the entire ceremonial circuit connecting the old (Cordoba) with the new (Madīnat al-Zahrā').

14 Anderson 2013.

15 Stetkevych 1997; see also Sperl 1977.

16 Safran 2000, 70.

17 Safran 2000, 70.

and proclamations'.¹⁸ As we shall see, the conspicuous display of ceremonial on state occasions was a tool by which both ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and al-Manṣūr asserted their right to rule.

According to Lévi-Provençal, caliphal ceremonies were 'increasingly sumptuous and minutely regulated by etiquette the further ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III advanced in age'.¹⁹ The emphasis in the texts he cites is on the staged public image in which ʿAbd al-Raḥmān showed himself to his chosen audience; the objective of the ceremonial was to overawe the spectator with splendour and majesty. A good example is provided by the reception of John of Gorze in 956,²⁰ though this embassy from Otto I (r. 936–73) was an unprecedented and unrepeated diplomatic anomaly, and for political reasons the Andalusis may have wanted to put on an extra-splendid show.²¹ After having been kept waiting in Cordoba for three years, the anticipation

on John's part must have been huge. John's biographer describes the 'sumptuous preparations' that were made 'in order to make ostentatious the royal magnificence'.²² The street from his lodgings to the Cordoban *qaṣr* was lined with soldiers displaying their military prowess, which terrified the Christian visitors.²³ On their arrival at the palace they were met at the main entrance, which was carpeted with precious cloths and carpets, by 'the grandees of the court' who escorted them to the reception chamber.²⁴ Here, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was 'alone, like a god'; the *majlis* was so completely covered with sumptuous textiles that 'the walls and floor seemed the same'. In the midst of even more splendid luxury reclined the caliph. John was given the great honour of kissing the palm of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's hand, 'a favour which was not allowed to any of his subjects nor to foreigners, ... only to eminent persons and those received with the greatest pomp'. The caliph invited John to sit in a chair near him, another sign of great favour.²⁵ The interview began with the presentation of gifts from the German ruler.²⁶ Then the two got down to business.

There is a palpable narrative tension between the apprehensive German envoys, terror-struck by military displays and overbearing luxury, and the caliph, static at the heart of the most potent symbols of his power. In the end, however, John's reception was informal: he and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān spoke 'man to man ... without the trappings of the court bureaucracy'. All the while, 'the physical setting, architecture and decoration "did the

18 Safran 1999, 191; Safran 2000, 51–97.

19 *HEM* 11:141. Lévi-Provençal's chapter 5, part 4: 'Le Calife et la vie Califienne', especially pp. 141–143, 'La Vie de Cour sous al-Nasir', is still a key point of reference on the workings of the court.

20 The source for this embassy is the biography of John of Gorze, *Vita Iohannis Gorziensis*, by John of Saint Arnulf, the last 22 chapters of which are concerned with John's mission. The Latin text is reproduced with a Spanish translation in Paz y Melia 1931. The final meeting with the caliph is described in chapters 131–134 (pp. 145–149 of the article). Cf. also *Bayān* 11:234 [translation, 362]; Vasiliev 1950, 219; *HEM* 11:154–155; El-Hajji 1970, 208–227; Barceló 1997; Ecker 1992, 56–62.

21 Diplomatic contact with the Ottonians probably began c. 950 over the issue of the colony which Andalusī corsairs had established at Fraxinetum, on the east coast of southern France, at the end of the ninth century; see *HEM* 11:154–160. Otto seems to have held ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III responsible for this, and a Cordoban embassy to the German court, presumably sent to counter this accusation, seems to have caused some offence. The reason for John of Gorze's three-year delay is that Andalusī court officials discovered he had brought an unsuitably insolent letter from Otto, so a new embassy – led by ʿArīb ibn Saʿd, Bishop Recemundo of Elvira, who frequently acted in the role of Latin interpreter – was sent to extract a more temperate letter from the German ruler; see Paz y Melia 1931, chapters 120–130.

22 Paz y Melia 1931, 146 (ch. 132).

23 Paz y Melia 1931, 146–147 (ch. 132). Ecker 1992, 61, suggests that the reception of John of Gorze took place at the new palace of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, indeed that it was one of the first occasions on which the audience hall was used, even that John's reception was postponed until its completion. It appears that the German envoys stayed in one of the many *munyas* located in the environs of Cordoba: cf. Paz y Melia 1931, 130 (ch. 118).

24 Paz y Melia 1931, 147 (ch. 132).

25 Paz y Melia 1931, 148 (ch. 134).

26 Paz y Melia 1931, 148–149 (ch. 134). Sadly there is no record of what these gifts were.

work”, while ‘Abd al-Raḥmān merely waited for its impact on John as he reclined quietly.’²⁷ It worked: the existence of the Latin source proves that on his return to Otto’s court, John regaled his compatriots with the splendour he had encountered in al-Andalus. Indeed, such was Cordoba’s international reputation that Hroswitha (c. 935–c. 975), a Saxon abbess who had never left Germany, was moved to call the city the ‘ornament of the world’.²⁸

While we should not necessarily see this embassy as typical of ceremonial under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, certain elements are echoed in descriptions of the reception of Byzantine ambassadors,²⁹ as well as al-Ḥakam’s reception in 360/970–1 of Ja‘far and Yahya al-Andalusī.³⁰ The examination of such receptions allows us to identify the significant elements of court ceremony – what Paula Sanders has called ‘the building blocks of ceremonies’³¹ – and demonstrates how these elements were exploited according to changing circumstances: for example, the power-relations between al-Andalus and Byzantium seem to have required a more intimidating display than ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s meeting with the Ottonian envoy;³² during al-Ḥakam’s caliphate, the ‘most

elaborate performances’ were those related to the assertion of Umayyad control in the Maghrib at the expense of the Fatimids.³³ The ‘building blocks’, however – the welcoming committee and escort, the military parades and routes lined with soldiers, the presence or absence of other court officials, the splendour of the ceremonial accoutrements, the gestures of salute or homage, the exchange of gifts – remain essentially the same.

The development towards increasingly regulated protocol continued under al-Ḥakam II, as seen in the annual celebrations of *ʿīd al-fiṭr* and *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, which established the standard formula for all court ceremonies.³⁴ These were carefully staged theatrical events, whose objectives were ‘to clearly establish a ritual of power’, and to give ‘a demonstration of the state order’.³⁵ Madinat al-Zahrā’ was the theatre, built precisely for this purpose. Ceremonial exposed the machinery of the state to a carefully selected audience: the important officials were present, in strict hierarchical order, which allowed ‘the full range of ranks to be identified and recognised’. The fact that this display took place in the heart of the caliph’s residence ‘is an indication that it was not the subjects (*ʿamma*) who were the targets of such ceremonies’. Ceremonial was thus ‘the instrument by which the dominant group makes manifest its own composition’ – to *itself*.³⁶

In this ceremonial theatre, the *ḥājib* was stage manager, literally a ‘master of ceremonies’, assisted by a team of ushers.³⁷ Their role was to ensure ‘the strictest attendance/adherence to protocol – who was to be seated or to remain on foot, which positions were assigned to which groups, entrances

27 Ecker 1992, 61.

28 Menocal 2002, 32–3.

29 *Bayān* 11:229, 231 [translation, 353–362]; Vasiliev 1950, 218–219, 274–281. On Andalusī-Byzantine relations, see *HEM* 11:143–153; Vasiliev 1968, 320–332; Shepard 1988, 81–84, much of which is derived from the two previous works. These relations were resumed c. 949 after a hiatus of over 100 years, and 949–950 saw the exchange of several embassies between ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. It is not clear which side initiated diplomatic contact, though Shepard, p. 81, believes it was Byzantium, keen to neutralise its Islamic neighbours in the Mediterranean – both of whom had larger fleets than it did – before launching its unsuccessful attack on Crete in 949.

30 *Anales Palatinos*, pp. 54–74 (§§16–26); see also Safran 2000, 80–88; Bennison 2007a.

31 Sanders 1994, 14.

32 Though the Arab account would of course overestimate the Byzantine reaction: for example, ‘The [Byzantine] ambassadors ... were stupefied and scared by the spectacle of royal majesty and by the crowd’ (Ibn ‘Idhārī quoted in Vasiliev 1950, 218); or, ‘never had they seen

at the court of any king before [‘Abd al-Raḥmān] such demonstration of splendour and power’ (Ibn ‘Idhārī, in Vasiliev 1950, 219).

33 Bennison 2007a, 74.

34 Barceló 1998, 9. The most representative sections in the *Anales Palatinos* which describe ceremonial occasions at al-Ḥakam’s court are: §§26, 28, 115, 130, 146, 157–159, 174, 195, 203, 220.

35 Barceló 1998, 10.

36 Barceló 1998, 18–19.

37 Barceló 1998, 15.

and exits, and so on'; these 'were carried out on both sides of the *majlis*. Thus, each row of dignitaries had one or several men acting as *ḥājib*'. The act of appointing someone to assist as *ḥājib* was tantamount to a promotion.³⁸ This is especially interesting when we consider that it is in this capacity that Ibn Abī ʿĀmir is most often encountered in Al-Rāzī's *Annales*: he 'ministers to the caliph' (*ḥajaba al-khalīfa*) on the right hand side (*ʿan dhāt al-yamīn*) in the *ʿīd al-ḥijr* ceremonies of 972 and 973, and on the left (*ʿan dhāt al-yasār*) in 975.³⁹ His absence from the roll of *ḥujjāb* in other years is not an indicator of demotion: during the *ʿīd* ceremonies of 973–4, for example, Ibn Abī ʿĀmir was serving in the Maghrib as *qāḍī al-quḍāt* (Chapter 1).⁴⁰

The public recitation of panegyrics in praise of the ruler was an essential element of court ceremonial, which Stetkevych interprets as another 'insignia of power'.⁴¹ Under al-Manṣūr such recitations dealt an extra humiliation to the Christian kings whom he had already defeated on the battlefield.⁴² Likewise, the ceremony's physical setting had an important impact: in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's audience with John of Gorze, the whole reception area was covered with rich textiles over which the delegates walked. Another famous example of the ostentatious furnishing of the ceremonial setting is the basin of mercury which ʿAbd al-Raḥmān installed at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, in a pavilion with a golden roof; he liked to intimidate his visitors by setting the basin rocking, so that the mercury's reflections would flash off the ceiling like lightning.⁴³

While ceremonial in al-Andalus bore strong similarities to that of other Islamic courts, Barceló concludes that 'of the ceremonial practices of the three caliphates of the mid-tenth century, the ritual of the Umayyads of Cordoba was the most archaic in form'.⁴⁴ His view is based on the issue of the visibility of the caliph: in Abbasid and Fatimid ceremonial, the caliph was becoming increasingly invisible, literally veiled in ways that removed him ever further from his subjects. The physical manifestation of this was the construction of new extra-urban centres such as Samarra, and of new architectural features, such as the *ṭwān*, which provided a more impressive setting for caliphal audiences.⁴⁵ The process was most fully developed at the Fatimid court, where the caliphal throne was concealed by a *siṭr*, or curtain, which was lifted only once everyone had taken their places in the audience hall, and the caliph was already seated on the throne: this 'functioned to construct the caliph as a permanent and immobile centre' of the court/state. Bennison 2007, 75 says of al-Ḥakam II that the 'caliph entered the hall first and left last, creating an illusion of stasis and stability'.⁴⁶

In Barceló's view, 'had [Andalusi ceremonial] continued to evolve, it [might] have gone down the same road to a progressively more invisible caliph'.⁴⁷ However, Andalusi ceremonial *did* continue to evolve, under al-Manṣūr. As seen in Chapter 1, Hishām indeed became invisible, but not for these reasons; in contrast, in the descriptions of ʿĀmirid ceremonial discussed below, al-Manṣūr is conspicuously present, while, as we shall see in Chapter 3, the private aspect of his court took on an unprecedented intimacy.

38 Barceló 1998, 16.

39 For the text of these ceremonies, see al-Rāzī 1983, 81ff. (361/972); 119ff. (362/973); 229ff. (364/975). For translations, see *Anales* §§ 68, 127 and 237 respectively.

40 These are: *ʿīd al-aḥḥā* 362/973 (*Anales* §143), *ʿīd al-ḥijr* 363/974 (§180), and *ʿīd al-aḥḥā* 363/974 (§198).

41 Stetkevych 1997, 1.

42 Cf. Monroe 1971a, 7, who says that 'satirical poetry ... played a major role against the enemy in war'.

43 See Ruggles 2000, 67.

44 Barceló 1998, 19.

45 Sourdel 1960, 143ff.

46 Sanders 1994, 34. Bennison 2007a, 75 says of al-Ḥakam II that the 'caliph entered the hall first and left last, creating an illusion of stasis and stability'.

47 Barceló 1998, 19.

2 Tools of Diplomacy

2.1 Gifts

A fundamental 'building block' of diplomacy was gift exchange. The act of presenting gifts in an embassy was an important part of the ceremonial ritual: the presentation of significant quantities of luxury or exotic objects had the goal of establishing a sympathetic rapport between envoy and ruler before they embarked on the real business of the embassy. The presentation of gifts emblematised a form of client-patron relationship, as it did in the more private context of relations between ruler and favoured courtier:⁴⁸ tribute was paid in the form of rich gifts, and in the hope of a favourable hearing. Reciprocation of gifts sealed the bargain, while at the same time the acts of receipt and bestowal enacted an acknowledgement of the relative hierarchy of the recipient and benefactor.

Gift giving, or *khil'a* (pl. *khila'*), became a key strategy in the development of the Umayyads' relations in the Maghrib. More than a 'simple' exchange of presents within the terms of a diplomatic agreement, gifts such as the extensive and magnificent offering that 'Abd al-Raḥmān sent to his main ally among the Berber chiefs of the Maghrib, Mūsā ibn Abī'l-'Afiyya (Chapter 6), should be understood within this concept.⁴⁹ At its most literal, a *khil'a* is a garment that has been taken off (*khala'a*) by one person and given to another, but during the Abbasid period the term came to designate any garment bestowed by the ruler upon an official; court officials were thenceforth referred to as the

'men of robes of honour' (*aṣḥāb al-khil'a*).⁵⁰ By the tenth century, the phrase *khulī'a 'alayhi* had become shorthand to indicate simply that someone had been appointed to an office of the state bureaucracy. Such an appointment implied a delegation of authority from the caliph, and this investiture took place within the context of solemn ceremonies that were profoundly hierarchical, in which the bestowal of the office was accompanied by gifts, usually an outfit formed of textiles woven in the state *tirāz* factory (Figure 9); these may be inscribed with the ruler's name and titles, and the quality of the textiles from which the outfit was made would be commensurate with the importance of the office.⁵¹ The economic importance of such textiles – which were often woven from silk and embroidered with gold thread – as well as their close association with the royal industry of the *tirāz*, meant that they constituted a high status gift whose bestowal signified great favour.

Under the Andalusī Umayyads, *khil'a* became a deliberate policy, inaugurated by 'Abd al-Raḥmān but fully developed under al-Ḥakam, used to build strategic alliances that gained them power and influence in the Maghrib. As Xavier Ballestín has discussed, during the Umayyads' war against the Idrīsīd leader Ḥasan ibn Qānūn (d. 985), a considerable effort was made to lure away his supporters among the Berber tribal chiefs and to win their loyalty to the Umayyads and the authority of Cordoba.⁵² These men thus became agents of caliphal authority in the Maghrib, while Ibn Qānūn's support was gradually eroded. This process was accomplished through the constant distribution of *khil'a*, which not only included textiles and turbans, but also jewels, swords, other arms and armour, horses with luxurious caparisons, and coin. Such was the case with the gifts sent by al-Ḥakam in 973 to eight Berber chiefs who had recently foresworn their Fatimid allegiance

48 For example, the *fatā al-kabīr* Durri al-Saghīr made a present to al-Ḥakam of his Muniyat al-Rummāniyya in 362/973, cf. *Anales* §104. It is not coincidental that this gift came a month after Durri had fallen out of favour with the caliph, cf. *Anales* §94. On al-Rummāniyya, see Ocaña 1984a; Anderson 2013; and the work of Arnold, Canto and Vallejo 2008, 2015, 2019. On the legendary gift presented by Aḥmad ibn Shuhayd to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III in 327/939, in thanks for his becoming the first ever appointee to the office of *dhū'l-wizāratayn*, see *HEM* II:142–143; Dickie 1964, 244–247.

49 Ibn Ḥayyān 1979, §§238–9.

50 Sanders 2001, 225–6. For further bibliography on *khil'a*, see the discussion in Chapter 6.

51 Ballestín 2004a, 58.

52 Ballestín 2004a, 59–60, 81–2; Ballestín 2006.



FIGURE 9 Fragment of a *tirāz* woven in the name of Hishām II, datable 976–1009, silk and gold thread; Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, inv. 298

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and acknowledged Umayyad suzerainty: each was presented with a fully-caparisoned horse, a large quantity of dinars, weapons, and expensive textiles.⁵³

The gifts were distributed according to a strict hierarchy: the quantity, combination and quality of the objects given were directly related to the beneficiary's rank and importance. The moment of bestowal was a public act with a carefully-regulated protocol. The acceptance of these gifts signified that the beneficiary had accepted the authority of Cordoba – they and their men may subsequently be incorporated into the Umayyad army. The bestowal signified that the Umayyads recognised the loyalty of the beneficiary, and that they publicly endorsed his position and authority within the tribal group to which he belonged. Essentially these gifts constituted a bribe: they welcomed the Berbers to the Andalusí fold and implied that more riches could be expected for remaining loyal to Cordoba. A contract was sealed by the presentation of these gifts.

It was in the capacity of negotiating this fine line of hierarchies and sensitivities among the Umayyads' would-be allies that Ibn Abī ʿAmir first excelled himself. Appointed by al-Ḥakam to the post of *qāḍī al-quḍāt* and inspectorate (*amāna*) of the Maghrib in 973, he was charged with supervising the distribution of the *khilʿa*.⁵⁴ As Ballestín points out, this distribution required a finely-tuned understanding of the authority, dignity, rank and power of each of the Berber chiefs with whom Ibn Abī ʿAmir did business. Without this understanding, he risked offending them and inciting disputes of protocol and hierarchy. He needed to understand the relationships between the different tribal leaders, and to calculate how to integrate them within Cordoba's authority without wounding local sensitivities, while at the same time satisfying al-Ḥakam.

The success of Ibn Abī ʿAmir's execution of this policy can be judged by the number of delegations and embassies that travelled to Cordoba or to Ghālib's camp to submit to al-Ḥakam. It was a policy that al-Manṣūr himself continued extremely

53 *Anales* §140, 166–168; Ballestín 2006.

54 Ballestín 2004a, 85–88; Manzano 2019, 121.

successfully once he had attained the *ḥijāba*, not just with his allies in the Maghrib but also in internal relationships within Cordoba or the Umayyad court, and in his wider diplomatic contacts and dealings with the rulers of Iberian Christian kingdoms or envoys from further afield, including Byzantium. As we will see below, al-Manṣūr's audience with Sancho Abarca ended with the *ḥājib* distributing *khila'* to his Christian guests. While the descriptions of Sancho's embassy might be short on details of what these gifts actually were, this gap is filled somewhat by accounts of al-Manṣūr's relations with the Berber chiefs of the Maghrib, in particular Zīrī ibn 'Aṭīyya (discussed below). Al-Manṣūr is also known to have bestowed luxurious gifts of textiles on his troops and allies after successful campaigns, and the list of those distributed after the campaign against Santiago de Compostela in 997 is preserved (Chapter 6).

Frustratingly, the historical sources tend only to describe gifts when they are particularly rare or unusual items. While we often know *that* gifts were exchanged, rarely do we know *what* they were. The Byzantine embassy to Cordoba in 950, for example, is notable for two magnificent imperial letters whose obvious strangeness caused them to be described and recorded. Though one of them contained an inventory of the gifts they accompanied, this list has not survived.⁵⁵ Particularly magnificent gifts, especially if from particularly impressive donors, could also be displayed in such a way as to enhance the sense of splendour. 'Abd al-Raḥmān III seems to have been particularly adept at manipulating the physical furnishings of his reception space in order to overawe his visitors. He ostentatiously displayed the gifts received from Byzantine Emperors through the various embassies exchanged between Cordoba and Constantinople: he was said to have hung a 'magnificent pearl', presented to him by Leo VI (r. 886–912), in the centre of his reception pavilion, above the tank of mercury which he set moving to overawe visitors with

the bright light that would flash off the walls.⁵⁶ A second rich gift – a fountain basin of green marble, presented by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 945–59) to the Andalusī ambassador, Rabī' ibn Zayd, during an embassy to Constantinople c. 955 – was likewise installed in 'Abd al-Raḥmān's *majlis*.⁵⁷ But he aggrandised the gift yet further by commissioning for it twelve fountain heads from the caliphal Dār al-Ṣinā'a. They were made of gold incrustated with pearls and other precious stones, and represented various animals:

“a lion, flanked on his right by a gazelle, on his left by a crocodile; on the opposite side was [a group consisting of] a dragon, an eagle and an elephant. On the remaining two sides were first a dove together with a falcon and a peacock, and [second] a hen with a cock and a vulture. All these statues consisted of gold encrusted with precious jewels, and water poured from their mouths.”⁵⁸

This anecdote also documents the existence at Cordoba of an institution called the Dār al-Ṣinā'a, and that it manufactured, at the very least, figural sculpture in precious metals (this institution is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). While 'Abd al-Raḥmān's fountain-heads do not survive – probably long ago melted down for their metal, and the jewels reused – bronze fountain heads whose provenance can be linked with Madīnat al-Zahrā' do give an idea of what the royal objects would have looked like (Figure 10). Interestingly, the delegation of Byzantine envoys to Cordoba in 949 was taken on a tour of the palace-city, Madīnat al-Zahrā', still being built at that date, which included a visit to the Dār al-Ṣinā'a.⁵⁹ This indicates the importance of this institution in making luxury objects that

56 Holod 1992, 46.

57 Ibn Ḥayyān, *apud* al-Maqqarī, I: 237; cf. *Bayān* 11:247 [translation, 382]. *HEM* 11:148–149, suggests the date of the embassy, which is not given by the contemporary historians.

58 Translation from Bargebuhr 1968, 155.

59 Silva 2012, 285, 287, citing Vallejo, 2010, 184.

55 *HEM* 11:152–153; Vasiliev 1968, 326.

could be given away as *khilaʿ* to the Umayyads' clients and allies. Surely the ambassadors would have been given some of its products to take away with them: since we know from the gift to Mūsā ibn Abī'l-ʿAfiyya that the Cordoban ivories were in production by the 930s, one likely possibility is that these gifts included ivory caskets, products of a new industry that could conceivably have been modelled on the use of ivory in Byzantium. It has even been suggested that Byzantine ivory caskets with entirely vegetal decoration reflect an awareness of the designs of the Cordoban ivories or of other Umayyad objects that might have come to Constantinople as gifts on such occasions.⁶⁰

2.2 *Dynastic Marriages*

One of the key 'diplomatic tools' that al-Manṣūr employed in his relations with the Iberian Christian kingdoms was that of dynastic marriage – in particular, his marriage to the daughter of Sancho Garcès II of Navarra, who converted to Islam and was known as 'Abda.⁶¹ Though her conversion was not necessary from an Islamic point of view, she is said by the historian Ibn al-Khaṭīb to have become 'a good Muslim; she was of all al-Manṣūr's wives the staunchest in faith and of most gentle birth'.⁶² Their son, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, was nicknamed 'Sanchuelo' after his Christian grandfather. As Simon Barton observed, al-Manṣūr adopted a canny 'matrimonial policy', which early on in his career served to 'consolidate and further his political influence by entering into advantageous marriage alliances with other powerful Muslim aristocratic families' – referring to his advancement by his possible marriage to a member of the Banū Bartal and then by his match with Asmā', daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's freedman, Ghālib (Chapter 1).⁶³ Once he held the reins of



FIGURE 10 Fountain head in the form of a deer, bronze, mid-tenth century, H 61.6 cm; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba, inv. CE000500
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power, however, it is striking that he 'preferred to distance himself from the local Muslim aristocracy and underline his peninsular hegemony', by marrying the daughter of one of Iberia's most powerful Christian rulers.

We will return in a moment to the details of al-Manṣūr's marriages, but it is important to note that alliances with the Christian monarchies of Iberia, through marriage or concubinage, was a tactic imitated from the Umayyad amirs of al-Andalus. All amirs since the conquest are said to have taken concubines from among the local population, and indeed to have preferred to father heirs from these concubines rather than from marriages to freeborn Arab women. Thus

60 Williamson 2010, 68–73 (cat. 13), discussing one such example now in the V&A (inv. 5471–1859).

61 *Bayān* III:38 [translation, 43], and below.

62 Barton 2011, 9; Echevarría 2011, 107–9.

63 Barton 2011, 10.

was born the oft-repeated axiom, following Ibn Ḥazm, that ‘every one of [the amirs] has been fair haired, taking after their mothers, so that this has become a hereditary trait with them’.⁶⁴ Only ‘Abd Allāh, the grandfather of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, took a Christian noblewoman as a wife: this was Onneca/Oñega, known to Muslim writers as Durr (Pearl), the widow of Aznar Sánchez of the Arista family; their son Muḥammad fathered ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. Muḥammad’s first cousin, Toda, married Sancho Garcès I of Pamplona (r. 905–25), and after his death she ruled as queen regent of Navarra, for more or less the same period of time as her nephew’s caliphate.⁶⁵

What Barton styled ‘interfaith marriage’ was a deliberate policy conducted by the Muslims in al-Andalus for a complex series of factors. After the conquest, it served to consolidate their power in Iberia and bound conquerors and conquered more closely together; it also ‘represented a means through which much of the landed wealth of the Visigothic magnate class could legitimately be channelled into Muslim ownership’.⁶⁶ Over the centuries, such alliances became a tool of diplomacy, ‘a means to help stabilise relations with the sometimes fractious Christian states to the north’. For the Christians, it was ‘a means to achieve both peace and dynastic survival’. Barton cites the model proposed by the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, whereby ‘a continuous transition exists from war to exchange, and from exchange to intermarriage, and the exchange of brides is merely the conclusion to an uninterrupted process of reciprocal gifts, which effects the transition from hostility to alliance, from anxiety to confidence, and from fear to friendship’.⁶⁷ As such we might conceptualise dynastic marriages within the scheme of diplomatic gift exchange, discussed

above. At the same time, though, this was an ‘aggressive’ strategy, sexual domination as a form of power underlining the Muslim hegemony of the Peninsula.

This was not the exclusive preserve of amirs: Barton notes that several Andalusī noble families living on the frontier, in particular the Banū Qasī in the Ebro Valley, also engaged in this policy. But, as in other aspects of al-Manṣūr’s administration, the difference in scale is notable here. He did not marry the daughter of just any Christian nobleman, but one of the most powerful Christian rulers on the Peninsula. Indeed Sancho Garcès II of Pamplona was Toda’s grandson, which means that, on marrying his daughter, al-Manṣūr was also marrying into this complex kinship group, binding himself through marriage ties to the caliphal family as well as to the kingdom of Navarra. This indeed ‘underline[d] his peninsular hegemony’, both within the borders of al-Andalus and without, as Barton observed.

We do not know exactly when al-Manṣūr’s marriage to ‘Abda took place, but their son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Sanchuelo’ was born around 982, since we know that he was appointed to the office of *wazīr* in 991, when he was only nine years old. Echevarría speculates that the marriage alliance might have taken place after the Christian surrender in the campaign against a coalition of the ‘Three Nations’ – Navarra, Castile and Girona.⁶⁸ The marriage thus took place in the period soon after the adoption of al-Manṣūr’s *laqab*, when according to Ibn ‘Idhārī he was ‘supreme master of all the affairs of the state and of the [Umayyad] dynasty’.⁶⁹ ‘Abda herself could therefore be seen as an element in the articulation of al-Manṣūr’s *ḥijāba*, in particular if he was aware of her kinship connection to the caliphs (which he surely was). The marriage also presupposes a long-standing treaty between Cordoba and Pamplona, which was

64 Barton 2011, 2–11; Ruggles 2004.

65 Barton 2011, 8; Anderson 2014, esp. 22–24, including a genealogical table at Fig. 7.

66 Barton 2011, 3.

67 Barton 2011, 9–11.

68 Echevarría 2011, 107.

69 *Bayān* II:291 [translation, 452].

celebrated in Sancho II's splendid visit to Cordoba in 992, discussed below.

Historians have also attributed to al-Manṣūr a second marriage to a Christian noblewoman, Teresa Bermúdez, daughter of king Bermudo II of León (r. 982–99) and sister to Alfonso V (r. 999–1032). This interprets an unreliable and polemical Christian source – the *Chronicle of the Kings of León* composed by Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo between 1121 and 1132, and followed by many later Christian writers – which talks of Alfonso giving Teresa away to ‘a certain pagan king (*rex*) of Toledo for the sake of peace’.⁷⁰ Reinhardt Dozy interpreted this to mean al-Manṣūr, since Ibn Khaldūn, writing centuries later, had recorded that al-Manṣūr married a daughter of Bermudo II in 993. Nevertheless, the impossibility of this marriage was convincingly demonstrated by Cotarelo in 1903, who argued that since Teresa's parents only married in 992, she would have been a babe-in-arms at that date, and less than 10 years old if she married al-Manṣūr at some later point before his death in 1002.⁷¹ It seems most likely that Ibn Khaldūn was confusing the marriage with that of ʿAbda, though Barton revisited this anecdote and cautioned that ‘it is unlikely to be a complete fiction’. Indeed, he suggests that it could reasonably have been one of al-Manṣūr's sons to whom Teresa Bermúdez was betrothed, and of the two perhaps it is most likely to have been ʿAbd al-Malik, who treated with León in 1003 and 1004 – this was the context in which the Braga pyxis (Figures 11, 15) was likely presented as a diplomatic gift to Menendo González, Alfonso's regent (discussed below). Bearing Lévi-Strauss's model in mind, could Teresa's hand have been part of a wider exchange of gifts, marking a wish for a lasting peace across the frontiers of the Peninsula? After ʿAbd al-Malik's death in 1008, or during the Fitna that followed soon after, she would have

returned to León, as the sources say she did, and entered a convent, where she died in 1039. If there is truth in the Teresa Bermúdez story, it also shows that one or other of al-Manṣūr's sons attempted to continue his wise policy of using dynastic marriage alliances to consolidate peace.

As a footnote to this discussion, Echevarría notes that ‘it is possible’ that Onega, sister of Sancho García and daughter of García Fernández of Castile, was given to al-Manṣūr as a wife or concubine in 995, after their father's downfall at the *ḥājib's* hands – but she gives no further details.⁷² If so, it means that al-Manṣūr and his sons had marriage or concubinage ties with all the important Christian kingdoms and counties of the Iberian Peninsula – Navarra, León and Castile. Their dominance of the Peninsula was sexual as well as political.

3 ʿĀmirid Diplomatic Relations

Whereas the arrival of foreign embassies at ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's court has been seen as a ‘true sign of [al-Andalus's] power and prestige’,⁷³ the same subject in relation to the ʿĀmirid court has, surprisingly, been entirely neglected. This has much to do with the few secondary sources that have examined Andalusī diplomatic relations. The major studies – Aleksandr Vasiliev on Byzantine relations with the Arabs, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān El-Hajji on Andalusī diplomacy – do not consider diplomatic events in Iberia after the mid-tenth century. El-Hajji ties his study to the Umayyad dynasty, and therefore does not consider the periods before the arrival of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I in 755, or after the death of al-Ḥakam in 976; he even specifically states that the political dominance of al-Manṣūr during Hishām's caliphate ‘enables us to suggest that the real Umayyad

70 Cited and discussed in Barton 2011, 12–17.

71 Cotarelo 1903. The myth still persists, however, and even Echevarría, who is otherwise very sensible in her interpretation of the historical data, repeats that al-Manṣūr was married to Teresa Bermúdez: Echevarría 2011, 109.

72 Echevarría 2011, 110, 155.

73 *HEM* 11:143. Kennedy 1996, 98, says that, given the Byzantine emperors' role as the traditional rivals of the caliphs, ‘no doubt ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III felt that Byzantine diplomacy, like minting gold coins, was one of the attributes of his new office’.

period ended with the death of al-Ḥakam.⁷⁴ But for the twenty-six years of al-Manṣūr's *hijāba*, al-Andalus within its borders was at its most peaceful and prosperous, conditions in which it would be surprising to encounter an absence of diplomatic activity. Furthermore, there is ample evidence that such activity occurred, though some of this evidence only came to light after Maḥmūd 'Alī Makkī's 1961 edition of Ibn Darrāj's *dīwān*, and Margarita La Chica Garrido's translation into Spanish of the panegyric poems in 1979. We can only speculate how many more foreign embassies to al-Manṣūr's court were not celebrated in song, or indeed, how many more were so celebrated, only to have disappeared from the written record over the past millennium.

The passage from Ibn al-Kardabūs quoted at the head of this chapter implies that all the kings of the known world were eager to engage in peaceful relations with al-Manṣūr. The discussion here will focus on relations with Christian Iberia and the Maghrib, but there is some indication that ambassadors from Byzantium were also received in Cordoba during 'Abd al-Malik's administration. Al-Manṣūr's policy towards Iberia's Christian kingdoms continued 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's, in the sense of lending military support when he thought the alliance profitable to al-Andalus. Dozy mentions, for example, the aid sought by the rulers of León in 981, when Ramiro III, deposed by his cousin Bermudo II, 'found himself driven, in order to avoid total defeat, to crave assistance from Almanzor, and to acknowledge him as over-lord'. When Ramiro died in 984, Bermudo 'foresaw that unless he stooped to follow Ramiro's example, he would have great difficulty in bringing the recalcitrant [Leonese] nobles to their knees'. He appealed to al-Manṣūr and 'the Minister espoused his cause and placed a considerable Moorish force at his disposal'.⁷⁵

In the *dīwān* of Ibn Darrāj, we find mention of embassies to Cordoba for which there is no other

historical evidence. The sources which transmitted Ibn Darrāj's poems also preserved their titles, which briefly comment on the events for which the poems were written; sometimes they also give the date. For example, the introduction to poem 112 reads, 'On the occasion of the reception which al-Manṣūr gave to Sancho, son of García Fernández, when he came to Cordoba at the head of a delegation in the year 382/993'.⁷⁶ We can thus identify four poems that record the reception by al-Manṣūr of Christian ambassadors: 107 (Sancho II Abarca, king of Navarra, in 992); 109 (Count Ibn Gómez, c. 995); 112 (Sancho Garcès, son of the ruler of Castile, in 992–993); and 117 (Gonzalo Sánchez, son of the king of Navarra, c. 993).⁷⁷

It is significant that, in all these cases, the representative of each Christian kingdom was the ruler himself or his heir. While the first two caliphs seem to have received annual embassies from their Christian clients and allies, before al-Manṣūr's *hijāba*, the occasions on which a Christian ruler *himself* (or herself) had visited Cordoba had been few, and were justified in the primary sources by the rulers' need to seek help from the caliph. The first of these was initiated by the appeal of the Navarrese queen regent, Toda, that her nephew 'Abd al-Raḥman III assist her grandson, Sancho I of León, to regain his throne.⁷⁸ Sancho, known uncharitably to history as 'the Fat', had been deposed in 957, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān agreed to lend the expertise of his own physician, the Jewish doctor Hasdai ibn Shaprut, to cure him

76 Makkī 1963–64, 66; Makkī 1969, 412 ff.

77 See Makkī 1969, 335–339 (#107); 341–344 (#109); 349–353 (#112); 366–368 (#117).

78 HEM 11:144; see also Dozy 1913, 440–443; El-Hajji 1970, 46, 54, 58–59, 74–76; Anderson 2014, 22 ff. According to Anderson, while Toda had visited 'Abd al-Raḥmān in person in his campaign tent in 933–4 – invoking kinship ties to intercede with the caliph not to attack Pamplona – it appears unlikely that she visited Cordoba herself in 958 (pp. 26–7). Nevertheless, she may have taken advantage of Sancho's time in Cordoba to commission the ivory processional cross for her new church at San Millán de la Cogolla.

74 El-Hajji 1970, 30.

75 Dozy 1913, 500.

of his obesity. After three years of treatment in Cordoba, Sancho successfully regained the throne in 960. Ironically, Ordoño IV, the ruler who had deposed Sancho and was then himself deposed, likewise sought asylum in al-Andalus, now under the caliphate of al-Ḥakam.⁷⁹ In both cases, the caliph offered assistance, surely conscious of the political advantage of a grateful king on the Leonese throne; and while al-Andalus clearly held the upper hand, as the dominant power on the Peninsula, at a certain level these relations could be seen as being conducted between equals, since all concerned were Iberian royalty.

That al-Manṣūr also received rulers, rather than envoys, at his court might be viewed as an imitation of this model, but the intensification of this policy is significant: al-Manṣūr received more Christian rulers in his home than any of his predecessors, and it was always in the context of celebrating military victory. The objective of all these embassies seems to have been to 'reaffirm peace with al-Manṣūr and render [him] their subjugation'.⁸⁰ How much more humiliating for al-Manṣūr's Christian visitors: they had already been defeated in battle, and were now expected to abase themselves in front of the assembled court and people of al-Andalus. Furthermore, their humiliation was then publicly celebrated in the poems written by Ibn Darrāj for the occasion. Again, we can see correspondences between al-Manṣūr and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān: as Lévi-Provençal wrote, 'Christian ambassadors during the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III are always presented as beggars'.⁸¹ The metaphorical language of Ibn Darrāj's poems also depicts the Christians ambassadors to al-Manṣūr as supplicants, as in the passage quoted at the start of this chapter.

In Stetkevych's view of the 'iconography of power', this kind of ceremony 'ritually reenacts' the surrender of the enemy on the battlefield. This is also reflected in the emphasis which panegyric

places on the *ḥājib's* power over life and death: the apprehension on the part of his Christian visitors over whether they will get out of Cordoba alive reenacts al-Manṣūr's sparing of their life on the battlefield. Thus, the ruler 'seated in majesty, flanked by his elite, ordering his (political) creation' embodies social order, while the ceremony represents the 'reaffirmation of the social, political and religious hierarchy, the recreation of order after the preceding chaos ... In ceremonial terms, it plays the role of the cosmic ritual combat between good and evil'.⁸²

Of the four poems by Ibn Darrāj that record the reception of Christian rulers, Sancho Abarca's embassy (poem 107) will be discussed in detail below; that of his son, Gonzalo Sánchez (poem 117) can be related to his father's visit, since its objective is most likely to have been to confirm what had been agreed a year earlier.⁸³ For the visits alluded to in the other two poems, we must rely on what we know of their historical context.

Ibn Darrāj's poem 112 celebrates the uprising which Sancho García began against his father, García Fernández, Count of Castile, in 994, in which he was likely aided by forces provided by al-Manṣūr.⁸⁴ García Fernández was, of all Iberia's Christians, the most tenacious in his resistance to the *ḥājib*, and at this period al-Manṣūr was seeking retribution against him for assisting a conspiracy in which his own son, ʿAbd Allāh, had been embroiled (Chapter 1). The Count was captured by the Muslims in May 995 and died of his wounds a few days later, an incident celebrated in song by Ṣāʿid al-Baghdādī, one of al-Manṣūr's court poets (Chapter 8). It is likely that his son, Sancho, planned his uprising with al-Manṣūr during this time in Cordoba, and Ibn Darrāj's poem even talks of Sancho 'putting in al-Manṣūr's hands ... the

79 See Dozy 1913, 448–452; *HEM* 11:174–178; El-Hajji 1970, 77–80.

80 Makkī 1963–64, 66.

81 *HEM* 11:144.

82 Stetkevych 1997, 20–21. On 'ceremony and submission' under ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, see Safran 1999.

83 Makkī 1963–64, 76.

84 Makkī 1963–64, 66; on al-Manṣūr's relations with Castile, see pp. 65–69. On Sancho's rebellion, Ruiz Asencio 1969.

reins of his destiny'.⁸⁵ Perhaps his sister, Oñega, was promised in return.

Even so, relations with Castile under Sancho García (r. 995–1017, as third Count of Castile) continued the turbulent trajectory they had had under his father. In 1000, Sancho broke off his alliance with al-Manṣūr and joined in the coalition with García Sánchez II of Pamplona, which was defeated by the Muslims.⁸⁶ Al-Manṣūr was again campaigning against Sancho when he died in 1002. In 1003, Sancho signed a treaty with 'Abd al-Malik, and allied with him against Aragón. In 'Abd al-Malik's victory over Clunia – celebrated by his commissioning the Pamplona casket (Figures 120–127) – Sancho became its master. In 1004, Sancho requested right of tutelage over Alfonso V of León; this was the case for which 'Abd al-Malik was appointed 'international arbitrator', deciding in favour of Menendo González of Galicia, to whom the Braga pyxis may have been given as a diplomatic gift (see below). In 1007, 'Abd al-Malik was again at war with Sancho, and recovered Clunia from him, the battle for which he took the *laqab* al-Muzaffar.

Turning to the visit of Ibn Gómez c. 995, poem 109 in Ibn Darrāj's *dīwān* begins with the introduction, 'On the occasion of the visit which the Count Ibn Gómez made to Cordoba, after the defeat which al-Manṣūr inflicted on him'.⁸⁷ This member

of the Banū Gómez, who governed a small county in León, is likely to have been García, the 'opportunistic and unscrupulous' son of Gómez Díaz, son-in-law of Fernán González, who had sent an embassy to al-Ḥakam in 973.⁸⁸ Friendly relations with al-Andalus seem to have continued under his successor until about 995, when Lévi-Provençal dates a campaign conducted by al-Manṣūr against the Banū Gómez:⁸⁹ this, presumably, is the defeat mentioned in the introduction to the poem. The reason for this embassy was therefore probably to celebrate the Christian's defeat on the battlefield by glorifying al-Manṣūr in his own home. This would also make the 'awesome military parade' described in the poem all the more symbolic.⁹⁰ Though Ibn Darrāj describes the scene in outline, 'his images are vivid, full of colour': paraphrasing verses 19 to 39, he mentions 'enormous banners depicting gigantic eagles and vultures, straight files of horses and lances, thousands of soldiers hailing the great Muslim general with roars which made the ground tremble, Berber horsemen with their turbans and shining helmets and veils which covered their faces'.⁹¹ Ibn Gómez advances 'with slow and trembling steps' until he perceives al-Manṣūr 'at the heart of ... the ranks of his veteran soldiers', and 'he bowed to kiss the ground, before advancing again'.

Perhaps the most important Christian embassy to be received in Cordoba by al-Manṣūr – and the one we know the most about, thanks to its treatment by Ibn al-Khaṭīb – was that of his father-in-law, Sancho II Abarca, king of Navarra (r. 970–995). Sancho was the most powerful of the Christian rulers, though he was wise enough to pursue a pacific policy towards al-Andalus, and a truce

85 Makkī 1963–64, 66.

86 For information on the 'Amirids' engagement with Sancho, see Ruiz Asencio 1969.

87 Makkī 1963–64, 81; on the County of 'Carrión y Saldaña', see pp. 80–82. For the history of the Banū Gómez from the late eleventh century, see Senra 2006. Known today as Carrión de los Condes, this is where the painted ivory chest made for the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz (r. 953–975) and now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid was found (inv. 50887). As I argue in my 2015a article (esp. pp. 50–51), it is possible that this object was in Cordoba – probably as the result of diplomatic activity relating to the struggle for hegemony in North Africa between the Umayyads and Fatimids – and was brought from there to Carrión when the relics of San Zoilo (d. fourth century) were translated from Cordoba in 1051–2. On the ivory casket

made for al-Mu'izz, see Lévi-Provençal 1931, 191–192 (#210); Bloom 2011; Armando 2015.

88 Makkī 1963–64, 81. On Gómez Díaz's embassy, cf. *Anales* §146.

89 *HEM* II:245, though Makkī 1963–64, 81, inclines towards an earlier date.

90 Makkī 1963–64, 82.

91 Makkī 1969, 330–332.

throughout the 980s had been sealed by the marriage of al-Manṣūr to Sancho's daughter, ʿAbda. However, in 990 Sancho assisted García Fernández with incursions into Muslim territory, and in 992 al-Manṣūr began a retributive campaign against Pamplona. Sancho surrendered, and apparently asked 'that he be allowed to be received in Cordoba at the head of an embassy, with the aim of convincing [al-Manṣūr] of the sincerity of his submission'.⁹² The king's official visit took place on 3 Rajab 382/4 September 992 and, in addition to Ibn Darrāj's poem 107, the reception is described by Ibn al-Khaṭīb. Sources that discuss al-Manṣūr's diplomatic activity are so rare that it is worth citing this precious passage in full:⁹³

"Then al-Manṣūr in person with his son [ʿAbd al-Malik?] and his men joined battle against Shānjah [hereafter Sancho], the king of the Christians, until he surrendered, seeking [al-Manṣūr's] pardon, and [Sancho] asked permission to visit [al-Manṣūr] in person and [al-Manṣūr] permitted it. And [al-Manṣūr] was happy as never before at his visit. He went ahead with preparing for [Sancho's] visit, and he summoned the top-ranking men. [Sancho] arrived three days after the start of Rajab of the year 382, and al-Manṣūr made his troops and volunteers (*al-muṭṭawwiʿ*) ride to meet [Sancho] at his entrance to Qaṣr al-Zāhira. And this day was one of the world's famous days, so that the unbeliever [i.e. Sancho] was bedazzled. He beheld the wealth of the Muslims and the fame (*nabāha*) of their weapons and the beauty of their clothes and the multitude of their number, of which he had no idea that the world could encompass

nor the days gather together nor the storehouses shelter. Al-Manṣūr's son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān met him, (who was) [Sancho's] grandson by his daughter – the story of which we have already mentioned – and the Sultan's *wuzarāʾ* were surrounding him [Sanchuelo?], together with the prominent military leaders (*quwwād*) and the important officials (*akābir*) from among the civil service (*ahl al-khidma*) and the *mamālik* [wearing] the most beautiful outfits and the most perfectly tied cloth (*taʿbiya*). Then when [Sancho's] eyes fell on the boy [i.e. his grandson], he dismounted, and [Sancho] kissed his [grandson's] foot and [Sanchuelo] ordered him to remount, and arrived with him to his father. [Sancho] went barefoot between two rows of iron [i.e. files of armed soldiers?], flanked along the way for miles with nothing but fine coats of mail and golden breastplates. The strong men wore [pieces on] their shanks and forearms, and they had put on their full armour and carried their shields. Behind them were ranks of archers with golden belts, girdled around their waists. The Christian king (*al-malik al-rūmī*) was rolling his eyes, his heart overwhelmed with fear, until he arrived at al-Manṣūr's *majlis* at the seventh hour of daylight. Al-Manṣūr had [already] seated himself on the most splendid of seats, and the most elevated of them, his throne (*sarīr*) surrounded by the *wuzarāʾ* and the best men of the state (*aʿāzīm rijāl al-dawla*), and the servants and the *Ṣaqāliba* were lined up in two rows from the entrance (*bāb*) to the *majlis* as far as the entrance (*bāb*) to the Qaṣr. When [Sancho's] eyes fell on al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir, he threw himself to the ground, kissing [it] repeatedly as he approached him, until he kissed his feet and hands. Al-Manṣūr gave a command and a gilded chair (*kursī mudhahhab*) was brought for [Sancho], on which he sat. [Al-Manṣūr] made a sign and those present left. Privately he fulfilled his wishes, and the unbeliever (*ʿilj*) responded gratefully. Then [al-Manṣūr] came out while [Sancho] followed him, clad in royal garments

92 Makkī 1963–64, 75: relations with Navarra are discussed on pp. 74–79.

93 Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1934, 84–85. It should be noted that Makkī 1963–64, 75, n. 29, cites the 1956 edition, where this passage occurs at pp. 73–74. The embassy is also mentioned in *HEM* II:242–243. I gratefully acknowledge the help of Martin Accad and Isla Rosser-Owen in my translation of this passage.

(*khila' al-sultāniyya*), in the company of mounts and dignitaries. And the *majlis* only came to a closure by nightfall.”

In this passage we can recognise those ‘building blocks’ of caliphal ceremonial that were discussed above. Also present are certain narrative elements, which recur in descriptions of the receptions of John of Gorze, Ordoño IV, and García Gómez: the military parade (*burūz*) and extensive description of the soldiers’ armour; the presence of the most important state officials; dismounting at a designated point; the long and intimidating walk past the double ranks of soldiers who line the route from beginning to end, at the culmination of which the ruler is enthroned; the *sarīr* on which al-Manṣūr sits and the *kursī* which Sancho is offered as a sign of great favour; the gestures of salute – kissing the feet and hands of both al-Manṣūr and Sanchuelo, then probably around ten years old but who in al-Andalus obviously had superior status to his grandfather; the private interview; the bestowal of robes of honour on the visitors. What is sadly missing from this picture is a description of the ceremonial furniture and presentation of gifts. What is new, however, is the note that al-Manṣūr continued to ‘hold court’ with his officials and other colleagues until nightfall. Other such *majālis*, though without this ceremonial prelude, will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Some of these ceremonial and narrative aspects recur in the poem written by Ibn Darrāj in honour of this event (poem 107).⁹⁴ Makkī comments that this poem contains ‘phrases eulogising the Navarrese king, his noble genealogy and his prestige among the Christian kings.’⁹⁵ These in fact serve to eulogise al-Manṣūr all the more: ‘the great lord of polytheism, who has come in all humility, submitting to your arbitration’ (l.9); now ‘he wears ... the yoke of slavery’ (l.18). The narrative movement of the poem, though rendered

somewhat in slow motion by the continuous interjections of praise for al-Manṣūr, resembles that of Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s description: ‘For [Sancho] came with the fetters of fear shortening his step, yet lengthening it while he advanced in the bond of abasement ... / Awe of the army frightened him so that he drew back in terror ...’ (ll.34 and 36).⁹⁶ Ibn Darrāj next ‘offers us a vivid description of the spectacular military parades organised in Sancho’s honour, though they give more signs of intimidation and threat than of hospitality’ (ll.40–42).⁹⁷ Sancho catches sight of al-Manṣūr – just as he does in the prose passage – but here the moment is like a cloud moving away from the midday sun (l.43). The good news is given that Sancho’s life is spared (as is also the case with García Gómez in poem 109), which reminds us that al-Manṣūr does indeed have power over the life and death of his Christian visitors; in return, Sancho ‘kissed a hand sealed with mercy’ (l.47). The poem ends with final praises and congratulations for al-Manṣūr.

4 Diplomatic Exchange with the Maghrib

If the descriptions of Sancho’s embassy were short on details of gift exchange, this gap is filled somewhat by accounts of al-Manṣūr’s relations with the Berber chief, Zīrī ibn ‘Aṭiyya al-Maghrawī. There is a certain degree of confusion in the sources about the dates of Zīrī’s visit to Cordoba and whether or not he paid a second visit a few years later, but this has now been resolved by Xavier Ballestín with recourse to the anonymous *Kitāb al-Mafākhir al-Barbar* (c. 1312), which allows for a more detailed understanding of the Maghribi historical context.⁹⁸ Ballestín concludes that Zīrī

94 Makkī 1969, 335–339.

95 Makkī 1963–64, 75.

96 Some of these translations are taken from Monroe 1971a, 10–11.

97 Makkī 1963–64, 75.

98 Ballestín 2004a, 168–172, following *Kitāb al-Mafākhir*; qv *Bayān* II (1951):299. Al-Maqqarī (*pace* Gayangos p. 191), says that the embassy on Zīrī’s behalf occurred in 381/991–992, while Lévi-Provençal and Idris dated

came to Cordoba only once, before 380/990–1, and that the embassy bringing the spectacular gift to celebrate Zīrī's victory over the Fatimid turncoat, Abū'l-Bahār ibn Zīrī, arrived in 384/994.

As we saw in Chapter 1, Zīrī had become the lord of the Maghrāwa tribal group on the death of his brother in 988, and thus became al-Manṣūr's most important Berber ally. Al-Manṣūr invited him to Cordoba and Zīrī 'responded favourably to the request'. As Ballestín interprets it, asking Zīrī to report to Cordoba in person allowed al-Manṣūr 'to check his obedience' as well as to publicly incorporate him within the Umayyad fold by exercising the policy of *khil'a*.⁹⁹ The reception is described in the *Kitāb al-Mafākhir* and is closely comparable to the reception of Sancho Abarca, just described. Al-Manṣūr

“received him with the army in formation, fully equipped [caparisoned] and that day acquired fame for its majesty/splendour. [Al-Manṣūr] put him up in the *munya* of Ja'far [ibn 'Alī] in Quth Rash,¹⁰⁰ and he poured numerous emoluments on him, he appointed him to the dignity of *wazīr*, he invited him to his own palace, and applied himself carefully to heaping benefits upon him: he granted him the most valuable presents, including numerous horses and arms, and to all of this he added an extraordinary quantity of money, precious textiles of beautiful manufacture and in great abundance, and excellent gifts. He showed diligence in letting him return to his country, since in fact he considered [Zīrī] to be his enemy, and he conscripted into the

a second embassy from Zīrī to 384/994, which makes sense in the light of the chronology of Zīrī's struggle with Abū'l-Bahār al-Ṣanhājī (see below): see *HEM* 11:267; Idris 1962, 1, 82.

99 Ballestín 2004a, 168–9. He quotes the passage from the *Kitāb al-Mafākhir*, 22.

100 Al-Maqqarī, 19; *HEM* 11:265 (though he means a different Ja'far). Ballestín, citing *Bayān* 11 (1951):299, says he was given accommodation in the palace where Ja'far ibn 'Alī had stayed and, as was the latter, received with the dignity of a minister.

register of the professional soldiers of the regular army (*dīwān*) the majority of the men who had come with him ...”

Appointing Zīrī to the office of vizier was the highest possible dignity that could be conferred within the Umayyad state: this was the same status that was held by al-Sulamī, the Umayyad governor of the Maghrib (Chapter 1), as well of course as the host of ministers and high functionaries who would have been part of Zīrī's welcoming committee. This appointment also supposes a considerable monthly salary,¹⁰¹ and the *khil'a* he received would have been commensurate to his new rank. The *Kitāb al-Mafākhir* speaks of horses, arms, expensive clothing and money,¹⁰² the same ensemble of presents that al-Ḥakam gave to the Idrīsīd supporters he was attempting to lure away from Ḥasan ibn Qannūn. A comparable ceremonial visit was that of Ja'far and Yaḥya al-Andalusī, the two brothers responsible for killing the Fatimid governor of Ifrīqiya, Zīrī ibn Manād; they visited Cordoba in 970–1, and were fêted by the caliph and his court. They were likewise appointed viziers, and accommodated in one of Cordoba's *munyas* – the Munyat Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz.¹⁰³ Al-Manṣūr thus indicates to Zīrī that his rank and hierarchy is at the same level as the two men who had supported al-Ḥakam in the war against Ḥasan ibn Qannūn, and associates him with the running of affairs of state.

But the appointment also implied Zīrī's inferiority to al-Manṣūr: in Ibn Khaldūn's account, Zīrī disparages 'this title of minister which lowers my dignity'.¹⁰⁴ Zīrī obviously considered his treatment to be supremely patronising, as dramatically

101 On which see Meouak 1999, 51.

102 Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 238, says that Zīrī was compensated for his travel expenses and the cost of the gifts he had brought, receiving 'a great deal of money and precious robes of honour'.

103 Bennisson 2007a, 75.

104 Ballestín 2004a, 172, citing Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 239.

expressed when he returned home and declared ‘ana amīr ibn amīr’ – underlining that he was a ruler by his own authority, and had no need of ministerial posts from Cordoba. One of his first acts on returning to the Maghrib was to put on his turban, which Ballestín calls ‘a metonym for the Berbers themselves’. He suggests that Zīrī may have received a *qalansuwa* as a mark of his rank of vizier, and thus putting his turban back on symbolically reestablished his own authority over the Maghrib.¹⁰⁵ Zīrī also refers obliquely to the gifts that he had presented to al-Manṣūr on this occasion, while he clearly did not have a high opinion of the gifts he had received in return: ‘This man has made me the object of his parsimony, when I presented to him a fortune of incalculable riches and afterwards he wanted to deceive me that what he had given in return corresponded to generosity ...’.¹⁰⁶ Thus the historiographers foreshadow the difficulties to come in the relationship between Zīrī and al-Manṣūr, through Zīrī’s bitter rejection of al-Manṣūr’s *khil’a*. Even so, a short while later, after the death of al-Sulamī, Zīrī accepted the appointment to be Umayyad governor of the Maghrib, the first time a Berber had been appointed to this office – no doubt he saw this as being more in keeping with his natural rank. Thereafter, he campaigned energetically on the Umayyads’ behalf, greatly extending their sphere of influence.

The gifts from Zīrī that arrived in Cordoba in 994 celebrated a great victory that he had won on the Umayyads’ behalf about a year before. This was Zīrī’s castigation of the treachery of Abū’l-Bahār ibn Zīrī ibn Manād, uncle of Manṣūr ibn Buluqqīn, the Fatimid viceroy in Ifrīqiya. Having briefly come over to the Umayyad side, Abū’l-Bahār was lured back to the Fatimids; he was splendidly received by Manṣūr ibn Buluqqīn and invested as governor of Tahart in 382/992–3.¹⁰⁷ Al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir sent Zīrī against him, in punishment for

his betrayal of the Umayyad *khil’a*. Abū’l-Bahār fled to Qayrawan in Sha’ban 383/October 993, and Zīrī occupied his lands, extending the Umayyad hinterland well into modern-day Algeria. But this conquest also extended Zīrī’s own authority and dominion, and he was now acknowledged as the undisputed lord of the Zanāta.¹⁰⁸ Zīrī wrote to al-Manṣūr announcing his victory, which was proclaimed from the minbars of all the mosques in al-Andalus, and he confirmed Zīrī in possession of all the Umayyad lands of the Maghrib al-Aqṣā’. Zīrī established himself in Fez, and his authority – hence al-Manṣūr’s – now stretched from the Atlantic coast as far east as the Zab mountains.¹⁰⁹

The announcement of victory was followed up with a massive gift representing the luxury commodities for which the lands in North and West Africa that Zīrī now governed in the Umayyads’ name were renowned. The arrival must have been spectacular, since no fewer than three sources transmit the lists of what the gift contained, though the details do vary slightly between them.¹¹⁰ The *Kitāb al-Mafākhīr* tells us that the gift ‘was staggered and arrived successively, in perfect order and arrangement’. First came the exotic and extraordinary animals: 200 horses, of which 50 were caparisoned and purebloods of extraordinary beauty; 50 camels, fast runners of the *mahara* type; a bird that spoke eloquently in a marvellous voice and had an extraordinary appearance; a musk ox; civet cats; a tiger of marvellous physique and enormous body; varieties of fauna of the desert, such as

108 Ballestín 2004a, 185.

109 Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 243.

110 The sources are the *Kitāb al-Mafākhīr* (which is the longest), Ibn Abī Zar’s *Rawdh al-Qirtas*, and Ibn Khaldūn’s *Kitāb al-Ibar* (1934 edition, p. 243). The three passages listing the diplomatic gifts are given in Spanish in Ballestín 2004a, 185–6, and the contents and significance of the gift is analysed at pp. 187–9. Al-Maqqarī’s account, at least according to Gayangos’s translation (discussed further below), contains some more colourful information, for example that the bird (*tayr*) ‘spoke eloquently in Arabic and Berber’ (Gayangos, *Mohammedan Dynasties*, vol. II, Book VI, Chapter VII, p. 191).

105 Ballestín 2004a, 170–171, n. 111.

106 Ballestín 2004a, 172, citing Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 239.

107 Ballestín 2004a, 183.

lamt antelope and other species; and, the *pièce de résistance*, a giraffe – though the *Kitāb al-Mafākhir* is the only text to contain the detail that the giraffe had died en route, and needed to be stuffed before its arrival in Cordoba, where ‘it caused great amazement when people saw it’. Next came the weapons: shields made with *lamt* skin, lances of Indian (*hindawi*) steel, possibly bows; then clothing ‘made from very fine wool’, and food, including a thousand crates of dates of which Ibn Abī Zarʿ says each was as big as a cucumber. Al-Manṣūr ‘was very satisfied with what Zīrī had gifted to him and he recompensed [him] with a generosity that surpassed what [would have] corresponded to the mere reciprocation of the gifts received’. No indication is given of what these return gifts actually were, but since al-Manṣūr was the superior in the hierarchy, his gifts needed to be better.

What is not mentioned in any of the historical passages relating Zīrī’s gift is ivory. The information is transmitted in Pascual de Gayangos’ translation of al-Maqqarī’s *Nafh al-Tib* that this gift also included ‘8,000 pounds weight of elephant tusks’, *min nāb al-fīl* in Arabic.¹¹¹ This nugget has become almost legendary among art historians of the Andalusī carved ivories, myself included,¹¹² because it purports to give documentary support to the hypothesis that not only did al-Andalus rely on her North African clients for the supply of ivory, but also that ivory was abundantly available at the end of the tenth century. Even if al-Maqqarī had overestimated the quantity, this would represent the arrival in al-Andalus of tens of elephant tusks, which could have stimulated the revival of the

ivory-carving industry under ʿĀmirid patronage – since only five years later, in 999, a pyxis was made for Sanchuelo (Figures 139–141) after an apparent lapse of some thirty years (since the manufacture of the Ziyad pyxis, Figure 12, dated 969), if we judge by the surviving objects.

Gayangos’s commentary cites Ibn Abī Zarʿ and Ibn Khaldūn as the sources for al-Maqqarī’s description of Zīrī’s gift, but he did not specify which manuscript this information came from. Worryingly, neither of these sources mentions ivory in their lists of the gifts sent from Zīrī to al-Manṣūr, nor does the slightly longer, more detailed account of the gift preserved in the *Kitāb al-Mafākhir*; nor is there mention of ivory in Dozy’s edition of al-Maqqarī’s Arabic text.¹¹³ None of these sources mentions the ‘150 ostrich feathers’ that are also included in Gayangos’s translation of this gift list. The fact that Gayangos quoted the Arabic phrase for ivory strongly suggests that he was working from an Arabic source, perhaps a variant manuscript of al-Maqqarī that has not been subsequently edited, but he does not specify the manuscripts he worked from or their institutional locations.¹¹⁴ The authenticity of the information should not be dismissed out of hand, although Gayangos’s translation is notorious for its inaccuracy and occasional creativity.¹¹⁵ At the moment it unfortunately appears that the information that Zīrī’s gift to al-Manṣūr included raw ivory was interpolated – indeed, possibly invented – by Gayangos. It seems we can no longer rely on this primary source for verification of the import of substantial quantities of raw ivory by this route. Nevertheless, as we will discuss in Chapter 6, the ʿĀmirids’ North African clients *are*

111 Gayangos, *Mohammedan Dynasties*, vol. II, Book VI, Chapter VII, p. 191.

112 In my 1999 article, I noted that 8000 lbs (approx. 3600 kg) of raw ivory was equivalent to some 160 tusks at an average weight of 50 lbs or approx. 22.7 kg per African elephant tusk. I was way off! The tusks of a bull elephant killed near Mount Kilimanjaro c. 1898 (on which see Chapter 6, n. 132) weighed 94 kg and 89 kg. Taking approx. 90 kg as an average weight, this represents a cache of about 40 tusks. However, the point is moot if the original Arabic text does not exist, as discussed below.

113 Dozy 1855–61; 1967. My thanks to Amira Bennison and Eduardo Manzano for corroborating my own search through the primary sources.

114 Given his personal circumstances, the original text is likely to be either in the Escorial Library, or the British Library in London. On Gayangos, see Álvarez Millán and Heide 2008.

115 On this translation enterprise, see Ruggles 1991, esp. pp. 132–3.



FIGURE 11
Pyxis, datable 1004–8, ivory,
chalice and paten, c. 1008, silver
gilt; Braga Cathedral, Portugal
PHOTO: BRUCE WHITE /
IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN
MUSEUM OF ART, REPRODUCED
WITH PERMISSION OF THE
TESOURO-MUSEU DA SÉ DE
BRAGA



FIGURE 12
Enthronement scene from the pyxis made for Ziyād ibn Aflah,
dated 969–70, ivory; Victoria and Albert Museum, 368–1880
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

the likely source for the supply of ivory, which, as we can see from the surviving objects, was indeed abundantly available.

The nature of the historical sources at our disposal means that the events discussed so far have focused on ambassadors and gifts received by al-Manṣūr, but we should also consider what was sent out from Cordoba. As mentioned above, the *Kitāb al-Maḥākhir* tells us that Zīrī ibn ʿAṭīyya was given horses, arms, expensive clothing and money when he was received in Cordoba in 991. This seems to have been a standard ‘gift package’ for Berber allies, as the same ensemble of presents was given by al-Ḥakam to the Idrīsids whom he was trying to lure away from supporting Ḥasan ibn Qānūn.¹¹⁶ The sources also preserve another glimpse of gifts bestowed by al-Manṣūr to important North African clients. When Abūʾl-Bahār al-Ṣanhājī briefly revolted in favour of the Umayyads, he sent an embassy to al-Manṣūr led by his nephew, Abū Bakr ibn Ḥabbūs, together with one of his sons as a guarantee of his loyalty, and ‘a good number of Ṣanhājī warriors who were enrolled in the Andalusī army.’¹¹⁷ This deputation arrived in Cordoba in 381/991–2: it was welcomed with the customary military honours, and all its members received ‘rich gifts.’¹¹⁸ Later, when Abū Bakr presented himself to take his leave of the *ḥājib*, he was showered with gifts to carry back to his uncle, including 25,000 pieces of gold coin, 500 pieces of silk of different kinds, several slaves, jewellery, and *other luxury objects* which together reached a value of 10,000 dirhams.

5 Objects of Exchange

One can only speculate about the nature of these ‘other luxury objects’, but by this date, the Dār al-Ṣināʿa was already operating under ʿĀmirid control, as al-Manṣūr’s marble basin had been

created in 987–8 (Chapter 6, Figures 113–118). Surely al-Manṣūr’s intense campaigning and diplomatic activity in the 980s and 990s kept the craftsmen busy producing objects that could be presented as gifts in these kinds of contexts. As we know, al-Manṣūr was also accustomed to distributing gifts of precious textiles to his allies after a successful campaign (see Chapter 6), so this diplomatic activity implicated the Dār al-Ṭirāz as well.

One crucial piece of evidence survives that indicates the ʿĀmirids were including luxury objects in media such as ivory in their gift-giving. This is the Braga pyxis (Figures 11, 15, Chapter 7 2.2). Made in the name of al-Manṣūr’s son, ʿAbd al-Malik, between 1004 and 1008 according to the titlature used in its inscription (Appendix 4.12), it now houses a silver chalice and paten that were custom-made to fit exactly inside it.¹¹⁹ The correspondence in height and shape is perfect, and the Christian objects even bear a stylistic affinity with the pyxis, since birds and quadrupeds with stalks in their beaks, which appear in roundels on the ivory, have become the main decoration on the chalice. It is possible that these birds had connotations in Christian eyes that suggested an obvious subsequent use as a container for liturgical objects involved in the ritual of the Eucharist.

However, most interestingly, the base of the chalice bears a Latin inscription which reads: *In n[omi]ne D[omi]ni Menendus Gundisalvi et Tudad[o]mna sunm*. This identifies the commissioners as Menendo González, count of Galicia, and his wife Toda, and allows us to date the chalice and paten to before 1008, when Menendo died. This makes the vessels almost exactly contemporary with the manufacture of the pyxis, indicating that the pyxis was in Menendo’s hands soon after it was made. The explanation is surely due to the conduct of diplomatic relations between Menendo and ʿAbd al-Malik. From 999, Menendo González acted as regent to the minor Alfonso v of León (born 994), and was thus *de facto* ruler at the same

116 Ballestín 2004a, 168; Ballestín 2006.

117 Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 241; *HEM* 11:266; Idris 1962, 1, 80.

118 Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 241.

119 O’Neill 1993, 148–149 (cat. 73), and Prado-Vilar 1997, 33, n. 85.



FIGURE 13 Embroidery from the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, tenth century, silk and gold thread; general view of the largest fragment

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time as ‘Abd al-Malik was inheriting a more significant political role from his father. We know that relations existed between the two rulers by 1003, since an alliance was formed in that year, which agreed to provide Leonese and Castilian participation in a Muslim campaign against Cataluña.¹²⁰ In 1004, Sancho García of Castile requested right of tutelage over Alfonso, now 10 years old, which was effectively a bid to control Leonese politics. ‘Abd al-Malik was appointed ‘international arbitrator’, and resolved the case in favour of Menendo. Such relations would certainly have been accompanied by the exchange of gifts, and this is a likely context in which the Braga pyxis changed hands. Its peaceable imagery fits perfectly with this notion, and could support the idea that it was carved

specifically as a diplomatic gift – a beautiful object courteously offered to express the wish for cordial relations.

Similarly, Miriam Ali-de-Unzaga suggests that at some point in the turbulent relationship between the ‘Āmirid *hujjāb* and Sancho García of Castile, the Andalusī silk-and-gold embroidery now in the Monastery of San Salvador at Oña (Figures 13, 137) exchanged hands as a diplomatic gift. The monastery at Oña was founded by Sancho in 1011, and Ali-de-Unzaga suggests that this magnificent textile may have been a gift from the founder at the time of its consecration.¹²¹ The textile itself will be discussed in Chapter 7 (2.4), but as to its dating, the scholarly consensus is that it was made during the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, probably

120 HEM 11:286.

121 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 568.

for the caliph himself. What Ali-de-Unzaga does not explain is how it later passed from Umayyad into ʿĀmirid hands. The implication is presumably the usual one, that ʿAbd al-Malik or his father had ‘usurped’ this precious and prestigious embroidery, along with the caliphate. Another possibility is that Sancho obtained the textile after his victorious entry into Cordoba in 1009, when he lent his military support to the caliphal pretender, Sulayman al-Mustaʿin, and helped him gain the throne; as a reward, he was covered with money, horses, jewels and clothes of honour, which he brought back with him to Burgos and perhaps donated to his own monastic foundation two years later.¹²² Moreover, Fernando Valdés sensibly points out that the monastery at Oña only grew in importance during the eleventh century, benefitting from considerable donations, gifts and royal burials, and it grew into the most important ecclesiastical institution in Castile. This precious Andalusī embroidery could thus have been donated to the monastery at some considerably later date than its initial foundation.¹²³

Finally, we might speculate whether the magnificent Pamplona casket (Figures 120–127) found its way to Navarra through diplomatic gift exchange. As we have seen, there was a close, even family, connection between the ʿĀmirids and the Navarrese monarchy, whose capital was at Pamplona, and at least two royal embassies came to Cordoba in the 990s. The casket came to reside in the monastery at Leyre, as a reliquary for the bones of the

martyrs Nunila and Alodia, and was there since at least 1057, when their relics were translated into it. As Harris has shown, this monastery ‘was closely allied with the Pamplonese/Navarrese crown and bishopric throughout its history ... Four of the monastery’s abbots were simultaneously Bishop of Pamplona, [and] examination of the monastic cartulary proves that many of its donations came from royalty and that at least one member of the royal family was buried at the site.’¹²⁴ Perhaps this ivory casket came into Navarrese hands during diplomatic contact with the ʿĀmirids, and was later rededicated to this royal foundation as a suitably magnificent container for the relics of these saintly sisters.

As a final point, it is significant to note that most of the instances of ʿĀmirid diplomatic relations that have been discussed here took place in the 990s. This may be a symptom of the fact that Ibn Darrāj, from whom we gather much of our information about the Christian embassies, only became ‘poet laureate’ in 992; nevertheless, as outlined in Chapter 1, it was at exactly this period that al-Manṣūr began to adopt protocol more appropriate to the caliph, in requiring his officials to kiss his hand and to address him with a variety of honorific titles. The increased intensity of diplomatic activity which is observable at this period, and the luxury arts patronage which seems to have accompanied it, should be considered as another aspect of the caliphal protocol and practice which al-Manṣūr consciously adopted in order to express his role as the caliphs’ delegate.

122 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 569, referencing *Bayān* 111:86 and Scales 1994, 188.

123 Valdés Fernández 2001.

124 Harris 1995, 215 ff.

‘The Creation of Loyalty’: Public and Private Staging of the ‘Āmirid Court

When Sulaymān [al-Musta‘īn] established himself in Cordoba ... those that remained of the ‘Āmirid poets (*shu‘arā’ āmirīyyīn*) that were still residing in Cordoba at that time began to compose panegyric for him in the hope of tapping the stores of his generosity. So they composed in his praise good poems in which they appealed to religion (*dīn*) and manly virtue (*murū‘a*), and most of them recited them openly in his public audience. He listened with manifest delight, but then defrauded them in accepting the panegyric, for he neither rained down generous rewards upon them nor even sprinkled. Because of this the dispersal of the group [of poets] from Cordoba was completed and most of them abandoned his protection. Thus every trace of culture (*adab*) was erased there and was vanquished by barbarism, and the Cordobans reverted from their customary humanism to blatant vulgarity, and nobility was abandoned.

IBN ḤAYYĀN, *apud* IBN BASSĀM 1989, I, 1:50¹



This passage, which describes the state of literary patronage in Cordoba immediately after the

‘Āmirid period, is telling of what Andalusī poets had come to expect under ‘Āmirid patronage: a two-way relationship, in which the patron provided a captive audience for their panegyrics, and in turn rewarded them amply. As Stetkevych puts it, ‘the role of a panegyric *qaṣīda* in a ritual exchange of poem and prize is ... a sacred trust upon which courtly culture is founded.’² When al-Musta‘īn did not fulfil his side of the bargain, the *dīwān* of ‘Āmirid poets was forced to find patronage elsewhere. As the passage quoted above goes on to say, Ibn Darrāj was one of the poets to leave Cordoba at this time, finding patronage at the Tujībīd court in Zaragoza.³ Ibn Ḥayyān credits this diaspora for the flourishing of Arabic literature at Taifa courts in the eleventh century, led by such charismatic and creative individuals as Ibn Shuhayd and Ibn Ḥazm. But, as this passage implies, the only place that Andalusī poets could have come to expect such a level of patronage, and where the seeds for the later flourishing were sown, was at the ‘Āmirid court. In fact, for Salma Khadra Jayyusi, the ‘*hijāba* period’ was the start of ‘the greatest literary age of al-Andalus.’⁴

While there is little textual evidence for al-Manṣūr’s artistic patronage, there is substantial evidence in the primary sources to demonstrate active literary patronage during his *hijāba*. Indeed, a new ‘courtly’ style of courtier was born from al-Manṣūr’s policy of surrounding himself with an informal *dīwān* of boon companions (*nudamā’*), a practice which likewise reached its full development at Taifa courts, as Cynthia Robinson has

1 The text of this passage is also given by Blachère 1933, 108, n. 3, and discussed at p. 109. This translation is from Stetkevych 1997, 11.

2 Stetkevych 1997, 43.

3 Viguera 1983.

4 Khadra Jayyusi 1992a, 326.

discussed.⁵ The focus in this chapter will be on the development of an 'Āmirid literary culture, since a study of the influence of literary patronage on the cultural environment of the 'Āmirid court suggests ways in which the visual arts produced for these same patrons may be read. These personal and intimate gatherings with members of the Cordoban elite, who tacitly legitimised their regime, developed bonds of loyalty to al-Manṣūr and his sons; these were also the target audience of the messages contained in the decoration of the objects which furnished the spaces in which they gathered. These objects will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, while the relationship of poetic imagery to particular 'Āmirid objects or visual motifs is discussed in Chapter 8.

1 Elegance and Eloquence: the Literary Court

The literature patronised by the 'Āmirid court falls into two types: public poetry, that is panegyric which was composed for the express purpose of recitation during the types of ceremonial occasions discussed in the previous chapter; and private poetry, created and sung in intimate *majālis* hosted by al-Manṣūr and his sons, as we will discuss below. This atmosphere of literary patronage invites a broader consideration of the place of books and learning at this period.

Every ceremony in al-Rāzī's *Annals* ends with a short paragraph containing a phrase similar to the following example: 'During [the ceremony] the orators and poets stood extemporising and reciting many long and excellent [orations and poems], and among the best of what the poets recited that day was ...'.⁶ Al-Rāzī then relates the 'greatest hits'

of the panegyric poems recited on that occasion. In this way, a substantial quantity of panegyric poetry from the last years of al-Ḥakam's reign has been preserved. Studies of this poetry show that it was 'essentially political', and that poets used it to make statements about '[Andalusi] foreign policy and [its] expansionist plans *vis-à-vis* the Islamic world'.⁷

The rhetorical vehicle for these political statements was the panegyric *qaṣīda*, which was transferred to al-Andalus from the Abbasid court 'as an integral element of courtly ceremony and the insignia of authority'.⁸ This is reflected not only in the incorporation of panegyric recitation as an essential element of Andalusī ceremonial, but also in the practice of *mu'āraḍa*, 'imitation' or 'response' to a well-known, earlier, usually Abbasid poem.⁹ Such was the case in the *qaṣīdas* recited at the *ʿid al-ḥiṭr* ceremony of 363/974: al-Muhannad's offering imitated a poem by Abū al-'Atāhiya, and that of Ibn Shukhayṣ was based on poetic quotation from Abū Tammām.¹⁰ Thus, Cordoban poets strove to identify '*qaṣīda* with *qaṣīda* and caliphate with caliphate' – in other words, to identify poetically with their Muslim rivals, all the better to compete with them politically.¹¹ The court poet's presentation of a panegyric *qaṣīda* was thus 'an act of allegiance that [was] both politically and ritually obligatory and, as a bodily performance, [was] part of the iconography of power'.¹²

As al-Manṣūr adopted the forms of caliphal ceremonial and diplomatic relations in the articulation of his court, so he adopted the all-important element of panegyric poetry. The transmission of much of Ibn Darrāj's *dīwān* indicates that these

5 Robinson 2002, 2007. I would like to express my gratitude to Cynthia Robinson for her generosity over the years in providing me with drafts of her unpublished work on this subject, some of which remains unpublished.

6 Stetkevych 1997, 3, from the *ʿid al-ḥiṭr* celebration from 363/974 (*Anales*, §180; her translation). For other similar passages, cf. *Anales*, §§33, 68, 82, 127, 143, 198, 237.

7 García Gómez 1949, 5, and Stetkevych 1997.

8 Stetkevych 1997, 28.

9 To form his response, the poet may adopt the same rhyme and metre as the original, employ the same rhyme-words, incorporate or quote an entire hemistich (*tadmūn*), in addition to borrowing particular motifs and metaphors. See Stetkevych 1997, 28–29.

10 Stetkevych 1997, 30–34.

11 Stetkevych 1997, 22.

12 Stetkevych 1997, 22.

poems were publicly recited, in gatherings like those recorded in the *Anales Palatinos*. Al-Manṣūr was skillful in his manipulation of public poetry, in the audience hall as well as on the battlefield, and his military entourages usually included poets 'so that they might record his high deeds'.¹³ He was accompanied on his campaign against Count Borrell of Barcelona in 375/986 by no fewer than forty poets, whose names have been preserved by Ibn al-Khaṭīb as illustrative of the 'pomp and splendour with which [the *ḥājib*] generally marched, and the cultivation of letters during his administration'.¹⁴ His own political propaganda depended in large part on the panegyrics that these poets composed about him, which were widely circulated, projecting a particular image that he himself designed.¹⁵

It is apparent from what Makkī calls his 'vivid realism' that Ibn Darrāj also accompanied al-Manṣūr on several campaigns: in poem 111, for example, which was written about al-Manṣūr's campaign against León in 995, he gives a vivid description of the Muslim armies marching through the hardships of winter and his impressions of the horrors of war.¹⁶ In poem 4, he says unequivocally, 'With my own eyes I saw, on the day of the battle of Clunia ...' (1.33); in poem 126, 'I saw how you made a star fall and I was a witness of

what they call the lion race' (1.23).¹⁷ Ibn Darrāj was also employed to write in rhymed prose the official account (*risāla*) of the Santiago campaign in 387/997, a work which was considered by contemporary critics to be a masterpiece of Arabic prose. Ibn Ḥazm relates that at the end of the campaign, al-Manṣūr summoned his most favoured poetscribes, Ibn Darrāj and Abū Marwān al-Jazīrī, and ordered them to write immediately their accounts of the battle. While al-Jazīrī complied, Ibn Darrāj waited a few days, and in consequence his work was the 'object of the greatest admiration ... as much for its accuracy as for its magnificent literary style'.¹⁸ Though now lost, it is possible that it is partly preserved in Ibn 'Idhārī's account of this campaign, which is 'much more detailed, with a profusion of toponymic and geographical facts, precise dates and details which we do not encounter in [his] accounts ... of the other campaigns'.¹⁹

The *ḥājib*'s intention in employing poets in such capacities was clearly that he be praised and his exploits celebrated, but this begs the question: what was his intended audience? While military victories continued to be announced to the population at large from the minbars of the congregational mosques,²⁰ a document written in complex rhymed prose was intended solely for an educated audience. Likewise, panegyrics were recited in gatherings of the state's elite, at ceremonies such

13 Al-Maqqarī, 189–190.

14 Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1974, 11: 106–107, quoted in al-Maqqarī, 189–190. Though as Garulo 2008, 316, points out, the list provided by Ibn al-Khaṭīb is not necessarily totally reliable: he includes al-Ramādī, though this was just two years after the downfall of al-Muṣḥafī, when al-Ramādī is likely to still have been *persona non grata* with al-Manṣūr, for his partisanship of al-Muṣḥafī. Garulo asks: 'Es lo que tenemos aquí un intento posterior de recuperar una figura relevante de la poesía andalusí, restableciéndolo en el lugar que le correspondería por su arte, en el entorno del poder?' Ibn Darrāj is also listed among the Barcelona poets, though he did not come to prominence at al-Manṣūr's court until around 992. Echevarría 2011, 197, believes his inclusion in the list for the Barcelona campaign implies that he was actually contracted earlier than we have come to believe.

15 Echevarría 2011, 198, citing De la Puente 1997, 390.

16 Makkī 1963–64, 70.

17 Makkī 1963–64, 67. Poems 4 and 126 were both written about a campaign against Castile in 994, in which the forts of both San Esteban de Gormaz and Clunia fell to al-Manṣūr's armies. Another campaign at which Ibn Darrāj seems to have been present was that against the Christian coalition in 1000: see poem 105, Makkī 1963–64, 78.

18 Ibn Ḥazm, *apud* al-Ḥumaydī 1966, 104 (biog. 186), cited by Makkī 1963–64, 70–71; cf. Blachère 1933, 102. On al-Jazīrī, see *Continente* 1969.

19 Makkī 1963–64, 71. In total Ibn Darrāj wrote three poems about the Santiago campaign (poems 102, 120 and 128), which Makkī discusses at pp. 72–3.

20 Ghālib's victories are announced in this way throughout the *Anales*, see §§194 and 241; and as mentioned in the previous chapter, this was also how al-Manṣūr proclaimed the news of Zīrī ibn 'Aṭīyya's victory over Abū'l-Bahār in 384/994.

as those discussed in the previous chapter, where al-Manṣūr received homage from his conquered enemies. We should also bear in mind that poetic celebrations of al-Manṣūr's military successes would resonate among his political rivals, and we find in Ibn Darrāj's poems exaggerated and propagandistic statements *vis-à-vis* the Abbasids and Fatimids.²¹ For these reasons, Stetkevych characterises 'the *qaṣīda* as an object' as 'one of the "royal insignia".²²

To fulfil these ceremonial functions – but also for more private reasons, as we shall see – al-Manṣūr maintained a circle (*dīwān*) of poets laureate, the *shu'arā' āmiriyyīn* of Ibn Ḥayyān's passage above, or the 'pensioned poets' as they are called by Ibn al-Khaṭīb.²³ This seems to have come into being around 991–2.²⁴ This group was formed by the most educated men of the day, who also held official posts at court. In addition to those names that have already been mentioned (Ibn Darrāj, Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī, al-Jazīrī), the following persons can be associated with the 'Amirid *dīwān*: courtier-poets of al-Ḥakam's reign such as al-Muṣḥafī and Hārūn al-Ramādī;²⁵ patricians (and fathers of poets) such as Abū Marwān ibn Shuhayd and Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm;²⁶ al-Sharīf al-Ṭalīq, an Umayyad prince

of the blood, whom Ibn Ḥazm called 'the best Andalusī poet of his time';²⁷ savants such as Ibn al-'Arīf (tutor to al-Manṣūr's sons), Ibn Dhakwān (grand *qāḍī* of Cordoba), Abū Hafṣ ibn Burd (author of Sanchuelo's succession *risāla*),²⁸ and 'Īsā ibn Sa'īd (*ḥājib* to al-Muzaffar). The Ṣaqālība in al-Manṣūr's retinue were also highly educated, and Ibn Ḥayyān preserves the names of those who authored books or treatises;²⁹ later, when several of them became rulers of Taifa states, they sponsored their own literary circles (Conclusion).³⁰ In sum, 'the poets, theologians, orators and rhetoricians who flourished under [al-Manṣūr's] reign ... were as numerous as the sands of the ocean', and in a chapter entitled 'the state of literature under Hishām', the caliph's name is not once mentioned by al-Maqqarī.³¹

Access to this group was gained by competitive application. A prospective member's credentials were his education and wit, his talent at composing and preferably extemporising quality poetry, and his courtly comportment – qualities which Robinson embodies in the concepts of 'elegance' and 'eloquence'.³² However, he was still required to pass through a formal tribunal, as the experiences of both Ibn Darrāj (958–1030) and Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī (c. 950–1026) demonstrate. Ibn Darrāj al-Qastallī – whose *kunya* implies an association with Castile, but who may in fact have been a Ṣanhāja Berber – faced a tribunal composed of poets, literati and intellectuals, in which he was required to improvise a panegyric in al-Manṣūr's honour. The panel considered his offering too perfect and accused him of plagiarism. In

21 On the 'imperialist propaganda' in Ibn Darrāj's panegyrics that 'argued for the reconquest of the eastern Islamic regions from the Fatimids', see Monroe 1971a, 4ff.

22 Stetkevych 1997, 22.

23 Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1974, II, 106. He says that the 40 poets whom al-Manṣūr took with him on his Barcelona campaign were *min al-shu'arā' al-murtaziqīn bi-dīwāni-hi*. 'Murtaziqīn' has the sense of 'hired' or 'kept' (Hans Wehr) with general overtones of good fortune and the receipt of gifts, though Edward Lane's dictionary gives the definition of *murtaziqa* as 'those who receive subsistence money, pay, or settled periodical allowances of food'. It is therefore appropriate to translate it here as 'salaried' or 'pensioned'.

24 Echevarría 2011, 197.

25 On al-Muṣḥafī, see Nykl 1946, 49–51. On al-Ramādī, see Nykl 1946, 58–60; Khadra Janyusi 1992a, 330–331; and Garulo 2008.

26 On Ibn Shuhayd, see Nykl 1946, 47–49. Dickie 1964, 250 and 1975, 16, comments that the Banū Shuhayd were one of the principal Cordoban families, on whom also

see Meouak 1999, 129–139. On Ibn Ḥazm, see Puerta Vilchez 2013b; on the relationship between the Banū Ḥazm and al-Manṣūr, see Behloul 2002, 225–229.

27 On whom see Nykl 1946, 61–64; García Gómez 1945; Terés 1956, 420; Monroe 1974, 11.

28 On whom see Nykl 1946, 121–122.

29 Ibn Ḥayyān *apud* al-Maqqarī, 200. Cf. also al-'Abbādī 1953, especially pp. 13–14.

30 Al-'Abbādī 1953, 15–24; for example, on Mujāhid's cultural patronage in Denia, see Sarnelli Cerqua 1964.

31 Al-Maqqarī, 200.

32 Robinson 2002, 11.

refutation of this charge, he improvised a second poem (preserved in his *Dīwān* as poem 100), with which he was successful. He was generously rewarded by al-Manṣūr, appointed to the position of *kātib* in the *Dīwān al-Inshāʾ* (Chancery), and on 3 Shawwal 382/2 December 992 'his name was inscribed in the register of official poets'.³³ The brilliance of his poetic skill led to Ibn Darrāj being commissioned to compose the funeral elegy for Ṣubḥ, on her death in 998;³⁴ eventually his reputation was such that he was known as 'the Mutanabbī of al-Andalus', after the Abbasid poet who lived 915–965.³⁵

Ṣāʿid al-Baghdādī's 'trial' was even more notorious. One of the cultured men attracted to Cordoba at this period from the Islamic East, he arrived from Baghdad in 990, where he was known as 'al-Lughawī, 'the Philologist'.³⁶ Before being awarded a place on al-Manṣūr's *dīwān*, he was put to the test by a 'cabal ... of high officials, secretaries of the Chancery, *literati* and poets',³⁷ led by Ibn al-ʿArīf, al-Zubaydī and al-ʿĀṣimī, who posed questions of Arabic grammar and philology.³⁸ As seems to be something of a topos, Ṣāʿid was also accused of plagiarism, and his skill was tested by being

required to improvise a poem in description of an elaborately-laid tray:³⁹

"A large tray, containing compartments ornamented with every variety of elegant designs ... On the roof of the compartments were toys of jasmine made in imitation of females, and under the roof a reservoir of transparent water, the bottom of which was paved with pearls instead of common pebbles; in the water was a snake swimming. [Upon showing this object to the poet, al-Manṣūr said,] 'Look at that tray, the like of which I assert was never placed before any other king but me. If the charge brought against you be false, prove it by describing to me in verse both the tray and its contents'. [To meet this challenge, Ṣāʿid recited a composition that al-Manṣūr deemed beautiful but incomplete. He called Ṣāʿid's attention to a detail he had failed to notice:] a ship, in which was a maiden rowing herself with oars of gold. Immediately Ṣāʿid started reciting new verses on the motif he had previously overlooked and, finally, al-Manṣūr regarded the poem worthy of the object described. For his ability to render images in poetic words, Ṣāʿid received a gift: one thousand dinars and one hundred robes."

33 Blachère 1933, 101–102; La Chica Garrido 1979, 15–16; Echevarría 2011, 197.

34 Marín 1997, 442. Al-Manṣūr walked barefoot at the head of the funeral cortège, presided over the elegy and offered alms of 500,000 dinars before her tomb: *Dhikr Bilād* 1:184–5 [2:196].

35 Echevarría 2011, 197. Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1974, II, 107 calls Ibn Darrāj the 'Mutanabbī al-Andalusī'. See 'al-Mutanabbī', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

36 Blachère 1930, 16, 18–19.

37 Blachère 1930, 20–24. The anecdotes relating to Ṣāʿid's 'tribunal' are found in al-Maqqarī, 200–207, who gives Ibn Bassām as his source (cf. Ibn Bassām 1989, 1:4:8–56).

38 Al-Zubaydī (on whom see Fagnan 1904, 488, n. 3; *HEM* 11:218, n. 1) was personal tutor to Hishām, and one of the Maliki *fuqahāʾ* who officiated at the purge of al-Ḥakam's library (on which see *Bayān* 11:314–315 [translation, 487–488]; Wasserstein 1990–1991, and my discussion in Chapter 5). On al-ʿĀṣimī, see Fierro 1986, especially 70–71.

Francisco Prado-Vilar subjects this episode to an interesting analysis that has implications for our later discussions about al-Manṣūr's engagement with the workings of the luxury arts industry (Chapter 6) and how the iconography of the objects he commissioned visualised specific messages about the 'Āmirids' role (Chapter 8). This anecdote 'reveals a model of viewing courtly portable objects that privileges close observation and attention to detail' – it shows al-Manṣūr engaging with the materiality and physicality of the object before him, 'find[ing] pleasure in the discovery of

39 Cf. Blachère 1930, 22–23, and al-Maqqarī, 204–205 (*Analectes*, 11: 55–56), most recently cited and discussed in Prado-Vilar 2005, 156.



FIGURE 14 Arcades at the Aljafería, Zaragoza, late eleventh century
© KENT RAWLINSON

nuances and variations on the commonplace.⁴⁰ It also highlights a privileged interrelationship between objects and poetry. As Prado-Vilar puts it, ‘When interpretation entered the public stage, the vehicle was poetry because it was understood that the essential challenge posed by the visual was a challenge to the limitations of language itself. Only the poet, the master of language, could attempt to come close to capturing the full significance of the object.’

It is not surprising that the admission process to the ‘Āmirid *dīwān* was so tightly controlled and jealously guarded by those who were already in it, since it meant the making of one’s career and was accompanied by generous remuneration. It presumably also ensured that only poetry and literature of the highest calibre was seen to be patronised by the court. However, it also

symbolised admission to al-Manṣūr’s closest circle, for a poet who passed the tribunal thus became one of the *ḥājib*’s *nudamā*’ (boon companions), with whom he chose to relax in intimate *majālis* on his return from campaign. While the patronage of court panegyrists can be interpreted in the context of ‘Āmirid ‘appropriation’ of caliphal ceremonial, this second, more private, level of the *dīwān* would appear to have been a personal innovation by al-Manṣūr.

2 Private Poetry

As Cynthia Robinson has discussed, in her work on the Taifa court of the Tujībids of Zaragoza and its home among the intricately-decorated halls of the Aljafería (Figure 14), by the early eleventh century, the primary forum for interaction between king and courtier had become the *majlis al-uns*,

40 Prado-Vilar 2005, 156–7.

'elegant and intimate *soirées* at which wine was drunk, physical and spiritual beauties contemplated, and lyrical poetry and song improvised and sung'.⁴¹ Such was the environment out of which arose the treatises on *adab* by Aḥmad al-Aṣghar ibn Burd, grandson of the 'Āmirid *kātib*;⁴² Ibn Ḥazm's work on 'courtly love'; and the poems of Ibn Shuhayd in which the poet adopts the role of the 'loving subject'.⁴³

These new 'courtly' relationships were not forged according to traditional virtues, but rather by 'the possession of certain qualities which could be *cultivated* (knowledge, elegance in person, deportment and speech)'.⁴⁴ This differentiated them from the traditional relationships between caliph and courtier-poet, and thus allowed the creation of an 'alternate nobility'. The main protagonists of this 'courtly' interaction were the *kuttāb* of the Dīwān al-Inshā', members of Cordoba's patrician families. As discussed in Chapter 1, al-Manṣūr was conscious of needing the support of these 'mandarin dynasties' and cultivated their support by finding new positions of power for them in the administration. The development of a private aspect to the relationship between ruler and courtier was perhaps the most important way in which the 'Āmirids sought to build support for their position. What Robinson describes as the "Āmirī rulers' perspicacious currying of the favor of "old nobility" through 'ties of loyalty',⁴⁵ and of occasionally solidifying those relationships

through marriage,⁴⁶ bound the Cordoban elite to the 'Āmirid dynasty. Though this bond was forged in the intimate setting of literary *majālis*, it was publicly and regularly affirmed through the practice of caliphal-style ceremonial.

The new privileging of written culture in al-Andalus can again be compared to the cultural coming-of-age of the Abbasid court in the late eighth/early ninth centuries, when writing and literature were growing in sophistication and importance, increasing in complexity and 'metaphorical encoding', and reflected in the newly self-conscious practice of history-writing.⁴⁷ Von Grunebaum attributes this development to the increasing urbanisation of Abbasid society, which led to what he calls 'the ritualisation of life',⁴⁸ that is, the codification of an intricate social etiquette as embodied, for example, in the *Kitāb al-Muwashshā'*.⁴⁹ It is generally accepted that the Abbasid culture of *ẓarf*, 'elegance', was introduced to al-Andalus in the ninth century by figures such as Ziryāb, who brought to Cordoba 'not only the courtly music traditions of Baghdad but also the art of elegant living, with its manners, fashions and etiquette'.⁵⁰ *Zarf* also accompanied the adoption of the 'courtly' persona in al-Andalus, and literary anthologies show that the 'cult of physical elegance and verbal eloquence' was firmly entrenched at the Taifa courts. However, Robinson argues that the foundations of this 'cult' were laid at the 'Āmirid court.

41 Robinson 2002, 8.

42 On whom see Robinson 2002, 94 n. 15, 110. Aḥmad ibn Burd was one of the most brilliant *literati* at the Taifa court of Almería, and claimed to have learned everything he knew about literature and its 'craft' (*ṣana'at al-kalam*) from his grandfather, Abū Hafṣ ibn Burd, a member of the 'Āmirid *dīwān*. See also Nykl 1946, 121–122.

43 Robinson 2002, 105–116. The concept of the 'loving subject' is already seen in the work of Mutanabbī, and is probably therefore another 'borrowing' from Abbasid poetry: my thanks to Julie Meisami for pointing this out.

44 Robinson 2002, 109.

45 Robinson 2002, 106, 121.

46 See my genealogy of the Banū Abī 'Āmir (Appendix 1): some examples are al-Manṣūr's unnamed daughter who was married to 'Īsā ibn Sa'īd; and 'Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar's wife, Khayāl, who later remarried al-Qāsim ibn Ḥammūd, the first 'caliph' of that dynasty which rose to prominence in Cordoba during the Taifa period. Al-Muẓaffar's son, Abū 'Āmir, was an intimate of Ibn Ḥazm: cf. Ibn Ḥazm 1953, 43; 50; 143–144; 248–249; also the discussion in Martínez-Gros 1997, 31–49.

47 See the introduction to Stetkevych 1991.

48 Von Grunebaum 1955, esp. 280–281.

49 Written by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Yahyā ibn al-Washshā' (d. 936): Robinson 2002, 68 n. 38.

50 Holod 1992, 42, citing al-Maqqarī, 83–90.

Vignettes of these ‘relationships of loyalty’ are preserved by the sources. One source which Robinson uses extensively in her discussion is the *Kitāb al-Badī fī Waṣf al-Rabī*, written c. 1040 by al-Ḥimyarī and dedicated as a gift to the Taifa ruler of Seville, al-Mu‘tadid ibn ‘Abbād.⁵¹ This anthology of lyric verse drew on the ‘private’ correspondence of ‘Āmirid courtiers, and the qualities and accomplishments which these men praised in each other help us to define a portrait of the ideal courtier: for example, a *qaṣīda* written by Abū Hafṣ ibn Burd to Ṣā‘id al-Baghdādī lauds his general knowledge (*ilm*), elegance (*ẓarf*), knowledge of and prowess in literature (*adab*), agreeableness (*ṭīb*), and linguistic skills (*luḡhāt*).⁵² ‘Āmirid *nudamā*’ were thus ‘united by their nobility, their intelligence, their education and their peerless dominion over that most noble tool of their trade, the Arabic language.’⁵³

The context for the propagation of these ‘courtly’ virtues was al-Manṣūr’s *majlis*, a word qualified in the texts by *al-uns* or *al-mu’nis*, meaning (abstractly) a gathering or (physically) a place, for leisure, sociability or intimacy. Such gatherings had long since given rise to their own lyrical genre – the *khamriyya*.⁵⁴ The favoured setting was a *locus amoenus* which evoked nature but was usually an artificial, cultivated environment which accorded better with the tastes of contemporary urban society. The favoured time was night – all night – and wine was passed round by a wine-pourer (*sāqī*) or Ganymede, a young boy selected for his looks, and ‘specially trained to perform his office with flirtatious charm and in accordance with prescribed rules of etiquette.’⁵⁵ The *sāqī*

played an important role in creating the requisite atmosphere, and was often the subject in games of poetic improvisation with which the participants entertained themselves; other entertainment was provided by dancers and singers, accompanied by musicians.

If we look at the scenes on the front of the Pamplona casket (Figure 120), we can start to visualise what these gatherings might have looked like. Together with the anecdotal testimony of poetry and literature, the material evidence can help to build a picture of the physical setting of the ‘Āmirid *majlis*. It is said that on his return from campaign, al-Manṣūr liked to relax in the palace of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, or in one of the various nearby ‘Āmirid *munyas* (Chapter 4), ‘surrounded by cool gardens, filled with the murmur of fountains, fragranced with the perfume of flowers.’⁵⁶ He was joined in these leisure hours by his *nudamā*’, members of his *dīwān* who had likely also accompanied him on campaign. As at the Aljafería, the settings were probably pavilions surrounded by gardens, where the distinction between inside and outside was blurred. The luscious vegetation framed by architectural ornament which is presented as the main decoration on both al-Manṣūr’s fountain basin (Figure 114) and the Braga pyxis (Figure 15) seems to capture the sense of looking out through the arches of a pavilion at a verdant garden. These gardens were watered by fountains and canals, and perhaps ‘inhabited’ by sculptures of animals, which could also provide a source of inspiration for improvised verses. A poem by al-Jazīrī, for example, describes one of these ‘salons’:

“In the centre of the hall is a large basin of green water in which the turtles continually make sounds.

The water pours from the jaws of a lion whose mouth could only be more terrible if it spoke.

51 On al-Ḥimyarī, see Nykl 1946, 123–124, and Robinson 2007, 110.

52 Robinson 2002, 114–115, citing Ibn Bassām 1989, 1, 1108–109. On compositions ‘on lyrical themes of love and pleasure’ dedicated by Ibn Darrāj to both Ṣā‘id al-Baghdādī and ‘Īsā ibn Sa‘īd, see Robinson 2002, 115–116 and n. 80 (Ibn Bassām (1989): 1, 1:57–62).

53 Robinson 2002, 115.

54 See Scheindlin 1986, 19–33; Von Grunebaum 1955; Hamilton 1988; Behrens-Abouseif 1997.

55 Scheindlin 1986, 20.

56 Blachère 1930, 20; also Robinson 2002, 119 n. 90, citing Ibn Bassām 1989, 1, 1, *tarjama* of Ibn Shuhayd.



FIGURE 15 Pyxis, datable 1004–8, ivory; Braga Cathedral, Portugal
 PHOTO: BRUCE WHITE / IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE TESOIRO-MUSEU DA SÉ DE BRAGA

It is of scented aloeswood (*nadd*) and around its neck one sees a handsome necklace of pearls ... In this hall, a king, whose riches are without number, has gathered all happiness for his people.”⁵⁷

Similarly a poem by Ṣāʿid al-Baghdādī alludes to the presence of water animals, presumably turtles, as ‘aquatic troops, inexpertly suited in their armour

and displaying cuirasses and shields.’⁵⁸ This rather militaristic imagery accords with the ‘Āmirid self-image as *mujāhid*, visualised especially on their marble fountain basins (Chapter 8).

Several such basins have survived, which must originally have furnished these settings (Figures 113–118, 128–135, 156–158). Their production contexts, materials, inscriptions and decoration will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 6–8, but for now it is significant to note their obvious original function as fountain basins, indicated not only by their size and shape, but also by the holes carved into many of them for input and output pipes. The three largest basins also have a plain, uncarved area on each of their short sides, between the eagles, which indicates that a fountain-head was once affixed here, one on each end (Figures 116, 131, 132, 158). These fountain-heads were presumably in the shape of animals, such as the lion of aloeswood described in al-Jazīrī’s poem, or the twelve which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III commissioned to adorn his green marble basin from the Byzantine emperor (Figures 10, 108–109). The prevalence of iconography relating to water on these and other surviving marbles associated with the ‘Āmirids – for example, the designs of ducks, fishes and turtles on the small basins from Seville and Granada (Figures 164–168) and in the borders of the three large basins, or the aquatic plants which seem to be waving as if in the current of a stream – is appropriate for objects whose function was associated with water. They also suggest a relationship between lions and water, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

An eleventh-century *risāla* by Ibn Jabār, courtier of the Banū Dhū al-Nūn, then Taifa rulers of Toledo, describes fountain basins which appear to have been similar in form and decoration to the extant ‘Āmirid basins, in a palatial setting which helps us to conjure a picture of how the ‘Āmirid basins were originally installed and viewed (Figures 108–109). This *risāla* presents an eye-witness account of the

57 Contente 1969, 131–132; Ruggles 2000, 124. See the full citation of this poem at the start of Chapter 8.

58 *Bayān* 11:297 [translation, 460].

festivities held by al-Ma'mūn (r. 1043–1075) in honour of the circumcision of his grandson, and to which the highest men of the state were invited.⁵⁹

“In this salon there were some ponds at whose corners were raised up figures of lions forged in gold with great art which startled those who looked at them with their sombre faces, and they threw forth water from their mouths into the ponds with the softness of drops of rain or phials of silver. In the [middle] of each pond was a basin of marble in the form of an altar, of great size, of wondrous form and extraordinarily engraved, for on each of their sides they were worked with figures of animals, birds and trees. The water of the two basins surrounded two trees of silver, tall and of extraordinary form and finished manufacture, which were fixed in the middle of each basin with the most refined technique. The water mounted up them from the basins and cascaded down from the highest point of their branches like light rain or dew. Upon entering it produced a murmuring which inclined the soul, and it went up to the top of a heavy column, produced by pressure, then slipping down from openings and moistening the figures of birds and fruit with a tongue which was like a polished phial, and whose beauty ignited the gaze.”

It should be remembered that the ceremonial and perhaps even some of the physical furnishings at al-Ma'mūn's court very likely inherited a model that had been developed under the 'Āmirids. We can imagine, then, that the palace halls and gardens where al-Manṣūr liked to relax with his *nudamā'* would have been watered by such basins, and the existence of al-Jazīrī's verses demonstrates that such objects were seen and remarked upon. As a result, these gatherings became a form of 'private display', in which the *nudamā'* – those members of the Cordoban elite whose personal loyalty to the

'Āmirids tacitly legitimised their regime – were the target audience of the messages contained in these objects' decoration.

During these private gatherings, the *ḥājib* is portrayed in intimate *têtes-à-têtes* with his companions while strolling among his palace gardens: on one occasion, for example, al-Manṣūr requested that the poet he was with improvise a description (*wasf*) on a certain aspect of the garden's beauty.⁶⁰ Ibn Shuhayd recalled how, in the 'halcyon days' of his childhood, savants and *līterati* gathered at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira for *durūb al-'ulūm*, 'paths to enlightenment', conversations on subjects such as *adab* (culture), *khābr* (history), *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *ṭibb* (medicine).⁶¹ New lyrical genres developed, especially the *nawriyya*, descriptions of flowers which often ended with a few lines of panegyric, a genre that was particularly favoured by al-Manṣūr's son, 'Abd al-Malik.⁶² Furthermore, al-Manṣūr himself participated in the activity of poetic composition and recitation: on one occasion the *ḥājib* recited verses from a *qaṣīda* by Abū Nūwās (c. 747–c. 813), the archetypal poet of the wine-party genre.⁶³ He is also known to have corresponded in verse with his courtiers,⁶⁴ and to have composed at least one short poem on the subject of his own bravery, to which we shall return in Chapter 8.⁶⁵

On occasion, al-Manṣūr's gatherings became quite raucous. Blachère portrays a place where 'anything goes', of 'long banquets where they ate well and drank better ... One even sees high officials getting up to dance and singing bacchic

59 Text transmitted by Ibn Bassām (1975), v:vii:147–148, and translated with commentary in Robinson 1995, 448–459.

60 Robinson 2002, 118, citing Ibn Bassām 1989, I, 4:12.

61 Robinson 2002, 116–117, citing Ibn Bassām 1989, I, 1:186.

62 For a *majlis al-uns* hosted by 'Abd al-Malik, which also preserves several *nawriyyāt*, see *Bayān* 111:18–21 [translation, 25–28].

63 Robinson 2002, 118, citing Ibn Bassām 1989, I, 4:13. On Abū Nūwās, see Scheindlin 1986, 25.

64 On the poetic correspondence between al-Manṣūr and Abū Marwān ibn Shuhayd, see Dickie 1964, 248–249; Ibn Bassām 1989, IV, 1:18–19.

65 *Bayān* 11:293 [translation, 455]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:185–186 [2:197]; Terés 1956, 419.

songs⁶⁶ – such as the time when Abū Marwān ibn Shuhayd became ‘so carried away with wine and mirth’ that he disported himself, in spite of his age and his gout, with three young serving women.⁶⁷ According to Robinson, al-Manṣūr’s *majālis* had a larger attendance than those of the Taifa period and may have included women, in contrast to the purely homosocial world of Taifa courts.⁶⁸ The *majālis* hosted by Ibn Shuhayd (grandson of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s boon companion) in the eleventh century were notorious for their debauchery, and they shared many elements with al-Manṣūr’s drinking parties, not least the participation of many of the same people.⁶⁹ However, Robinson argues from the differences between them that al-Manṣūr’s era represented ‘a point of transition, an initial stage in the development of the persona of the “courtly” king’.⁷⁰

How do these ‘Amirid *majālis* compare, then, to the private conduct of the caliphal court? As Robinson notes, ‘The lyrical, or pleasurable, realm clearly existed during the caliphate, and was prized’.⁷¹ Indeed, the caliphal panegyrist Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī (858–940) is known to have composed lyrical poetry on themes of ‘boys, wine and love’,⁷² whilst al-Muṣḥafī composed lyrical poetry

which showed the first glimpses in al-Andalus of the ‘loving subject’ – some of his verses were even addressed to his protégé, al-Manṣūr.⁷³ This raises the intriguing possibility that, just as with the institution of the *ḥijāba* itself, the development of a private facet to the conduct of the court might have begun under al-Muṣḥafī. Another poet, Yūsuf ibn Hārūn al-Ramādī (d. 1022), whose career spanned four reigns, is known to have excelled in poetic description (*wasf*), though not much of his poetry has survived.⁷⁴ Al-Ramādī was also a notorious satirical poet, who kept falling foul of his own verses, which may be one reason why so little of his poetry was transmitted by later writers.

The difference between the two scenarios lies in the presence or absence of the sovereign. Al-Muṣḥafī’s compositions are situated in the context of *majālis al-uns* attended by his *nudamā’*, but the caliph’s *absence* from the festivities is implied. As Monroe notes, ‘The caliphal dignity had brought great pomp to state ceremonies, and to maintain this pomp the caliph kept aloof from mingling with poets on too free a level’.⁷⁵ It seems, then, that during the caliphal period, the lyrical genre and the first appearance of ‘courtliness’ belonged exclusively to the private ‘sub-culture of *literati* (*kuttāb*), who also did their duties in the public sphere’ – but these two spheres did not meet.⁷⁶ On the other hand, it was in this very ‘sub-culture’ that al-Manṣūr had built his early career (Chapter 1): his first rung on the ladder was as *kātib*, and his prominent position at al-Ḥakam’s court would have allowed him to mix with the very circles of educated nobility who were engaged in

66 Blachère 1930, 20 (citing al-Maqqarī, 177). Nykl 1946, 48, says that at al-Manṣūr’s *majālis*, the ‘enthusiasm of the guests [would reach] the highest point and the viziers would rise in turn and dance’.

67 Dickie 1964, 249; Robinson 2002, 119. This seems, from Nykl 1946, 47–48, to be a conflation of two separate incidents.

68 Robinson 2002, 119–120. She gives no sources for this statement, though Nykl 1946, 54–55, relates an occasion when a female singer entertained al-Manṣūr’s *majlis*; and also mentions that the poetess, ‘A’isha bint Aḥmad (d. 1009) improvised panegyric verses at an audience with al-Muẓaffar (pp. 64–65). She was said to be unequalled among free women, in ‘knowledge, literary talent and poetry’.

69 See Dickie 1964, 260–261, for the list of those involved in Ibn Shuhayd’s literary movement.

70 Robinson 2002, 120.

71 Robinson 2002, 104.

72 Robinson 2002, 100. On Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, see Monés 1969, 223–224; Khadra Jayyusi 1992a, 328–330; Monroe 1974, 8.

73 Ibn Khāqān 1983, 159–160.

74 See Monés 1969, 225–227; Monroe 1974, 8; Khadra Jayyusi 1992a, 330–331; Garulo 2008. While in prison (in 972?), al-Ramādī is known to have written an important collection of *awṣāf* (descriptions) of different birds, a familiar motif of freedom. Garulo 2008, 312, says that this book, the *Kitāb al-tayr*, was dedicated to the young Hishām with the hope that he would intercede with his father al-Ḥakam to obtain al-Ramādī’s release. Unfortunately, the tactic was unsuccessful.

75 Monroe 1974, 10.

76 Robinson 2002, 100.

developing the new literary genres. It is therefore not surprising that al-Manṣūr's tastes in literature and the way in which he chose to relax in private should reflect the social environment in which he was raised. This was his peer-group and what bound him to it was exactly what kept the caliph apart from it:⁷⁷ intimate *majālis* would threaten the divinely-ordained hierarchy that was affirmed through caliphal ceremonial. Al-Manṣūr exploited this ceremonial as a useful stage on which to act out the public face of his role as *de facto* ruler; however, he could retire backstage at the end of the act, something the caliph could not do because, in a sense, he was the theatre itself.

3 A Culture of Learning

As Ballestín notes, the majority of the court officials, *fuqahā'* and *kuttāb* of al-Andalus shared the same culture that al-Manṣūr had imbibed from a young age, and thus literary discussion formed part of their daily existence.⁷⁸ Echevarría, more cynically, associates the formation of a literary circle at al-Zāhira with al-Manṣūr's aim to 'gain the friendship of the influential intellectual class, at the same time as controlling its meetings, which were celebrated in his halls, and preempting his critics'.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, it seems clear that al-Manṣūr had a genuine love of literature, and its interplay with the world around. Al-Ḥumaydī stated that 'he loved science, he dedicated himself to literature and he entertained those who dedicated themselves to both subjects and taught them; he was grateful and he paid them'.⁸⁰ Indeed, the 'Āmirid period was an intensely and self-consciously literary time, the start of 'the greatest literary age of al-Andalus'.⁸¹

Despite al-Manṣūr's purge of the 'philosophical' content of al-Ḥakam's library (Chapter 1), there was flourishing literary patronage at this period, during which Andalusis began to record their own history, as evidenced by Ibn Ḥayyān's great lost works. But he is not the only one to have written histories of al-Andalus, nor to have written books dedicated to al-Manṣūr. It was also at this period that 'Īsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 989) compiled the chronicle of the reign of al-Ḥakam II, which has survived in the fragment translated into Spanish as the *Anales Palatinos*; he also wrote the only Andalusi equivalent of manuals of office, the *Kitāb fī'l-wuzarā' wa'l-wizāra* and *Kitāb fī'l-ḥujjāb*, sometimes referred to as *Kitāb al-ḥujjāb li'l-khulafā' bi-l-Andalus*, both now lost.⁸² It is significant that a book about Andalusi *ḥājibs* should have been written during al-Manṣūr's tenure of that office. Al-Manṣūr's own librarian, Ibn Ma'mar, was the author of a lost dynastic history of the 'Āmirids (Chapter 6).⁸³ In Rabī' 1 385/April 995, Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī dedicated to the *ḥājib* the *Kitāb al-Fuṣūṣ fī al-Lughāt wa al-Akhhbār*, a 'chrestomathy of classical texts in prose and verse, with a commentary from a grammatical and literary perspective', which he wrote sitting in the courtyard of the congregational mosque of the 'Āmirid palace-city, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira.⁸⁴ According to the sources, it was commissioned in order to outdo the *Kitāb al-Nawādir*, or *Philological Rarities*, which had been written 'in praise of the Umayyad dynasty' by Abū 'Alī al-Qālī al-Baghdādī (901–967) and dedicated to al-Ḥakam.⁸⁵ It is significant that al-Manṣūr also

77 Monroe 1974, 10, suggests something similar when he says 'al-Manṣūr ... was not of royal blood and could therefore mingle more intimately with his courtiers'.

78 Ballestín 2004a, 31.

79 Echevarría 2011, 198.

80 Cited by De la Puente 1997, 389–90.

81 Khadra Jayyusi 1992a, 326–327.

82 Meouak 1994–5, 163. He comments that such texts or manuals of office are comparatively common in the Islamic East, in particular at the Abbasid period.

83 Echevarría 2011, 16–17. This figure will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

84 Asín Palacios 1933, 2, n. 4, see also al-Maqqarī, 202.

85 See 'al-Qālī', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, and Khadra Jayyusi 1992a, 324. On the relation between the *Fuṣūṣ* and *Nawādir*, see Blachère 1930, 23–24. According to al-Maqqarī, 201, al-Manṣūr showed Ṣā'id a copy of the *Nawādir*, and the poet said, 'If thou givest me permission, I will compose a book in thy praise that shall be more valuable than this'.

engaged in the time-honoured royal practice of commissioning works of literature, and especially so if such works were deliberately intended to outdo those produced under Umayyad patronage.

Other works are known to have been written during the 'Āmirid period: unsurprisingly, one of these was the first book written in al-Andalus to be completely dedicated to the subject of jihad the *Kitāb qudwat al-ghāzī*, written by Ibn Abī Zamanīn (d. 1008).⁸⁶ During al-Manṣūr's *hijāba* the works of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 996) arrived in al-Andalus, one of the jurists who would strongly influence the interpretation of Maliki law in al-Andalus.⁸⁷ Learned men who had come to prominence under al-Ḥakam II continued to work and flourish under al-Manṣūr. These included the physicians and pharmacologists, Ibn Juljul (d. 994), who had been involved in the translation of the *De Materia Medica*, and himself wrote an important work on the history of medicine, the *Ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā' wa'l-hukamā'* (Generations of Physicians and Wise Men);⁸⁸ and al-Zahrāwī (d. 1013), known in the West as Abulcasis, who wrote a monumental medico-pharmacological encyclopedia, *Kitāb al-taṣrīf li-man 'ajiz 'an al-ta'lif*.⁸⁹ The Egyptian, Aḥmad ibn Faris, who had formed part of the corps of astronomers and astrologists around al-Ḥakam II, remained active until 981; and as Juan Vernet has discussed, al-Manṣūr also made use of astrology and horoscopes.⁹⁰ One book may even have been dedicated to Hishām II, implying that the caliph may not have been entirely aloof from certain subjects: the *Kitāb fī tartīb awqāt al-ghirāsa wa'l-maghrūsāt*, a practical agricultural treatise containing 'advice on growing specific varieties

of productive trees, vegetables and other plants, along with suggestions on matters of domestic economy like the cutting of wood and methods for preserving harvested fruits, [suggesting] that it was composed for the use of the gardeners associated with Cordoba's suburban estates.⁹¹ It is surely significant that of the ten earliest extant Andalusī manuscripts written in Maghribī scripts, all of them date from the 'Āmirid period, with one exception – a ninth-century manuscript that was owned by a *faqīh* who died during the 'Āmirid period.⁹² These manuscripts, and further aspects of scribal and intellectual activity at this period, are discussed in Chapter 6.

Apart from the poets and verse forms discussed above, other forms of literature flourished at this period – one particularly famous book, the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, might have had an impact on the way that certain motifs in 'Āmirid art were visualised (Figure 173). Indeed, their visualisation might allude to the literary illustrations in a witty and intentional way that would have been understood and appreciated by the educated members of al-Manṣūr's closest circle.

To an extent, the developments in 'courtly' tastes and demeanour which took place under al-Manṣūr mark the coming-of-age of a sophisticated and cultured society, and reflect the developments at the Abbasid court a century earlier. However, unlike his predecessors in power, al-Manṣūr was himself a member of the educated nobility that began to formulate these tastes, and this placed him in the unique position of directly overseeing their development. Al-Manṣūr and his sons therefore deliberately fostered the 'cult of elegance and eloquence' in order to forge bonds of intimacy and affection with those whose approval they required to legitimise and maintain their *hijāba*. As Robinson argues, this policy was so successful that it was imitated by the Banū Hammūd, the Shi'i Berber dynasty who came to power briefly in Cordoba before settling in Málaga, as

86 Echevarría 2011, 173–4. Ibn Abī Zamanīn was a religious man famed as a mystic, who also wrote poetry. This treatise had a strong religious content, highlighting the practice of jihad to put man in contact with God. It also included a section on the distribution of booty.

87 Echevarría 2011, 216.

88 'Ibn Djuljul', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; Vernet (1968).

89 Hamarneh 1965, esp. 309, and Hamarneh and Sonnedecker 1963.

90 Calvo 2012, 152 with references; Vernet 1970.

91 Anderson 2013, 114, citing López y López 1990.

92 Listed and discussed in Bongianino 2017, 41–50.

well as other Taifa dynasties.⁹³ It is also seen in the fact that many of these elite *nudamā'* supported and were even implicated in Sanchuelo's bid to inherit the caliphate from Hishām II (Chapter 1). At the same time, these gatherings permitted the 'Āmirids to reinforce the messages of legitimation embedded in the physical settings of their *majālis*

and in the objects that furnished them. This highly refined and educated audience could fully understand the interplay between the imagery in the poetry sung at these gatherings and that visualised on the objects. This 'Āmirid literary culture, then, provides the framework we need to understand the more fragmented material evidence, to which we now turn.

93 Robinson 2002, 124–133.

Architecture as Titulature: al-Madīnat al-Zāhira

When Ibn Abī ‘Āmir reached the apogee of his power, when his light shone in all its splendour and his autocratic power was fully manifest ... he conceived the grand design, prerogative of kings, of constructing a palace where he would reside.

IBN KHĀQĀN, *apud* AL-ḤIMYARĪ 1938, 80–81¹



One of the most visible ways in which al-Manṣūr articulated his role as *ḥājib* was through monumental construction – more specifically, his decision to assume the ruler’s social responsibility to undertake public works, the most obvious of these being his extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba, the subject of Chapter 5. In contrast to those works commissioned (albeit ostentatiously) out of piety or for the public good, al-Manṣūr’s construction of a palace-city appears to be motivated less by reasons of legitimation than of demonstrating the power of his *ḥijāba*. More so than his mosque extension, al-Manṣūr’s foundation of a palace-city has prompted emotive responses in the primary and secondary literature, and has become inextricably implicated in the discourse of his usurpation of the Andalusī Umayyad caliphate. This viewpoint has arisen from the perceived appropriation by al-Manṣūr of an architectural form which was the ‘prerogative of kings’, and from the historiographers’ subsequent need to define and locate al-Madīnat al-Zāhira within the wider historical framework of Islamic palace-building.

It raises questions about his ‘right to build’, especially his ‘right’ to adopt architectural forms that were explicitly associated with the first two Umayyad caliphs after the many decades it had taken to construct Madīnat al-Zahrā’. Since all traces of this palace-city have disappeared from the archaeological record, and no serious attempts have been made to find and excavate it, as we will see in the first part of this chapter, to understand what it looked like and how it functioned, we must turn instead to the evidence provided by textual and poetic descriptions of the foundation, construction, function and destruction of al-Manṣūr’s palace-city.² The texts which preserve this information tell the same story, and it is likely that the common source for all of them was Ibn Ḥayyān’s lost history of the ‘Āmirids. A scattered number of surviving fragments of architectural decoration, which have been attributed to the ‘Āmirid period for various reasons, give a material aspect to this reconstruction. The fragmentary and sometimes circumstantial nature of the evidence available to us means that this discussion of al-Manṣūr’s palace-city and what it looked like can only remain speculative.

1 Looking for al-Zāhira

“The ruin of al-Zāhira was so complete that there remained no echo of its name in the local tradition, nor memory of its location, much debated in modern times ...³

¹ See also Rubiera Mata 1981, 132–133; Arjona Castro 1982, 212–213.

² I undertook this exercise while researching and writing my DPhil thesis. Shortly after this was submitted, Bariani 2002a was published, which also looked at the Arabic sources to see what could be reconstructed of al-Zāhira’s original appearance. This chapter incorporates her discussion into my own.

³ Torres Balbás 1956, 356.

It is probable that a fortuitous find will one day allow its discovery and its unearthed remains will reveal the last and little-known phase of caliphal art.”⁴

Thus Torres Balbás expressed his lack of conviction about the much-hailed occasional ‘identifications’ of the site of al-Manṣūr’s palace-city, which began with Velázquez Bosco’s investigations at the turn of the twentieth century.⁵ Attempts to locate al-Madīnat al-Zāhira in the archaeological record continued throughout the twentieth century, but none of them – not even the apparently definitive identification detailed by Arjona Castro et al. in 1994 – has so far presented an argument convincing enough to lead to excavation.⁶

The debate over the location of al-Zāhira began with the discovery and, later, excavation of Madīnat al-Zahrā’. During a delay in his excavations of al-Zahrā’, which began in 1910, Velázquez Bosco explored a nearby site which is now identified as the Muniyat al-Rummāniyya, but which he initially believed to be al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, or ‘Alamiriya’ as he called it, from the *muniya* al-‘Āmiriyya mentioned in the historical sources.⁷ Velázquez Bosco gave no reason for his initial identification of this site as al-Zāhira, but thus began a spate of attempts to locate al-Manṣūr’s palace-city archaeologically. Over the following decades, every newly discovered caliphal site was hailed as al-Zāhira. Ramírez de Arellano in 1918 believed it to be located in the grounds of the sanctuary of La Fuensanta, to the north-east of Cordoba.⁸ Its identification to the west, by Rafael Castejón, was reported in 1926 in the *Anales* of the

Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Cordoba,⁹ and was accepted as late as 1951 by Gómez-Moreno.¹⁰ Ocaña, in 1952, identified al-Zāhira with the Cortijo del Arenal in the eastern Ramla suburb of Cordoba.¹¹ And in 1963, a celebration of the ninth centenary of Ibn Ḥazm’s death gave rise to an investigation into the topography of the ‘Cordoba of Ibn Ḥazm’, which located al-Zāhira in the area bounded by the two streams of Pedroche and Rabanales, to the north-east of Cordoba.¹²

Evaluating these varying ‘identifications’ of al-Zāhira is made all the more difficult by the use of local toponyms, which do not appear on modern maps, the lack of grid-references or low-scale regional maps, and the absence from these publications of plans or pictures. Furthermore, it is curious that the search for al-Madīnat al-Zāhira followed an opposite pattern to that of al-Zahrā’, in that it occurred in spite of the textual evidence. As we will see below, all the texts which mention al-Zāhira unequivocally state that it was located to the east of Cordoba; however, due to the large number of archaeological finds which issued from the west of the city compared with the relative poverty of finds from the east, the texts were discounted. This trend began with Simonet, in his novel-esque history of al-Manṣūr, who located the city in the Eras de la Salud, to the west of Cordoba.¹³ This neglect of the textual evidence and insistence on a western location characterises the first phase of the search for al-Zāhira, so enthusiastic that it overlooked the development of a scientific methodology. This state of affairs continued until 1952 when Ocaña redirected the debate towards the east of the city, soberly demonstrating through copious references that there was no doubting the Arab sources.¹⁴ He was followed

4 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 598.

5 Velázquez Bosco 1912, and below.

6 I am not aware of any more recent attempts than this to locate al-Zāhira or attempt excavation.

7 Velázquez Bosco 1912, 18–19, and passim. For more information on the Muniyat al-Rummāniyya, see *Anales de la Comisión Provincial* 1926, 17–21, 34, 55; Arjona Castro et al 1994a, 252–253; Castejón 1945, 1949, 1954; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 166–171; Ocaña 1984a; Terrasse 1932, 166–67; Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 594–597; Vallejo Triano 1987; Anderson 2013; Arnold, Canto García and Vallejo 2008, 2015 and 2019.

8 Ramírez de Arellano 1918, 132, 328–9, 337.

9 *Anales de la Comisión Provincial* 1926, 55.

10 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 165–166.

11 Ocaña 1952, reprinted 1964–5.

12 Ocaña 1964–5.

13 Simonet 1858 [1986], 86–87, n. 121.

14 Ocaña 1952, reprinted 1964–5.



FIGURE 17 Topographical reconstruction showing the proposed location of al-Madinat al-Zahira in relation to the medina of Cordoba, the River Guadalquivir, the main arterial roads, and Fahs al-Suradiq
© MATILDE GRIMALDI

by Torres Balbás, whose accounts of al-Madinat al-Zahira are entirely text-based.¹⁵

The truth of the eastern location is now universally accepted, and has been most recently applied in Arjona Castro's 1994 identification of al-Zahira in 'the Cortijo de Las Quemadas, in an alluvial plain which forms a valley whose lower part is bathed by the waters of the Guadalquivir which surround it forming a meander' (Figure 17).¹⁶ This Cortijo is located at the heart of an industrial estate, in the eastern zone of the second meander of the Guadalquivir to the east of Cordoba, on a quarternary terrace which forms a plateau overlooking a flat, lower area which borders the river. According

to Arjona Castro, the toponym Las Quemadas is suggestive of an area harbouring ruins which were 'burnt', as al-Zahira was at the start of the Fitna. In the westernmost part of this area, 'important archaeological remains' have been found, including the standing remains of 10 metres of wall built from blocks of sandstone measuring 1.20–1.30m × 0.45–0.60m, and conforming to tenth-century construction methods: 'undoubtedly in [this] place there was a great palace with an important walled enclosure'.¹⁷ Arjona Castro further reports that coin hoards and construction remains have been found throughout this zone; most significantly, when the foundations of the Centro de Adaptación de Incapacitados (CAIPO) were laid

15 Torres Balbás 1956; 1957 [1996], 597–600.

16 Arjona Castro et al. 1994b, 262. This argument is recapitulated in Arjona Castro et al. 1995.

17 Arjona Castro et al. 1994b, 264; Arjona Castro et al. 1995, 186–7.

here in 1974, abundant blocks of masonry and marble carved with arabesque decoration were uncovered, as well as an Arab cistern and gateway which was, according to witnesses, ‘of great beauty [and] very similar to those of the entrance gates to the Mezquita Catedral in Cordoba’.¹⁸ Apparently these finds were not reported to the proper authorities, and the foundations were filled in with concrete.

Apart from Velázquez Bosco’s investigations at what turned out to be al-Rummāniyya, none of these attempts to identify the location of al-Zāhira has resulted in excavation. Even the most recent identification of al-Zāhira, which is most convincing in regard to the textual descriptions of the site, has not prompted local archaeologists to begin further survey work or trial excavations. While Arjona Castro’s field survey seems to have had interesting results, his reliance on aerial photography has not supported his argument, since none of the constructions which he identifies in the photograph can clearly be discerned,¹⁹ and in the absence of other photographs – of the terrain, for example, or the coin finds and decorated construction fragments – we are still not yet ready to firmly identify this site as al-Zāhira’s location.

Since the excavation in 1944 of the Salón of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and the ongoing project to excavate and understand the palatine terraces of Madīnat al-Zahrā’, the caliphal city has overshadowed that of al-Manṣūr. At the same time, twentieth-century political developments have, as discussed in this book’s Introduction, perpetuated an unfounded belief that the ‘Āmirid period was marked by artistic decline. The disinterest in locating al-Madīnat al-Zāhira seems due, therefore, to a belief that it will have nothing new to offer after the riches of al-Zahrā’. We are, then, almost back where we started, and cannot do more than trust in Torres

Balbás’ belief that ‘a fortuitous find will one day allow its discovery’.²⁰

2 Reconstructing the Palace

“In 368/978–9 al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir ordered that his palace (*qaṣr*), known by the name al-Zāhira, be constructed ... In 370/980–81 he transferred his residence there and installed himself with his accompaniment of aristocracy and people, taking possession and placing his stores of weapons, treasures and personal belongings.”²¹

According to the sources, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira was constructed extremely quickly, which has led some scholars to remark that its fabric must have been ‘fragile, hastily made, its walls of earth and rubble, since it is explicable in no other way that it should pass so quickly without leaving any trace’.²² This picturesque view cannot hold, given that we know the congregational mosque of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ was built in only forty-eight days, and far from disappearing due to hasty construction and fragile materials, it has been carefully excavated and found to consist of stone, in imitation of the Cordoba mosque.²³ The short two-year construction period mentioned in all the sources may refer

20 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 598.

21 *Bayān* 11:294 [translation, 457]; Ibn Khāqān, *apud* al-Ḥimyarī, 82; al-Maqqarī, 242; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:181 [11:192].

22 The words of Henri Terrasse, delivered in an unpublished paper at the Ibn Ḥazm conference in 1963, and quoted in Castejón 1964–5, 62. Elsewhere in this article, Castejón speaks of the ‘fortaleza pétrea’ of Madīnat al-Zahrā’ in comparison to the ‘fugaz delicadeza’ of al-Zāhira.

23 On the ‘mezquita aljama’ at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, see Vallejo 2010, 197–219. Though the texts indicate that the mosque was constructed in 941, fragments of the foundation inscription give the date 333/944–5. The rapidity of its construction could be reflected in the distinctive flat carving style employed for many of its decorative elements: see Escudero 2015, 73–5 (capitals); 24, 78–9 (fragments of an epigraphic frieze) – all these elements are carved in limestone.

18 Arjona Castro et al. 1994b, 266. The witness he spoke to ‘recuerda perfectamente que tenía un arco con dovelas de color azul brillante’: Arjona Castro et al. 1995, 187, n. 86.

19 Antonio Vallejo, personal communication.

to the residence (*qaṣr*) into which al-Manṣūr first moved, and it can be presumed that the construction of other zones, which ultimately formed the madina, continued around it for some time.

The site was located on a rise overlooking the Guadalquivir, to the east of Cordoba (Figure 17).²⁴ The sources give various reasons for the choice of location: according to some, it was already ‘remarkable for its splendid palaces’;²⁵ to others – clearly written with historical hindsight – a prophecy was associated with that site, which told that one day a palace would be built there that was destined to supplant the Umayyad palace.²⁶ The legend, related by an ‘old crone seer’,²⁷ mentions wells, and might preserve the topographical memory of a water source in this location, a much more practical reason for al-Manṣūr’s choice of site. However, the sources also indicate that the site was chosen strategically – it was high, dominating the area around it, and protected on various

sides by the bending of the river Guadalquivir.²⁸ It may also have been deliberately sited close to the mustering point of the Umayyad armies. As we will discuss below, its location contributed to the defensibility not only of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira but also of Cordoba, and the caliph within.

The city’s location along the river, at a point where it bends, is indicated in the following anecdote reported by Ibn Ḥazm, presumably on the eye-witness testimony of his father, which also speaks of the intimate gatherings in which al-Manṣūr indulged with his close courtiers, as discussed in the previous chapter:

“On a dazzling day, we were out in a boat with al-Manṣūr and a group of viziers, on the river which flows past al-Zāhira, [profiting] from a charming view in front and behind. As the river started to bend, we plunged into intimacy, the mouth refreshed by chewing on fresh aromatic herbs from here and there, the pleasure of the world and its games gathered in [that moment]. [Al-Manṣūr] found the location extraordinary and contemplated the brightness and ornament [of his town]. He approved of the view and raised [his eyes] to the shining palaces, their pleasant constructions which beautifully attract the eyes and renew the hopes of life. Then al-Manṣūr said, ‘O al-Zāhira, resplendent in beauty! How beautiful is your allure! You exhale your opulence! To contemplate you, as well as to live in you, is an experience surpassing all. Your earth is of good quality and your water of a sweet taste.’”²⁹

At this point the *ḥājib* began to bemoan the destruction that would inevitably befall his beautiful constructions:

24 All the sources concur in locating al-Zāhira to the east of Cordoba: Ibn Ḥazm, for example, who lived there, clearly locates it in the east when he relates how his family moved from ‘their new houses in the eastern part of Cordoba, in the suburb of al-Zāhira’ to the ‘old [houses] in the western part’ (in the suburb of Balāṭ Mughith), in *Jumādā* 11 399/January–February 1009, after the success of al-Mahdī’s rebellion: cf. Ibn Ḥazm 1949, 286; 1953, 212. Cf. also see *Bayān* 11:313 [translation, 485]; al-Maqqarī, 209–211 (*Analectes*, 1:261, 268). According to Ibn Bashkuwāl (1101–1183), the Rabaḍ al-Zāhira was still in his day one of the seven suburbs comprising al-Sharqiyya, the populated zone to the east of Cordoba: see Zanón 1989, 29, §2.1.4.

25 *Bayān* 11:294 [translation, 457]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82.

26 *Bayān* 11:275 [translation, 427–428]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82. This prophecy, which derives from Ibn Ḥayyān, was said to have been known to al-Ḥakam, who tried to preempt it by being the first to build at that site. By a neat conceit, al-Manṣūr ‘still young, hard-working and unknown’, worked on this project and thus knew of the ‘favourable prognostications’ associated with the site, which is why he later chose to raise his palace there: see Torres Balbás 1956, 358–359.

27 The ‘old crone seer’ is a topos of other city foundation legends cited in O’Meara 2007.

28 Bariani 2002a, 333.

29 This translation comes from Franssen 2008, Appendix, xxix–xxx. I am very grateful to Élise Franssen for sharing with me her unpublished MA thesis on the ‘Āmirids and their ‘material traces’.

“I know that rebellion will destroy you ... Misfortune to him who is not impressed by your beauty! How is it possible that you will disappear? We were astonished by such a speech and disapproved of his words. We thought that the wine had got to him and placed such thoughts in his head. All that he said exceeded common sense ... But he explained what would happen and the reasons why: ‘By God, it is as if you know nothing! Yes! Our enemy will prevail quickly, demolishing everything and reducing it to nothing! It will be as if it had never been made!’ We attempted to calm and relax him, but were later astonished that his account was an unmistakable prophecy ...”

Though obviously inflected by the historical hindsight of the Fitna years, which saw the looting and destruction of al-Zāhira, this anecdote also implies al-Manṣūr’s sagacity, his awareness that palaces constructed so identifiably by a figure holding a position that would inevitably be coveted by others were unlikely to survive his passing, especially given the precarious situation of the caliphate under Hishām. It also indicates the sheer delight in which al-Manṣūr apparently indulged at al-Zāhira, and the physical setting in which he chose to relax with his closest courtiers.

Al-Zāhira’s height is clearly implied in another of Ibn Ḥazm’s anecdotes, of a party held at his family’s house in the Rabaḍ al-Zāhira: ‘The women stayed indoors for the first part of the day, then moved to a pavilion (*qaṣaba*) belonging to our house, on an elevated site overlooking the gardens and providing a view from there onto the whole of Cordoba.’³⁰ It seems to have been terraced in a similar way to Madīnat al-Zahrā’: during his account of the sack of al-Zāhira in 1009, Ibn ‘Idhārī talks of al-Mahdī’s mob pillaging the ‘lower zones’, while presumably al-Mahdī kept the upper, palatial zones for himself.³¹ Other descriptions of the site contain historiographical connections to the

foundation of al-Zahrā’: ‘the construction was spacious and [al-Manṣūr] took much care to extend it over flat ground for a great distance ... He dedicated himself to levelling the slopes and excavating the foundations.’³² He gathered artists and labourers to work on the construction, commissioned the use of gold, lapis lazuli and other precious materials, and ‘decorated [his palace] with such magnificence that the sight wearied the eyes’.³³

Al-Manṣūr granted the neighbouring zones to the upper classes and officials of the state, such as the Banū Ḥazm and Banū Shuhayd,³⁴ who built their own mansions there, while other members of the Banū Abī ‘Āmir constructed their own palaces in the environs of al-Zāhira. Al-Muẓaffar lived in the Qaṣr al-Ḥājibiyya, ‘which was near to (*jānib*) al-Zāhira, outside its walls’; this was where his mother, Asmā’/al-Ḍalfā’, and son, Abū ‘Āmir Muḥammad, were found at the time of al-Mahdī’s siege in 1009.³⁵ Al-Manṣūr also built himself smaller *muniyas* ‘on the road to al-Zāhira’, and names of several are preserved. One is the Dhāt al-Wādiyayn, ‘Having Two Streams’, which Laura Bariani suggests might be the *majlis li’l-mulūk* (‘hall of the kings’) located between two waterwheels with a view of a marble pool, described

³² Al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82; *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 457].

³³ Al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82; *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 457]. It is an age-old topos of royal patronage that the builder is influential enough to summon the best artisans and materials from the farthest places: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān 111 had done so at al-Zahrā’, importing marble columns from North Africa and Byzantium; and al-Ḥakam 11 brought a mosaicist and tesserae all the way from Constantinople for his extension to the Cordoba mosque (Chapter 5).

³⁴ Ibn Shuhayd’s family residence was the Munyat al-Nu‘man: see Dickie 1964, 251. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān 111 had also granted the lands surrounding al-Zahrā’ to the nobility. In addition, he issued financial incentives to the people so that they would settle there and ‘urbanise’ his city: see Ruggles 2000, 53–85.

³⁵ *Bayān* 111:62–64 [translation, 65–66]. Arjona Castro et al 1994b, 256–258 discusses the location of the Qaṣr al-Ḥājibiyya, which they believe was located in the area of Rabanales, to the north-east of Cordoba.

³⁰ Ibn Ḥazm 1949, 282; 1953, 209–210.

³¹ *Bayān* 111:63 [translation, 66].

in a poem by Ibn Hudhayl; Lévi-Provençal suggested that the name might suggest the place where the Fuensanta tributary debouches into the Guadalquivir.³⁶ Another was the Munyat al-Urtāniyya, a name which probably derived from the Romance word ‘Huertanilla’, meaning ‘a small orchard-garden’, as many *munyas* in fact were.³⁷ The Munyat al-Surūr, ‘Villa of Happiness’,³⁸ had a garden and a large pool, and according to Bariani is the ‘Āmirid *munya* most frequently cited in the sources; while the Munyat al-Lu’lu’a, ‘Villa of the Pearl’, was located in a high part which allowed al-Manṣūr to look down on the city at his feet – the Qubbat al-Lu’lu’a, one of the towers of al-Zāhira mentioned in the textual descriptions, was probably part of the walled enclosure of this *munya*.³⁹

Another of the ‘Āmirid *munyas*, which seems to have had a more important role than the others, was the Munyat al-‘Āmiriyya, where we know that al-Manṣūr liked to relax on his return from campaign (Chapter 3), and where in spring 978 ‘Abd al-Malik celebrated his marriage to his niece, Ḥabība.⁴⁰ Al-‘Āmiriyya’s location is closely related to al-Zāhira by Ibn ‘Idhārī, who mentions it in the midst of his account of al-Manṣūr’s palace-city and calls it ‘one of his palaces’.⁴¹ Al-Ḍabbī (d. 1203) presents it as one of the palaces integrated within the al-Zāhira complex by calling it ‘one of his castles (*quṣūri-hi*) in the “Zāhiriyya”’.⁴² However, perhaps the most vivid indication of their intimate topographical relationship is given by Ibn Shuhayd in his poem about the lost glories of Cordoba, who talks about both palaces in the same breath (note the clever puns in verse 15 on the names of the two palaces):

(v.6) For the weeping of one who weeps with an eye the tears of which flow endlessly is not enough [to lament the loss of] such as Cordoba ...

(v.13) ... O for their pleasant circumstances in its palaces and curtained apartments when its full moons were concealed in its palaces!

And the palace of the sons of Umayya abounded in all things, while the caliphate was even more abundant!

(v.15) And al-Zāhiriyya shone brightly with pleasure boats, and al-‘Āmiriyya was rendered flourishing by the stars (*wa al-zāhiriyya bi’l-marākib tazharu, wa al-‘āmiriyya bi’l-kawākib tu’maru*).

And the Great Mosque (*al-jāmi‘ al-a’lā*) was packed by all those who recited and studied whatsoever they wished, as well as those who looked on.

And the alleys of the markets bore witness that because of those who crossed them, doomsday’s assembly would hold not a few.

O Paradise such that the wind of separation has blasted it and its people so that both have been destroyed!⁴³

Bariani speculates whether the Munyat al-‘Āmiriyya in fact formed the first nucleus of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, because of the otherwise early date at which al-Zāhira was founded.⁴⁴ We will return below to a discussion of the motivations for al-Manṣūr’s foundation of al-Zāhira, but whatever the original relationship of al-‘Āmiriyya to the wider palace-city, it seems that al-Zāhira’s private residential zone was supplemented by a constellation of smaller palaces, which were *munyas* in the sense of small, luxurious estate-houses, surrounded by gardens. From the various mentions of these *munyas* and the activities conducted in

36 Bariani 2002a, 331, citing in Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 80–81; Lévi-Provençal 1957 [1996], 247, n. 125.

37 HEM III:381, n. 4; Anderson 2013, 117–9.

38 *Bayān* II (1951):398–99, cf. HEM III:381, n. 4.

39 Bariani 2002a, 330.

40 Ruggles 2000, 113.

41 *Bayān* II:297 [translation, 461].

42 Ocaña 1984a, 371–372.

43 Ibn Shuhayd 1963, 64–67 (metre: *kāmil*); cf. Monroe 1974, 160–163; Pérès 1990, 128–129.

44 Bariani 2002a, 332–3.

them, it seems that they were very much part of the 'Āmirid ceremonial landscape, and fit with the picture that Glaire Anderson has reconstructed for how these suburban villas functioned during the reigns of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II.⁴⁵

The beauty of al-Zāhira's buildings inspired poets to sing its praises – Ibn Sa'īd (d. 1286), for example, dedicated a whole book to describing the 'splendid marvels and the beauty' of al-Zāhira.⁴⁶ From these poetic descriptions, corroborated with those of the historical sources, certain details can be inferred about its layout and decoration.

From the descriptions of ceremonies considered in Chapter 2, especially the passage detailing the reception of Sancho Abarca in 992, we know that a road led from the main entrance gate (*bāb*) of the *qaṣr* to that of the *majlis*, the inner sanctum of the palace where al-Manṣūr sat on his throne (*sarīr*) to receive his visitors. This calls to mind the arrangement at Madīnat al-Zahrā', where a processional road led from the monumental entrance of the Bāb al-Sudda, beyond which only the privileged few passed, to the *majālis*, of which al-Zahrā' had three.⁴⁷ Similarly, in addition to the *majlis* where Sancho Abarca was received, the sources mention various reception halls at al-Zāhira, some of which may have been located in *munyas*. Ibn Ḥayyān mentions the *majlis al-kabīr*, 'Great Hall', and notes that it had views towards the Guadalquivir.⁴⁸ A *majlis al-sāmī*, 'High' or 'Exalted Hall', is also mentioned in an anecdote in which al-Manṣūr staged a particularly impressive display of wealth and power, on the occasion of the visit to his court of 'an ambassador from the

most powerful of the Christian kings of Rūm'.⁴⁹ Al-Manṣūr ordered that 'a vast lake, several miles in length' be planted with as many water-lilies as possible, and that four *qintārs* (about four hundred pounds) of gold and silver pieces be broken into tiny fragments and placed inside the buds of every flower when they closed at night. At dawn, al-Manṣūr summoned the ambassador to present himself in the High Hall, 'which had views over the lake'; they watched as one thousand Ṣaqāliba appeared, 'dressed in silken robes embroidered with silver and gold'. When the flowers opened to the sunlight, the Ṣaqāliba plucked the silver and golden 'pollen' from the flowers, placing the silver pieces on gold trays and the gold pieces on silver trays, which they finally placed at al-Manṣūr's feet, 'thus raising a mountain ... before his throne'.

This obvious metaphor of the natural bounty and riches of al-Manṣūr's kingdom was recognised both by the Christian visitor, who immediately requested a truce, and the historian who cited this passage in order to demonstrate the 'splendour and magnificence with which [al-Manṣūr] used to surround his person while residing in his palace of al-Zāhira'.⁵⁰ While it resounds with historiographical hyperbole, this passage also preserves a clear sense of the manner in which al-Manṣūr manipulated al-Zāhira as the ceremonial stage for his *ḥijāba* and, like 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, the conscious use of setting to overawe his visitors. This passage specifically mentions the 'views over the lake' from the High Hall, and the ensuing incident is carefully contrived to make the most of the view.

45 Anderson 2013, Chapter 5, 'The Landscape of Sovereignty'.

46 Bariani 2002a, 328.

47 These were the Majālis al-Gharbī (West Hall), al-Sharqī (East Hall) and al-Dhahab (Golden Hall); see Ruggles 2000, 66–67. She believes the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (Salón Rico) can be identified with the Majlis al-Dhahab, which opened onto gardens with a pavilion, pools and water basins with figural sculpture.

48 Bariani 2002a, 331: 'al-mushrif 'alā al-nahr'.

49 Al-Maqqarī, 243–244 (*Analectes*, 1:349). See also Bariani 2002a, 330–331. The date and purpose of this embassy is unspecified, apart from 'the king of Rūm' wanting to inform himself of the 'circumstances and force of the Muslims' (Bariani, *ibid*).

50 Al-Maqqarī, 243: 'The legate was stunned by the vision of servants so richly dressed ... This spectacle provoked stupor and admiration on the part of the Christian, who requested a truce with the Muslims. After returning quickly to his country, the ambassador said to his king: "Avoid enmity with this people! [With my own eyes] I have seen the land give up its treasures to them!"' (Bariani's translation: 2002a, 330–331).

These features, together with the indication in the sources that the private zones of the palace were in an elevated position, imply that the reception halls at al-Zāhira were miradors, windows which framed a ‘constructed view’ of the ruler’s domains, which Ruggles argues was such an important and innovative feature of the palaces at Madīnat al-Zahrā’.⁵¹ What the ruler sees is a landscape carefully and artificially constructed – by means of cultivated gardens or an aesthetically manipulated vista – to represent productivity and order, a pleasing metaphor of his ‘good stewardship’ of Islam and of his kingdom. This cultivation of the ‘wilderness’ – the creation of gardens where before was only unruly nature – signifies the ruler as the earthly counterpart of God, and he looks out as viewer/creator, via the mirador, over his view/creation (Figure 101). Is there a reference to this poetic imagery or these actual views in the decoration of al-Manṣūr’s basin (Figure 114), created in the palace-city itself, or the Braga pyxis (Figure 15), whose designs of arches framing luxurious vegetation evoke the idea of looking through a porticoed pavilion onto a flourishing garden?

Bariani believes that the incident of the water-lilies took place in the Munityat al-Surūr, which we know had a large pool,⁵² while as we saw above, the Munityat Dhāt al-Wādiyayn may have housed the *majlis li’l-mulūk*. Though this anecdote involved the reception of a Christian ambassador, it gives no indication of the ceremonial prelude as described for the reception of Sancho Abarca (Chapter 2) though, as we have seen, that unusual embassy involved the king himself. While Sancho was received formally and officially in the *qaṣr*, the Christian ambassador mentioned here was ostensibly subjected to a more intimate gathering in one of the ‘Amirid *munityas*. This implies a functional difference between the two types of *majlis*, in which the *qaṣr* proper was reserved for more ceremonial activities, though the performance could be no less intimidating in a more ‘private’ space.

The hyperbolic mention of revetments of gold and lapis lazuli, and the ‘magnificence that ... wearied the eyes’, conveys the impression that the rooms of al-Manṣūr’s palace were as splendidly decorated as those of the caliphal palace;⁵³ but apart from these hints, very little is known about the buildings’ physical appearance. This contrasts with the wealth of information transmitted in the sources about al-Zahrā’, which in turn implies that the caliphal city ‘was recognised as an extraordinary creation’ in its own day.⁵⁴ Poetic descriptions exist of al-Zāhira’s Munityat al-Surūr, ‘the place of Happiness’, such as the following verses by Ibn Darrāj:⁵⁵

“The high Dār al-Surūr whose balconies are above
the high and brilliant stars,
is raised on columns of marble as if it wished to
imitate the arrangement of the stars in Gemini.
They seem two squadrons, on foot and on horse-
back, which faithfully guard the battle, all
equal.”

Another poet, known simply as ‘Abd Allāh, describes another of al-Zāhira’s *munityas* (*ṣarḥ*):⁵⁶

“[The halls] are [raised] on columns which seem
in their beauty like the necks of youths and
whose arches seem like waxing half-moons.
They are adorned with cupolas in which the echo
seems like the cooing song of a dove.
When the singer lowers his voice, the roll of thun-
der comes to the listeners.
It is as if the red rooves between the patios were
poppies fed by the damp dew.”

53 Compare, for example, the description of the Qaṣr al-Khilāfa at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, in Ruggles 2000, 67.

54 Ruggles 2000, 53.

55 Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 67–68, cited in Rubiera Mata 1981, 133–134. See also Pérès 1990, 137 and n. 73, citing al-Maqqarī, *Analectes*, 1:385, 406. It is interesting to note that there was a Qaṣr al-Surūr in the caliphal palace at Cordoba: cf. Pérès 1990, 129, n. 31.

56 Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 69–70, cited in Rubiera Mata 1981, 134.

51 See Ruggles 2000, esp. 107–108.

52 Bariani 2002a, 330.

In another verse, the poet likens the *munya* to Solomon's palace. These descriptions of arcades, formed of smooth, marble columns, moon-shaped horseshoe arches and red-tiled domed rooves evoke the appearance of the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III at al-Zahrā'. The mention of 'two squadrons, on foot and on horseback', imitating the stars in Gemini, also suggests the doubling of columns (and therefore capitals), which becomes significant when we discuss below the unique double-capitals that are associated with al-Manṣūr's architectural projects.⁵⁷ Ibn Hudhayl also described the arches of one of al-Manṣūr's palaces as 'half moons',⁵⁸ and elsewhere they are likened to the curve of a bow.⁵⁹ The marble columns seemed to Ibn Hudhayl to be formed from clear water which one could almost drink,⁶⁰ and the smoothness of the marble also appeared wet with springwater to Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī.⁶¹ It gleamed like perfumed camphor, and the columns were so slender they recalled the necks of beautiful youths.⁶² The palace doors must have been plated with a metal such as bronze, since 'you can see in each one ... such light that it seems the sun is silhouetted in them'.⁶³ The mention of 'balconies ... above the high and brilliant stars' again implies the presence of miradors, and the terracing of the landscape to construct the view.

The reference to 'perfumed camphor' interestingly evokes the multi-sensory experience of being in one of these palaces, in which expensive scents must have been all-pervading. There was also the sense of sound from pools which furnished palace interiors, adorned with decorative basins

and fountain heads, even live animals. The presence of pools is indicated in the poem by al-Jazīrī and the description by Ibn Jabīr of the reception hall of al-Ma'mūn at Toledo, both discussed in the previous chapter. Al-Jazīrī's poem, for example, describes 'a large basin of green water' standing 'in the centre of the hall', 'in which the turtles continually make sounds'.⁶⁴ Its lion-shaped fountain-head 'is of scented aloeswood' (*nadd*), perhaps a description born of poetic exaggeration, but intriguingly again evoking the notion of strong scents pervading the air of the palace interiors – aloeswood being one of the five important scents.⁶⁵

Also located in the private zone of al-Manṣūr's palace complex were the harem,⁶⁶ and apparently the public and private treasuries, presumably because this location was particularly secure. The plural used in Ibn 'Idhārī's text (*buyūt al-amwāl*) may imply that the treasury was formed by various rooms, all containing different types of precious possession, in the same way that the Fatimid treasuries are known to have been thematically organised.⁶⁷ Descriptions of the palace's destruction mention al-Mahdī's mob looting 'money, jewels and precious objects', which were presumably stored in these treasuries; over a period of two days, they 'cleared out the greater part of the stores

57 Puerta Vilchez 2013a, 62, interprets this poetic description as 'columnas de mármol dobles'.

58 Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 68, cited in Rubiera Mata 1981, 133.

59 In a poem by al-Jazīrī, cited in Continente 1969, 133.

60 Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 69–70, cited in Rubiera Mata 1981, 133.

61 *Bayān* II:297 [translation, 460].

62 Bariani 2002a, 331, citing Ibn Hudhayl, apud Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 75–6; and Rubiera Mata 1981, 92–3.

63 Ibn Hudhayl, quoted in Rubiera Mata 1981, 133, citing Ibn al-Kattānī 1966, 69–70.

64 Continente 1969, 131–132; Ruggles 2000, 124.

65 The Abbasid court physician, Yuhanna ibn Māsawayh (d. 857), defined the five most important aromatic substances (*uṣūl al-ṭīb*) used in the medieval Islamic world as musk, camphor, ambergris, aloeswood, and saffron: see King 2008, 175. For the use of luxury fragrances in tenth-century Cordoba, especially in connection with artistic production, see Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, esp. 40–45.

66 *Bayān* III:63 [translation, 66]: during the sack of al-Zāhira, al-Mahdī embargoed his mob from sacking this private zone, which he claimed as his own. When the harem of the Banū Abī 'Āmir fell into his hands, he released the free women and kept the female slaves for himself. On the women of al-Manṣūr's harem, see Echevarría 2011, 104–111.

67 *Bayān* III:63 [translation, 66]. On the structure of the Fatimid Treasury, see al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī 1996.

of clothes, carpets and furniture, perfumes and jewellery, treasures, arms and provisions'.⁶⁸ The descriptions of the looting of al-Zāhira also mention carved marble dadoes,⁶⁹ and tell us that the 'strong gates, the sturdy wood and the rest of what was found in the palace' were ripped out and 'sold in all parts'.⁷⁰ It is likely that some of the objects discussed in this book were looted from al-Zāhira at this time: the marble basin in the Alhambra (Figure 156, Chapter 7 4.2.1), for example, bears an inscription which indicates that the Taifa ruler of Granada, Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs al-Ṣanhājī (r. 1038–73) brought the basin 'to the palace (*ila qaṣri*) of his capital', the obvious implication being, he brought it *from* somewhere else (see Appendix 4.20). Its provenance is unrecorded, though its iconographic relationship to the two basins produced in al-Zāhira for al-Manṣūr (Figures 113–118) and his son 'Abd al-Malik (Figures 128–133) argues that it was from the 'Āmirid palace-city, or one of its *munyas*. The enormous size and weight of the basin and the effort of transporting it 170 km from Cordoba to Granada, suggests that Bādīs's acquisition of this object was not driven merely by a search for building materials. Rather, his ownership of this marble object was a statement of association with the 'Āmirids. As to the whereabouts of the luxury arts ateliers themselves, we can only speculate, though the inscription on al-Manṣūr's basin saying that it was made *bi-qaṣri'l-zāhira* (Appendix 4.7), indicates that they were well established here by 377/987–8, ten years after the foundation of the city (Chapter 6).

All these buildings were surrounded by luscious gardens which were planted to be aromatic as well as aesthetic,⁷¹ and which formed an essential element in the framed view from al-Manṣūr's miradors. It is possible that the gardens included a menagerie, as al-Manṣūr would have needed somewhere to house the exotic animals that he

received as a diplomatic gift from Zīrī ibn 'Aṭīyya (see Chapter 2). While the two hundred pure-blood horses and fifty *mahara* camels were probably housed in al-Zāhira's stables,⁷² the bird 'which spoke eloquently in a marvellous voice' would perhaps have been housed in an aviary, if not a cage in one of the palaces, while more particular arrangements would have to be made for the musk ox, the 'tiger of marvellous physique and enormous body', civet cats, and 'varieties of desert fauna' including the *lamt* antelope; we can only imagine where al-Manṣūr housed the poor giraffe that had died en route and arrived stuffed, though 'there was great amazement when people saw it'.⁷³ In comparison, we know that at Madīnat al-Zahrā there was a large zoological park (*al-hā'ir*), and an aviary protected by netting.⁷⁴ Here 'Abd al-Raḥmān III housed the animals he received as diplomatic gifts from his North African allies, which also included camels and racehorses, as well as sheep, gazelles and ostriches.⁷⁵ For his lions, 'Abd al-Raḥmān constructed a dedicated lion-house behind his palace at Cordoba, 'on a bridge that was elevated over a gully ... which still today bears the name of the Bridge of Lions'.⁷⁶ The ownership of a reserve filled with exotic animals may have been one of the features that 'Abd al-Raḥmān imitated from the Abbasid palace model that influenced his construction of al-Zahrā'.⁷⁷ There are also textual references to collections of lions in the Abbasid cities of Iraq: al-Muhtadī ordered the lions of the Dār al-Khilāfa at Samarra to be killed in 869, while

72 Mentioned by Ibn Khāqān, *apud* al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 81–82. See also Arjona Castro 1982, 214.

73 Ballestín 2004a, 185–6.

74 Ruggles 2000, 65; Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 435, n. 70.

75 Ruggles 2000, 65, and Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, *passim*.

76 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 40–42 (§§23–25).

77 At Samarra, the Jawsaq al-Khāqāni contained a zoo ('Hā'ir', 'al-Ḳali', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; Ruggles 2000, 90), while Rogers 1970, 137, describes the Musharrahāt as a zoological palace and garden on the opposite bank of the Tigris. Northedge 2005 disputes these identifications and interprets these instead as game reserves for princely hunting, see esp. 150–165, chapter on 'al-Ḥayr'.

68 *Bayān* III:63 [translation, 66].

69 *Bayān* III:64 [translation, 67].

70 *Bayān* III:61 [translation, 64].

71 Anderson 2013, 105–35 (chapter on 'Gardens').

Byzantine envoys to Baghdad in 917 were shown ‘one hundred lions – fifty to the right and fifty to the left, each handled by a keeper, and collared and muzzled with chains of iron’.⁷⁸ A reserve for wild or hunting animals seems to have been a ‘must-have’ feature of the new palace style and, given the number of other features the two extra-urban palace-cities had in common, as well as the practical need to house these exotic diplomatic gifts, it may well have been adopted at al-Zāhira as well.

As well as live animals, the palace gardens were no doubt also populated with inanimate creatures in the form of decoratively-carved fountain basins and heads, mirroring those inside the palace halls. Poetic descriptions refer to the lakes (*ṣahārīj*) constructed in front of the palaces and adorned with fountain-heads in the forms of lions.⁷⁹

The lavishness of al-Zāhira’s gardens is implied in the anecdote of the waterlilies and the gold and silver coins, cited above. The ‘vast lake’ which the High Hall of the Munyat al-Surūr overlooked evokes the monumental lake which has been excavated at the site of the Munyat al-Rummāniyya, to the west of Madīnat al-Zahrā’. In the north-western corner of the complex, on the uppermost terrace, was found a huge water basin, with a depth of more than 4 metres. It is the largest and deepest such basin yet found in Cordoba.⁸⁰ It was surrounded by a walkway projecting on cantilevers over the water. Recent excavations have revealed the mechanism by which water from the basin was distributed to the various terraces of the *munya*’s gardens and orchards; the water may also have supplied the palace and stables with fresh water, and the basin may have contained fish to provision the estate owner’s table.⁸¹ Arnold notes that the volume of water stored here could also serve

as a means of tempering the microclimate of the palace, cooling adjoining spaces in the summer.⁸² It was also used as a boating lake – such as those of the Dār al-Baḥr at the Qal’a of the Banū Ḥammād,⁸³ and the Qaṣr al-Baḥr at Aghlabid Raqqāda⁸⁴ – and Arnold cites texts that speak of rafts floating across the water on which musicians sat and guests drank wine.⁸⁵ The existence of boating lakes in the ‘Amirid palaces is indicated by the sources: Ibn Shuhayd’s poem cited above mentioned that ‘al-Zāhiriyya shone brightly with pleasure boats’, and the description of ‘Abd al-Malik and Ḥabība’s wedding at al-‘Āmiriyya mentions ‘boats on its clear lakes [resounding] with sweet music’.⁸⁶ And as we saw from the Ibn Ḥazm anecdote quoted above, al-Manṣūr also liked to go boating with his courtiers on the River Guadalquivir.

This outline of the physical appearance and spatial organisation of al-Zāhira’s palace levels is obviously inconclusive, since the textual evidence can only take us so far, and as yet nothing can be verified archaeologically. Nevertheless, it is clear that there were many formal respects in which al-Zāhira resembled its caliphal model, Madīnat al-Zahrā’, and it goes some way to helping us reconstruct the physical setting of al-Manṣūr’s private life, in particular, the intimate *majālis* discussed in Chapter 3. However, perhaps the more important relationship between the two palace-cities was at the institutional level, and we shall now turn to consider which institutions were housed at al-Zāhira, and which were not.⁸⁷

78 Northedge 2005, 151.

79 Bariani 2002a, 331, citing Ibn Hudhayl, apud Ibn al-Kattāni 1966, 75–6; and Rubiera Mata 1981, 92–3.

80 Velázquez Bosco 1912, 24; Arnold 2017, 107.

81 Ruggles 2000, 116; Anderson 2013, 113, who notes that the word *birka* used in the texts to refer to the *munya*’s pools also means ‘fishponds’.

82 Arnold 2017, 107.

83 Ruggles 1994; Ruggles 2000, 116, n. 18.

84 Mazot 2000, 137. This lake appears to have been many times bigger than the Rummāniyya lake: it was trapezoidal, measuring 89 and 130 metres on its short sides, and 171 and 182 metres on its long sides. It was used for aquatic jousting and boating parties.

85 Arnold 2017, 108.

86 Ruggles 2000, 113.

87 There is a very brief list of al-Zāhira’s institutions in Vallvé 1986, 260–262.

3 Reconstructing the City

Neither Madīnat al-Zahrā' or al-Madīnat al-Zāhira was just another *munya* writ large, but was also 'a self-sufficient city, conceived on a monumental and urban scale'.⁸⁸ In studying these royal foundations, it is impossible to disentangle this dual character. Both madinas housed all the appropriate institutions of a city, but they nevertheless remained dependent on Cordoba, so that the two seats of power together functioned as what Mazzoli-Guintard has termed 'une capitale à double polarité'.⁸⁹ After al-Manṣūr transferred all the important organs of the state bureaucracy to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira in 981, the palace-city became his centre of operations until his death.

3.1 The Mosque

After the palace, or *dār al-sultān*, the most significant formative entity of a Muslim city was the congregational mosque. The sources do not describe the foundation of al-Zāhira's mosque in any detail, but a number of anecdotes attest to its existence, and its location next to the eastern (and possibly only) gate, the Bāb al-Faṭḥ.⁹⁰ It must have been constructed sometime between 980 and 990.⁹¹ The most detailed account is found in the *Tartīb al-Madārik*, detailing the controversy over whether al-Manṣūr was permitted to celebrate the Friday prayer in the al-Zāhira mosque:⁹² that is, whether his mosque was recognised as a *jāmi'*

or congregational mosque, as was the al-Zahrā' mosque. The Cordoban *fuqahā'* were divided over this issue: the grand *qāḍī* of Cordoba, Ibn Zarb, was opposed, and the majority of jurists seconded the *fatwa* he issued against al-Manṣūr. However, others supported a favourable *fatwa* issued by Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, which argued that the extensive urbanisation of Cordoba's environs made it impossible for much of the population to attend the Great Mosque in the centre of Cordoba. These favourable jurists ruled that the distance between the Cordoba and al-Zāhira mosques, as measured by the longest route, was about a parasang (3–3.5 miles) and therefore great enough to justify the existence of a *jāmi'* mosque in both places. This accords with Islamic legal rulings on the circumstances in which the multiplicity of *jāmi'* mosques is permitted,⁹³ though certain conditions were attached: the older mosque always took precedence and, if possible, the believer should pray there, even if he had already said the Friday prayer in the newer mosque. This would explain why the *Tartīb al-Madārik* tells us that a group of jurists who lived in the Rabaḍ al-Zāhira attended the prayer in the al-Zāhira mosque, so that 'al-Manṣūr would not harbour rancour against them', but afterwards repeated it in the Cordoba mosque.

Al-Manṣūr cautiously waited until after Ibn Zarb's death in 992 before acting on the more favourable of the two *fatwas*, whereupon he appointed Ibn al-'Aṭṭār as imam and mufti; the al-Zāhira mosque subsequently became that *qāḍī's* office, where he issued *fatwas* and lectured on *fiqh*. However, the congregational status of the al-Zāhira mosque remained controversial and unpopular among the *fuqahā'*: al-Manṣūr's first two choices for imam refused the appointment.⁹⁴

88 Ruggles 2000, 53.

89 Mazzoli-Guintard 1997.

90 Bariani 2002a, 333, citing al-Maqqarī (*Nafh al-Ṭīb*, 1, 156) who explicitly states that the mosque was located near to the only gate: *wa masjid [al-Zāhira] fi'l-bāb al-munfarid [=single] bi-hā*.

91 Bariani 2002a, 336, because of the involvement of Ibn Zarb, chief *qāḍī* from 977 to 992, in the controversy about the congregational prayer. She also comments (p. 337) that this controversy 'must have influenced [al-Manṣūr's] decision to start constructing his extension to the Cordoba Mosque in 987; the implication being that he was trying to pacify the *fuqahā'* and regain their support and approval.

92 'Iyād ibn Mūsā 1968, 11:657–658; cited in Ávila 1980, 107–109.

93 See Calero 2000, esp. 128–130. According to her examination of the surviving *fatwas*, one of the circumstances in which the multiplicity of *jāmi'* mosques is permitted is when the extent of the city and suburbs is so great that the distance between the two mosques exceeds two miles.

94 As Bariani 2002a, 337, n. 61, notes, Aṣḥab al-Ṭā'ī was sent into exile, while Abū Bakr ibn Wāqid was stripped of membership of the *shūra* and placed under house

Ibn Dhakwān (d. 1024), grand *qāḍī* of Cordoba (1001–1010) and a good friend and influential advisor of al-Manṣūr, who also had a residence within al-Zāhira's walls, nevertheless refused to accompany him in prayers at the al-Zāhira mosque, out of deference to Ibn Zarb's ruling.⁹⁵ These anecdotes underline al-Manṣūr's respect for Maliki juridical opinion, as discussed in Chapter 1; they are also interesting for the insistence they place on al-Zāhira's dependence on Cordoba, and the higher authority of the Umayyad dynastic mosque in the historic capital. Al-Zāhira's mosque was not intended to supplant that monument, but remained subordinate to it. Ibn al-Khaṭīb reports that, for a while, the Friday prayer was only celebrated at al-Zāhira – but this is likely to have been due to the works on al-Manṣūr's extension to the Cordoba mosque rendering it unusable for a time (see Chapter 5).⁹⁶

Other textual references to the al-Zāhira mosque are brief and sparse in detail, though they confirm that it remained a congregational mosque for the rest of its short life. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī wrote his *Kitāb al-Fuṣūṣ* whilst sitting in the *ṣahn* of the '*jāmi'*' mosque of the city of al-Zāhira.⁹⁷ The mosque is mentioned in the Almohad period as a ruinous and isolated Sufi refuge, indicating that parts of it were still standing almost two hundred years after the city was razed by al-Mahdī.⁹⁸ While none of these texts indicates the appearance of the al-Zāhira mosque, it is probable that, like the al-Zahrā' mosque, it recreated the form and features of the Cordoba mosque on a reduced scale. The al-Zahrā' mosque was a small

monument of five naves, a courtyard and a minaret, and despite its rapid construction was richly decorated in carved stone and plaster. According to al-Maqqarī, 1000 skilled artisans worked on it, and its *maqṣūra* was said to be 'of wonderful construction and ornamented with costly magnificence', containing a minbar of 'extraordinary beauty and design', installed on the day the mosque was completed. Friday prayers were held there for the first time in Sha'bān 329/May 941, indicating it was a '*jāmi'*' mosque from the start.⁹⁹ It seems likely that the al-Zāhira mosque would have had similar, if not smaller, dimensions. Did it have its own minaret and minbar as at al-Zahrā'? It is doubtful that al-Manṣūr would go so far as to appropriate such potent symbols of royal power. Chapter 5 discusses al-Manṣūr's extension and interventions at the Cordoba Mosque, and highlights some innovative architectonic and decorative features that seem to have been used there for the first time. Since it is likely that the construction of the al-Zāhira mosque predated the 'Āmirid extension at Cordoba, had al-Manṣūr already tried out some of these features in his own mosque? Indeed, at Cordoba he was constrained by the need to work within the mosque's existing vocabulary and the weight of Umayyad precedent, while at al-Zāhira he could do as he liked. Its decoration may have been highly innovative and experimental, as perhaps suggested by some of the unusual capitals that have been attributed to this period, discussed below.

3.2 *Organs of State Bureaucracy*

Turning to the bureaucracy of al-Zāhira, the sources tell us that when al-Manṣūr took up residence in his palace-city, he established there the administrative departments of the Cordoban civil service, in which the high officials of the state took office (*al-dawāwīn wa al-ʿummāl*).¹⁰⁰ The axis

arrest. On the '*ulamā'*' publicly rejecting political office, which was quite common practice, see Marín 1994.

95 HEM 11:295, 303. On the location of Ibn Dhakwān's residence, see Bariani 2002a, 333, n. 32.

96 Bariani 2002a, 338.

97 Al-Maqqarī, 202.

98 Zanón 1989, 104–105, §9.23, citing Ibn al-Abbār 1955, 304, who relates that 'the Sufi Abū al-Qāsim Khalaf ibn Yahyā ibn Khaṭṭāb al-Zāhid (d. 576/1187) had in it a place where he used to sit in order to preach'. For other twelfth-century references to the al-Zāhira mosque, see Ibn Bashkuwāl 1966, 233, 460, 598, 646.

99 Al-Maqqarī, 237–8. See also HEM 11:137, n. 1; Torres Balbás 1957; Pavón Maldonado 1966.

100 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; Ibn Khāqān, *apud* al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 81–82; al-Maqqarī, 187; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:181

of the government administration thus shifted east, but which offices and officials were these? Significantly, it *does not* appear to have included the fundamental caliphal institutions of the Dār al-Sikka and Dār al-Ṭirāz, though the Dār al-Ṣinā'a or at least some of its craftsmen do seem to have relocated to al-Zāhira, because we know al-Manṣūr's marble basin was made there (see Appendix 4.7). The operation of the luxury arts industry, including the Dār al-Ṭirāz, under the 'Āmirids will be discussed in Chapter 6. Though the mint had been transferred to Madīnat al-Zahrā' in 947, it had followed al-Ḥakam back to Cordoba in 976, a shift reflected in the coinage in the change of the mint-name to 'al-Andalus'. This is the mint named on all coins issued during al-Manṣūr's *ḥijāba* (with the obvious exception of North African issues) and, though al-Manṣūr was clearly in control of the mint, as evidenced by the presence of his *kunya* on the coins (Figure 4) and his appointment of mint governors, there is no evidence for a mint at al-Zāhira. It must therefore have remained in Cordoba after 976.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, al-Zāhira became the state's fiscal centre. Ibn 'Idhārī and Ibn Khāqān both recount that al-Manṣūr sent orders throughout the provinces of al-Andalus and the Maghrib that all tax revenues should be sent to al-Zāhira, and that local governors (*ummāl*) should direct all petitions there.¹⁰² As mentioned above, the state treasuries (*buyūt al-amwāl*) were located in the inner sanctum of al-Manṣūr's palace, presumably for increased security. As we saw in Chapter 1, after the domestic crisis (*waḥsha*) of 996–7, the caliphal purse was also moved to al-Zāhira. At the time of its sack by al-Mahdī, the al-Zāhira treasury

contained the equivalent of 5,500,000 dinars in silver and 1,500,000 dinars in gold: it is said to have taken three days to transfer all of it to the caliphal palace in Cordoba.¹⁰³

Mention in the sources of *kuttāb* (scribes) and *ḥussāb* (accountants) indicates that the Chancery, or Dīwān al-Inshā', was moved to al-Zāhira.¹⁰⁴ This makes sense not only in terms of the governance of the state, but also in relation to the private *majālis* discussed in Chapter 3; since many of al-Manṣūr's *nudamā'* were *kuttāb* or held some other post in the Dīwān, their proximity to the *ḥājib* was desired as well as expected. We also know that the state viziers were based at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira:¹⁰⁵ we saw above that al-Manṣūr granted the surrounding lands to his high state officials, and members of prominent families such as the Banū Ḥazm, Banū Ḥayyān and Banū Shuhayd moved their residences there. This made it all the easier to convene emergency council meetings, as al-Manṣūr did in 996–7, to discuss the response to Ṣubḥ's theft from the Cordoban treasury.¹⁰⁶ During the Fitna it was the 'viziers of al-Zāhira' who were in charge of the city's defence, while Sanchuelo was absent on his fatal last campaign.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps their council was held in the *dār al-sultān*, which is where the people addressed their petitions.¹⁰⁸ Lastly, al-Zāhira had

[11:92]. Bariani 2002a, 336, comments that Ibn Ḥawqal, writing c. 378/998 and thus contemporary with al-Manṣūr, does not mention al-Zāhira as the centre of government. Perhaps the transfer of power to al-Zāhira was slow, and never total?

101 On al-Manṣūr's role as *ṣāhib al-sikka*, see the discussion in Chapter 1.

102 *Bayān* 11:296 [translation, 459]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82; cf. also Ibn al-Kardabūs 1986, 84 (§62).

103 *Bayān* 11:61 [translation, 65]. Ibn 'Idhārī also notes that after the sack of al-Zāhira, coin hoards were found buried in jars, which amounted to a value of 200,000 dinars. Presumably these hoards were buried by wealthy residents fleeing al-Zāhira, who for whatever reason did not return to reclaim their assets. This calls to mind the 'varios tesoros de monedas' which Arjona Castro et al 1994b, 266, notes are 'frecuentísimos' in the area of the Cortijo de Las Quemadas, where they believe al-Zāhira to have been located.

104 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82; Ibn al-Kardabūs 1986, 84 (§62). *Dhikr Bilād* 1:181 [11:92] also mentions *kuttāb*.

105 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82.

106 Bariani 1996a, 45.

107 *Bayān* 11:57–8 [translation, 62–3], which relates how the bad news of Hishām's surrender to al-Mahdī reaches the 'viziers of al-Zāhira'.

108 *Bayān* 11:28 [translation, 34], which relates that 'Īsa ibn Sa'īd, al-Muzaffar's *ḥājib*, was so important that

its own *ṣāhib al-madīna*,¹⁰⁹ and *ṣāhib al-shurṭa*, whose headquarters were located next to the Bāb al-Faṭḥ.¹¹⁰ There is no indication that al-Zāhira had its own *qāḍī*, as did al-Zahrā',¹¹¹ unless this role was fulfilled by Ibn al-'Aṭṭār, once he was appointed imam of the al-Zāhira mosque, or Ibn Dhakwān, *qāḍī* of Cordoba, who had a residence in the city.¹¹² Al-Zāhira had a prison and executions were held there, which implies access to the services of a *qāḍī*, though perhaps in this crucial legal office al-Zāhira again deferred to Cordoba.¹¹³

In addition to the treasuries, there were important stores of weapons (*asliḥa*) at al-Zāhira.¹¹⁴ Ibn al-Khaṭīb recounts that 15,000 suits of armour were deposited in this Khizānat al-Silāḥ, in addition to all the arms required.¹¹⁵ Small circular bronze discs that have been recovered from the Cordoba area offer a glimpse of the physicality of this military equipment, as ingeniously reconstructed by Ana Labarta.¹¹⁶ Only five are known, of which three can be dated to the 'Amirid period, two of them

naming al-Manṣūr himself. These discs average 35 mm in diameter and 1 mm in thickness, and have two or three perforations, made before an inscription was incised into the metal. A near-complete example was found in the excavations at Cercadilla (Cordoba Archaeological Museum, inv. CER 93/S1/VE1/10-9-93; Appendix 4.22): it consists of two discs of equal size, each with two perforations, and preserves one of the rivets that connected them through an object – this object was not very thick because the rivet is only 3 mm long. Both external sides bear an inscription, which would need to be easily accessible for reading; the reverses of the discs are left plain. The inscriptions refer to weights, in a very precise manner. On the second (probably interior) of the discs from Cercadilla, the inscription reads 'Its weight is 21 *raṭls*', which has been struck through and rewritten above as 'Its weight is 20 *raṭls*'. But what do the weights refer to? The exterior disc refers to *ghilāla*, the term used for a chainmail tunic, while another example in the Cordoba Museum (Figure 18, Appendix 4.21) mentions *badan*, the term for a short mail coat, or hauberk. These terms are qualified by adjectives:

no-one dared talk to him when he was en route from his house to al-Zāhira, and the only time anyone could catch him was during office hours at the *dār al-sultān*.

109 Vallvé 1986, 261, mentions that al-Manṣūr's great-uncle, 'Amr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Asqalāja, was *ṣāhib al-madīnatayn*. Perhaps this role was shared with that of al-Zahrā' from the beginning, since according to Ibn Ḥayyān, as late as 1023–4 there was a *ṣāhib al-madīna* of al-Zāhira and al-Zahrā': see Bariani 2002a, 339–40.

110 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:181 [11:192] says: '[Al-Manṣūr] placed a *ṣāhib al-shurṭa* at [al-Zāhira's] gate'; Bariani 2002a, 329. The poet al-Jazīrī held the post of *ṣāhib al-shurṭa* at some point before his incarceration in al-Zāhira in 1003; see Contente 1969, 136 and n. 2.

111 Ruggles 2000, 53.

112 Bariani 2002a, 333, n. 32.

113 Various prominent figures were imprisoned or executed at al-Zāhira: al-Jazīrī was jailed there because of his involvement in an attempted coup against 'Isa ibn Sa'īd, and was reputedly assassinated in his cell: see Contente 1969, 123, 127, who says the dungeon was subterranean.

114 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; *Bayān* 111:61, 63 [translation, 64, 66], which mention 'arms and munitions' as a subdivision of the treasury. On the weapons stores at al-Zahrā', see *Anales*, §9.

115 Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1956, 119–20; Labarta 2016, 264.

116 Labarta 2016; Labarta 2019a.



FIGURE 18 Bronze disc in al-Manṣūr's name, found in Calle Cruz Conde, Cordoba, diam. 3.4 cm; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba, inv. CE009509

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the tunic is called *ḥarrāniyya*, probably after the city of Ḥarrān in Mesopotamia, an important military centre in the Umayyad period. Another adjective used on these discs is *kūftī*, after the Iraqi city of Kufa. Labarta believes armour of these types was used for military campaigns, as opposed to the more decorative armour used for parades (*burūz*). An example of the latter is probably indicated on the disc in Figure 18, where the mail coats (*al-abdān*) are called *al-ṣaqlabiyya al-muzayyana*, ‘decorated in the Slav style’. The historical evidence does not allow us to reconstruct the appearance of these different types of armour, or what ‘the Slav style’ meant, but this parade armour could have been made in nielloed silver or silver-gilt, as the arms given in *khilaʿ* presentations frequently were.¹¹⁷

The disc in Figure 18 is the 141st of the *abdān* decorated in this style, and the inscription further identifies it as the property of the ‘*ḥājib* Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir’. The discs from Cercadilla refer to the 11th of the Ḥarrānī mail tunics, also property of the *ḥājib*. Labarta has reconstructed that these numbers refer to inventories of arms and armour kept in the Khizānat al-Silāḥ, that must have been used to record to whom certain items were loaned when they were withdrawn for war or *burūz*, and from whom they were safely returned. These discs were attached through the rings of mail as tags to identify them. The reference to the *ḥājib* in both cases is because he would have paid for this armour to be made. The phrase *fī sabīli-llah* (‘for the cause of God’) on the Cercadilla disc further implies that this donation of armour to the arsenal was established as a *waqf*, or pious endowment, since this phrase is used in documents endowing arms or horses in this way.¹¹⁸ These unassuming little discs therefore contain a wealth of fascinating information about the operation of the state arsenals, as well as our only physical survival of the armour worn by the Umayyad army at this time.

Al-Manṣūr had granaries (*al-ahrāʿ*) constructed into the city walls, and mills (*al-arḥāʿ*) were erected along the banks of the Guadalquivir.¹¹⁹ Both these foundations suggest that al-Zāhira was intended to be self-sufficient in the supply of food to its inhabitants. They should also be considered as pious foundations, in the sense that they demonstrated the ruler providing for his people. Indeed, during a ‘terrible famine’ throughout al-Andalus, the Maghrib and Ifrīqiya, which began in 379/989–990 and lasted three years, ‘al-Manṣūr ordered that every day ... should be made 22,000 loaves of bread, which were distributed amongst the poor’.¹²⁰ Significantly, the description of al-Manṣūr’s generous behaviour during this time is comparable to that of al-Ḥakam during an earlier famine, in 353/964–5, and they are both credited with caring personally for the needy.¹²¹

Another indication of al-Zāhira’s intended self-sufficiency was the establishment of markets, another way in which al-Manṣūr’s city resembled Madīnat al-Zahrāʿ.¹²² These were ‘frequented by numerous caravans’ (*wa qāmat bi-hā al-aswāq, wa kathurat fī-hā al-arfāq*).¹²³ A Yemeni jewel-seller who is mentioned anecdotally in the sources must

119 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 81.

120 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:153–154 [11:193]; see also Ibn Abī Zarʿ 1964, 115. The length of three years seems like a topos: the *Dhikr Bilād* mentions a ‘great plague of locusts which affected the whole country and caused great damage’, which began in 381/991–92, and again lasted three years: cf. *Dhikr Bilād* 1:154 [11:193]. Ibn Abī Zarʿ 1964, 115, details al-Manṣūr’s response on this occasion.

121 *Bayān* 11:251 [translation, 389]: ‘Al-Ḥakam took care of the sick and needy, whether in Cordoba, its suburbs or al-Zahrāʿ. He gave them nourishment and he thus saved their lives’. In comparison, ‘during this famine al-Manṣūr behaved as no king before him had ever acted, and made kind gestures: he helped the Muslims, fed the weak, waived the tithes, buried the dead and succoured the living’: *Dhikr Bilād* 1:153–154 [11:193].

122 Al-Maqqarī, 238, lists markets among al-Zahrāʿ’ many ‘public and private establishments’, which also included baths: he gives two, while *Bayān* 11:247 [translation, 383] gives 300, which seems like an exaggeration, since Bariani 2002a emphasises the small size of the city. Cf. also Torres Balbás 1957, 435.

123 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82.

117 On which see Ballestín 2006.

118 Labarta 2016, 274.

have reached al-Zāhira's markets in one of these caravans,¹²⁴ though there is otherwise no indication of what commodities were traded in these souks. The people of Cordoba were attracted by these new markets and their associated job prospects, as well as the desire 'to be near the head of state (*ṣāhib al-dawla*)',¹²⁵ and so they also settled in al-Zāhira's environs. The surrounding land that was not built on was divided into orchard gardens and fiefdoms, administered by the *wuzarā'*, *kuttāb*, *quwwād* and *ḥujjāb* to whom al-Manṣūr had granted it; this land was farmed by tenant-farmers (*wa tanāfasa al-nās fī al-nuzūl bi-aknāfi-hā*).¹²⁶ Perhaps here was produced the grain that was stored, ground and made into the city's bread, as well as other food products that were sold in the city's markets. So many people settled in al-Zāhira's environs that in a very short time her suburbs 'joined those of Cordoba';¹²⁷ indeed, the way between al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrā' was so intensely urbanised that it was said that, at night, one could walk more than ten miles under the uninterrupted light of the torches illuminating the streets of the three cities.¹²⁸

3.3 Walls

A final and potent symbol of al-Zāhira's self-sufficiency was its high and heavy walls.¹²⁹ Contrary to Terrasse's belief that al-Zāhira's construction was rapid and flimsy, which is why the city disappeared so easily from the archaeological record, her walls appear to have been so well built that some of its towers were still standing in the twelfth century: on his way to campaign in

Shawwal 567/June 1172, the Almohad caliph Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (r. 1163–1184) made a stop 'on the mountain of the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, which dominated the towers of the site of al-Zāhira (*abrāj arḍ al-Zāhira*)'.¹³⁰ This Almohad reference also allows us to deduce the significant topographical information that the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, the 'Field of the Tent' or 'Pavilion' and the main mustering point for the Umayyad armies, not only lay to the east of Cordoba, but that al-Zāhira was sited close to it.

The first mention of the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq occurs in Ibn Ḥayyān's history for the year 319/931–2, when he mentions that 'Abd al-Raḥmān III began to plan a campaign against Toledo, 'beginning the preparations and bringing out the pavilion and the tents to the encampment of Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, to the east of Cordoba'.¹³¹ Ibn 'Idhārī tells us only that the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq was located on the northern bank of the Guadalquivir (*bi-jawf al-nahr al-a'zam*). In recent years, however, Manuel Acién Almansa and Antonio Vallejo Triano have been keen to locate the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq to the northwest of the city, closer to Madīnat al-Zahrā': specifically, they want to identify it with the site of Turruñuelos.¹³² The Faḥṣ al-Surādiq is mentioned several times in al-Rāzī's Annals, so was clearly well-established as the location of military staging by the 970s.¹³³ Before then, the mustering point had been the Faḥṣ al-Rabad, on the left bank of the river in front of the Alcázar, next to the *maṣalla* where great public religious acts were celebrated, such as prayers for rain.¹³⁴ Vallejo is keen to relate the transfer of the focus of military staging to the development of Madīnat al-Zahrā' to the northwest of Cordoba.

Although the site of Turruñuelos remains unexcavated, it was obviously an extraordinary construction since it can be detected clearly by

124 *Bayān* 11:313 [translation, 485]; al-Maqqarī, 209–211 (*Analectes*, 1:261, 268).

125 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82.

126 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 81.

127 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 457]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 82; al-Maqqarī, 242–243. The topos of the suburbs joining together is also mentioned in relation to al-Zahrā': see Ruggles 2000, 53–85.

128 Ibn 'Idhārī, cited in Bariani 2002a, 330.

129 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 81.

130 Zanón 1989, 79–80, §7.3.

131 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 216 (§190).

132 Lévi-Provençal 1932, 141, 225, citing *Bayān* 11: 219/338; Acién and Vallejo 1998, 126.

133 García Gómez 1965, 359–60; García Gómez 1967, 170; Vallejo 2010, 125.

134 Vallejo 2010, 125.

aerial photography and is visible on Google Earth. Rectangular in form and of huge dimensions, measuring 530 by 380 metres, the aerial images suggest that much of the interior space was empty, possibly planted as a huge garden. A large palatial complex stood on slightly elevated ground along the northern side. In this area fragments of marble decoration and column shafts can be seen lying on the surface. Additional buildings stood outside the enclosure.¹³⁵ Vallejo believes this structure 'should undoubtedly be related' to the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, 'or, more likely, that this enclosure formed part of the Faḥṣ, as the most important piece of infrastructure of the military cantonment of the State'. He goes on to note that the lack of excavation impedes the precise identification of its caliphal chronology, though 'the perfect geometry of its outline, its identical orientation to that of Madīnat al-Zahrā', and the regularity of the preparation of some of its foundations suggest a date around the 950s for the construction of its enclosing wall'.¹³⁶

Murillo et al seem to accept the identification of Turruñuelos with the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, although they admit that the 'interpretation of this immense and enigmatic site remains open for the moment'.¹³⁷ They consider that its association with the military necessities of the state – 'such as arsenals, the fabrication of arms or whatever other complex of buildings related to the function of a military camp' – could be related to the 'Āmirid period, because of the 'discovery of a direct connection between Turruñuelos, by means of the road which leaves from the gate in the centre of its southern wall, and the complex formed by large paved patios and narrow corridors, recently excavated in the Plan Parcial Huerta de Santa Isabel Oeste'. While this complex is still being studied, the archaeologists provisionally identify it as 'an enormous stables, complemented by surrounding areas of pasture and various auxiliary buildings'. There seems no reason in what they describe to

associate this structure with al-Manṣūr, though they note that 'al-Āmiriyya, al-Manṣūr's residence before the construction of Madīnat al-Zāhira ... contained workshops and arsenals for arms as well as storage and stables for the breeding of horses'. In citing al-Āmiriyya, they may be following Arjona Castro's association of Turruñuelos with the caliphal *munya* of al-Ruṣāfa, rebuilt by al-Manṣūr after the fall of al-Muṣḥafī.¹³⁸ This identification has not been accepted (indeed Murillo et al discuss another large structure which they identify as al-Ruṣāfa), but Arjona's association of Turruñuelos with al-Manṣūr was largely based on the discovery of a marble capital with a signature in its abacus, which he read as '*amala Sa'āda ibn Āmir 'abduhu*'.¹³⁹ While Juan Souto originally concurred with Arjona's reading, in a later study he reread the inscription as '*amala Sa'īd ibn Umar*, and discounted the 'Āmirid association.¹⁴⁰ León and Murillo also mention a residential quarter excavated to the west of the suburb of al-Ruṣāfa, constructed 'ex novo on a strictly orthogonal street grid', which they interpret as the housing for the Berber troops serving the 'Āmirid *ḥājib* (Chapter 1).¹⁴¹

All these interpretations might be correct: Turruñuelos may represent a massive military installation established in the 950s at the same time as Madīnat al-Zahrā', and this area may indeed have witnessed reinforcement and redevelopment during the 'Āmirid period, to house Berber troops and cater to the breeding and stabling of the cavalry and as a factory and arsenal for arms and armour. This does not also mean that this site should be identified as the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, which

138 Arjona 2000, 157 ff.

139 Arjona 2000, fig. 4; Arjona 2001, 384.

140 Souto 2002b was dedicated to this inscription; he revisited the inscription in Souto 2010a, 257 (no. 7.103). Arnold 2017, 117, returns to the 'Āmirid association of Turruñuelos, saying 'The possibility should not be discounted that Turruñuelos was a palace built by al-Manṣūr, either his country estate al-Āmiriyya or the famed Madīnat az-Zāhira itself' – but there is no evidence to justify this.

141 León and Murillo 2014, 25.

135 Arnold 2017, 116.

136 Vallejo 2010, 126.

137 Murillo et al 2010b, 612.

all the Arabic histories state was to the east of the city. Vallejo himself admits that his identification is ‘despite the insistence of the sources in situating its placement at the eastern tip of Cordoba (*ṭaraf Qurtuba al-sharqī*)’.¹⁴² Indeed, there is no need to have a permanent building on the site where the Umayyad armies came together before a campaign. As its very name indicates, this was a city of tents, and as Ibn Ḥayyān’s text mentions, the most important preparation for campaign was erecting the caliphal pavilion. In 1009, when Muḥammad ‘al-Mahdī’ seized Cordoba, ejected Sanchuelo and forced Hishām to abdicate, he ‘camped in Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, ordering provincials from every corner of al-Andalus to settle around his tent’.¹⁴³ All the sources indicate that it was a temporary city of textile structures that sprang into being when the army came together.

The location of the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq to the east of the city, and in proximity to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, also makes sense of Ana Echevarría’s observation that al-Zāhira’s main gate was located on the ancient Via Augusta, which led directly to the Marches.¹⁴⁴ Taking Arjona Castro’s suggestion of the area of Las Quemadas as the most likely site for al-Zāhira (see above), just to the north of the second bend in the river Guadalquivir, this indeed sits close to the main arterial road departing Cordoba to the east, as plotted by Murillo et al.¹⁴⁵ It is logical that the Umayyad army setting off on

campaign would have taken the main road out of Cordoba, and that the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq would have been located close to this road (Figure 17).

As Lévi-Provençal describes, once a campaign had been announced, the ceremonial of war began with the *burūz*, or grand parade, during which the ruler, surrounded by a luxurious cortège and followed by the Cordoban population, would process from the capital and install himself at the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq; here he would review and organise the troops, and distribute their payments, before departing for the front. This mustering period could last between 20 and 40 days, while the troops congregated here from all over the south of the peninsula.¹⁴⁶ Ibn ‘Idhārī also tells us that a garrison of six hundred men was permanently camped outside al-Zāhira, where they could be called upon in case of need;¹⁴⁷ and that ‘from [al-Zāhira] the standards marched direct to certain victory’.¹⁴⁸ These passages may indicate the constant readiness of al-Manṣūr’s troops to head off on campaign, as well as implying the city’s proximity to the army’s usual mustering point. The vista presented by al-Zāhira may thus have been one in which banners of the different regiments were constantly fluttering in the army camp around the city, a distinctive vista that may be significant in interpreting some of the visual imagery of the artwork created for the ‘Āmirid *ḥājibs*, in ateliers located within the city’s walls, as we will discuss further in Chapter 8.

As the end of the city’s history demonstrates, al-Zāhira was built to be defensible. Its walls were said to be impregnable, and its gate(s) could be closed against attack, as the city’s viziers urged its *ṣāhib al-madīna* to do when its fall to al-Mahdī seemed imminent.¹⁴⁹ Bariani argues that al-Zāhira was, in fact, intentionally small, with most of the buildings located outside the city walls, which

142 Vallejo 2010, 126.

143 Amabe 2016, 96.

144 Echevarría 2011, 182, citing *Bayān* III, trans. 12–13. She notes that its placement was therefore ideal for communicating quickly with Armilāt (Guadamellato), the Mozarabic monastery that served as a meeting and departure place for the armies. Armilāt is described in *HEM* II:282 and n. 1, as the first stopping station after Cordoba on the way to Toledo. It was located about 15 km north of Alcolea (prov. Cordoba), thus about a day’s march to the east from the capital. This was where ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr died in 399/1008, on the road back to the city.

145 In Arjona Castro et al. 1995, 188–192, they explore the location of the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq in the neighbourhood of the Cortijo de Rabanales, to the northeast of the city, now one of the campuses of the University of Cordoba.

146 Lévi-Provençal 1932, 141. Bariani 2003, 210–11, notes that troops located in more northerly or frontier locations would probably join the army along the route.

147 *Bayān* III:58 [translation, 62].

148 Bariani 2002a, 328, citing *Bayān* II:277.

149 *Bayān* III:58 [translation, 62].

would facilitate its defensibility; further, it may only have had one gate, as common for defensive structures.¹⁵⁰ While Ibn 'Idhārī mentions 'gates' in the plural, the only gate to be mentioned by name is the 'easternmost gate', the Bāb al-Faṭḥ, or Gate of Victory, where the heads of al-Manṣūr's executed foes were displayed,¹⁵¹ and where the people congregated to see the 'Āmirid *ḥujjāb* depart on campaign.¹⁵² If the Bāb al-Faṭḥ was the only gate, its location on the eastern side of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira put it at the farthest possible remove from Cordoba: arriving from Cordoba, you would have to travel all the way to the far side of the city in order to enter, and your progress would be perfectly visible along the way. According to Bariani, this enhanced the impression that the city was conceived as a fortress. It also meant that al-Zāhira shielded Cordoba, in the same way that it was the *ḥājib's* role to shield the caliph. During the absences of al-Manṣūr and his sons from al-Zāhira, they would seal the Bāb al-Shikāl, a gate in the eastern wall of Cordoba's al-Sharqīyya suburb, to enhance the defensibility of the capital.¹⁵³

That it was apparently impregnable does not imply that al-Manṣūr feared an internal uprising against his regime, nor that he attempted to seal himself in a hermetic world of which he alone was master, or to further isolate Hishām – all

suggestions that surface in the historiography of al-Zāhira. The heaviness of the city's walls may have been another feature that was imitated from al-Zahrā', whose walls were so substantial that the city's maximum extent can be determined solely by their appearance in aerial photographs.¹⁵⁴ But given the extent of al-Manṣūr's campaigning, and the very real military threats from Iberian and North African neighbours, the defensibility of al-Zāhira was also a sensible precaution against potential backlashes, especially if it was sited in close proximity to a standing garrison and the main mustering point of the Umayyad army. It is only in the aftermath of the outbreak of Fitna that the idea of defence against internal threats was written into the historiography of al-Zāhira's foundation.

4 Why Did al-Manṣūr Build al-Madīnat al-Zāhira?

This discussion of al-Zāhira's defensibility raises the question of al-Manṣūr's motivation for building this palace-city. The reconstruction presented here of what al-Zāhira looked like and how it functioned shows that in many important respects the palace-city imitated Madīnat al-Zahrā', both in terms of the formal similarities of their palatial buildings, and in the centralisation of all the necessary institutions of a city. Both al-Zahrā' and al-Zāhira 'duplicated civil, commercial and religious functions already in place in Cordoba';¹⁵⁵ however, an examination of the textual evidence for the state's political and religious calendar has found no substantive functional differences between Cordoba and al-Zahrā'. For example, ambassadors were just as likely to be received at al-Zahrā' as they were at the *qaṣr* in Cordoba, and proclamations of military victories or against

150 Bariani 2002a, 333–4.

151 'Īsa ibn Sa'īd was executed at al-Zāhira on 10 Rabī' I 397/4 December 1006 for his attempted coup against the 'Āmirids, and his head was displayed 'above the gate of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira', where it remained until the fall of the 'Āmirids: see *Bayān* III:33–34 [translation, 39–40]. His co-conspirator, Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Jabbār, was thrown into al-Zāhira's dungeons and never seen again: *Bayān* III:35 [translation, 41].

152 *Bayān* III:5 [translation, 13]. The gate is named in the context of al-Muẓaffar's departure in 393/1003 on his first campaign as *ḥājib*. Bariani 2002a, 334, notes that postern gates are sometimes opened in the walls of defensive structures, which might explain the plural in Ibn 'Idhārī's text.

153 Lévi-Provençal 1957 [1996], 241, n. 101, citing *Bayān* III:56, though he notes that this name might also have been given to one of the gates in the Alcázar (*Bayān* III:89). See also Bariani 2002a, 334.

154 Vallejo 1992, 27; Vallejo 2010, 165, pl. 89.

155 On the institutions which al-Zahrā' housed, see Ruggles 2000, 53, 62–65; Vallvé 1986, 257–259.

heretics were as likely to be read in the Cordoba mosque as the al-Zahrā' mosque.¹⁵⁶

This is the context in which al-Madīnat al-Zāhira should be understood, as a self-sufficient, autonomous capital, functionally no different from the twin capital of Cordoba/al-Zahrā'. The city's deference to Cordoba in important respects created a second axis of government, that is Cordoba/al-Zāhira, which eventually displaced the Cordoba/al-Zahrā' axis. Cordoba continued to be the traditional and principal capital of al-Andalus: despite the relocation of the treasury to al-Zāhira after the *waḥsha*, the fundamental caliphal institutions – the Dār al-Sikka and Dār al-Ṭirāz – were never transferred to al-Zāhira, and the city's congregational mosque had subordinate status to the Great Mosque of Cordoba, which continued to function as the primary *jāmi'* mosque in the area. It is also likely that the majority of the population continued to live in Cordoba,¹⁵⁷ so that the ancient Umayyad capital was still very much at the heart of the state.

However, the historiography surrounding the foundation of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira inextricably implicates it in the culmination of al-Manṣūr's appropriation of the power and prerogatives of the Andalusī caliphate. Some passages are explicit in their assertion of usurpation, such as those which speak of Hishām's destitution of all caliphal insignia, or his lonely imprisonment at al-Zahrā';¹⁵⁸ while this theme is implicit in other sources – the 'usurpation' of the site on which al-Zāhira was constructed, or of the Friday prayer in the city's mosque. Again this bias derives from Ibn Ḥayyān who gives three primary motivations for al-Manṣūr's construction of a palace-city: the desire to manifest his independence, having reached the height of his power; the need for

better security from his many enemies, since he feared for his life every time he needed to visit the caliphal palace; and lastly but most significantly, the desire to isolate Hishām and strip him of all power and influence.¹⁵⁹

This view of al-Manṣūr's city has been perpetuated in the modern attempts to understand and define it: Ruggles, for example, states that al-Manṣūr 'strategically developed Cordoba's east side ... to draw building attention and activity away from Madīnat al-Zahrā' which was too closely identified with the Umayyads';¹⁶⁰ and that by building such a palace, al-Manṣūr cunningly 'elevated himself to the level of kings' and 'put himself in the place of the caliph'.¹⁶¹ She even interprets the archaeological evidence according to an utterly literal reading of Ibn Ḥayyān: a subterranean passage, running from the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's west corridor under the upper garden to the lower south terrace, was later blocked, 'presumably by al-Manṣūr as part of his modifications to Madīnat al-Zahrā' when he incarcerated Hishām'.¹⁶² Such readings imply that al-Madīnat al-Zāhira was constructed specifically to efface al-Zahrā', which became no more than a luxurious jail-cell for the caliph. On the contrary, as Bariani's

159 See, for example, *Bayān* 11:294, 296 [translation, 457, 459–460].

160 Ruggles 2000, 113.

161 Ruggles 2000, 124, quoting Ibn Khāqān, *apud* al-Ḥimyārī 1938, 80.

162 Ruggles 2000, 85 and fig. 33. This assumption – that any later rebuilding at the site must provide physical evidence of the 'Āmirids' isolation of the caliph – is problematic, especially since we know from al-Idrīsī 1975, 579–580, that a small population continued to occupy the site of al-Zahrā' as late as the mid-twelfth century: see also Mazzoli-Guintard 1997, 62, n. 113. Such a modification could have been made any time, and Antonio Vallejo admits that it is incredibly difficult to date such examples of repair and reuse at al-Zahrā' (personal communication). Vallejo 2010, 162–3, says 'Nuestro conocimiento sobre las reformas que cabe atribuir al prolongado gobierno del tercer califa de al-Andalus, Hishām II, es mucho más limitado y, hasta el momento, no tiene constatación epigráfica.'

156 Mazzoli-Guintard 1997, 50–52 for the enumeration of religious events; pp. 52–57 for political events; pp. 57–64 for her incisive discussion and conclusion.

157 Mazzoli-Guintard 1997, 63.

158 *Bayān* 11:296 [translation, 459]; Ibn Khāqān, *apud* al-Ḥimyārī 1938, 82; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:152–153 [11:190–192].

study of the sources has shown, after the crisis of the *waḥṣha* was resolved, Hishām ‘often stayed at al-Zāhira’.¹⁶³

In order to understand the motivations for al-Zāhira’s construction more objectively, it is essential to properly contextualise it in light of the historical discussion presented in the previous chapters. As we saw, the years 976 to 981 were the crucial period in the development of al-Manṣūr’s career, during which he rose to a position in the regency government and became one of the most powerful political players on the peninsular stage. The beginning of the end for his rival, al-Muṣḥafī, was sealed when al-Manṣūr contracted his dynastic marriage to Ghālib’s daughter, Asmā’, which was celebrated in Muḥarram 368/August 978. As a wedding present, the caliph Hishām promoted him to *ḥājib*. A few months later, al-Muṣḥafī fell from grace, and al-Manṣūr assumed full control of the regency government (Chapter 1). This was the situation in 368/978, when the sources tell us that al-Manṣūr ‘ordered his palace to be constructed’. It is likely that, ultimately, it was founded both to triumphalise his new role at the centre of government, as well as to begin to rationalise the organs of government under his administration.¹⁶⁴ After the defeat of Ghālib in 981 and the culmination of al-Manṣūr’s triumph, al-Zāhira took on an extra, symbolic role. Just as Madīnat al-Zahrā’ had been ‘the architectural equivalent of ... caliphal titlature’,¹⁶⁵ so al-Zāhira was as important a symbol of victory as his adoption of a *laqab*: both emblematised the beginning of al-Manṣūr’s rule as sole regent. When he transferred the organs of government to al-Zāhira that same year, the

palace truly became ‘a new seat for the rule of al-Andalus’.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, just as al-Manṣūr was not the first *ḥājib* to adopt a *laqab* (see Chapter 1), so he was not the first to build a palace: al-Muṣḥafī’s home in elegant al-Ruṣāfa was ‘one of the most magnificent residences in Cordoba’ (Chapter 6).¹⁶⁷ But just as al-Manṣūr’s *laqab* was undeniably more ‘caliphal’ than those of his predecessors, we can identify a similar difference in scale in his construction of al-Zāhira: in graduating from *munya* to *madīna*, al-Manṣūr was adopting a caliphal architectural form that clearly articulated his *ḥijāba* as if it were the caliphate. After 981, al-Zāhira was undoubtedly perceived by al-Manṣūr, his court and the population of Cordoba, as a ‘celebration of triumph and a testament of power’.¹⁶⁸ It became a physical and metaphysical symbol of the new centre of power in al-Andalus.

While this symbolic aspect cannot be denied, there were also very practical reasons for al-Zāhira’s foundation. In establishing a new form of government, al-Manṣūr would have surrounded himself with administrators who were personally loyal and answerable to him, just as he reformed the organisation of the regiments in the Andalusi army. Inheriting the administrators of the old regime, who might harbour loyalty to al-Muṣḥafī, was not a shrewd move for someone who wanted to stamp his own identity on government or seek to organise it in a more efficient way, just as happens when governments change today. At the same time, while Madīnat al-Zahrā’ nestled cosily up against the foothills of the Sierra Morena, al-Zāhira was outward facing and strategically located: the city sat in a wide plain which opened onto the Guadalquivir, and was clearly visible from the river. Of course this also implies that anyone

163 Bariani 2002a, 339.

164 See Mazzoli-Guintard 1996a, 170–172, on ‘la ville triomphante’. Ballestín 2004a, 198 cites Ibn ‘Idhārī’s reasons for the construction of al-Zāhira as the centralisation of the administration of power, and to regulate closely access to Hishām.

165 Ruggles 2000, 92.

166 Safran 2000, 101.

167 Al-Maqqarī, 183.

168 Safran 2000, 102.



FIGURE 19 Roman stele reused to carve the inscription commemorating the restoration of the city of Lisbon by al-Manṣūr in 985; Museu da Cidade, Lisbon, inv. MC.ARQ.CSJ.40.EP.0009 © JOSÉ D'ENCARNAÇÃO

approaching from the east, by boat or road, was clearly visible to watchmen on the city's walls. The main approach to the Umayyad capital was from the east, from the major ports of Algeciras and Almería, which provided al-Andalus's access

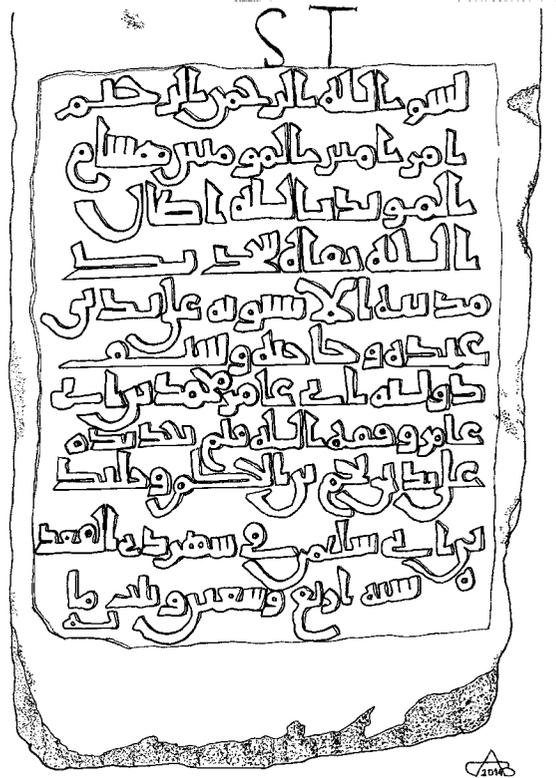


FIGURE 20 Drawing of inscription in Figure 19 © CARMEN BARCELÓ

to North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the wider world;¹⁶⁹ and this was the direction in which the Andalusi troops would head out on campaign.

Facilitating the mustering and movement of troops for the army's biannual campaigns was a central concern for al-Manṣūr, and much of the evidence we have for his other architectural construction – especially bridge- and road-building and the fortification of garrison towns – is connected with this. Indeed, the booty from al-Manṣūr's successful campaigns probably

169 On the importance of Algeciras as a port, especially for access to North Africa, see Fierro 2008, esp. 588–592. On the port of Almería, which was refortified by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III after a Fatimid attack in 954 as a home for the Umayyad fleet, see Lévi-Provençal 1932, 152–6; Lirola Delgado 1993, 198–212.

contributed funding towards these architectural projects.¹⁷⁰ As we saw in Chapter 1, he ordered the construction of a defensive wall at Ceuta, and the historical sources tell us that he created a new base for the Andalusí fleet at Alcáçer do Sal, on the Portuguese coast south of Lisbon, which became a mustering point for the combined land-sea attack on Santiago de Compostela in 997.¹⁷¹ An inscription found in excavations at Castillo Sao Jorge in Lisbon provides the information that al-Manşūr also undertook reforms at this strategic coastal site, which are not otherwise known from the historical record. Eleven lines of Arabic are carved in relief below the Latin text of a Roman tombstone made from a local stone and datable to the first century AD (Figures 19–20; the full text is given in Appendix 4.6).¹⁷² The inscription refers to a restoration of the city – *tajdīd Madīnat al-Ashbūna* – in 374/985, which Barceló interprets as the repair of the city’s walls. This would connect the fortification of Lisbon with al-Manşūr’s wider policy of reinforcing the frontier zones of al-Andalus in the wake of the campaign against Barcelona (also 985) and leading up to his attack on Santiago.¹⁷³ The text is in the name of the caliph Hishām, though the works mentioned were orchestrated by ‘his servant (*‘abdihi*), his *hājib* and the sword of his State (*sayf dawlatihi*)’, Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir. Significantly, the title ‘al-Manşūr’ is omitted from this inscription, though he is referred to by what

appears to have been the standard *hājib*al title of Sayf al-Dawla.

Ibn ‘Idhārī and al-Maqqarī both mention bridge-construction as among al-Manşūr’s pious works: in 378–9/988–9 he built a bridge over the Guadalquivir which cost 140,000 dinars and was ‘appreciated by the people’. He spent even greater sums on a bridge over the river Genil at Écija, which ‘smoothed out the difficult roads and the steep ravines’. The choice of the location of this second bridge is interesting, since Écija was the site of two fountains commissioned by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and Şubḥ, and as such had an important association with the caliphal family.¹⁷⁴ A fragmentary marble inscription preserved in Fuentes de Andalucía (prov. Seville, some 35km from Écija) has been identified by Carmen Barceló as part of the foundation inscription commemorating this bridge construction (Figure 21, Appendix 4.8). Though only two lines of Kufic script survive – of excellent quality carving, in the style of the late 970s or 980s – they name [Abū ‘Ā]mir Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir and allude to damage caused by a flood in the winter of the year [98]3 (*ḡalama-hu sayl shatwa sanat thalath ...*). Barceló notes that the historical sources speak of the Genil flooding Écija and the damage caused to the bridge and mills along its banks; if similar damage occurred in 373/983, it is likely that this inscription celebrated the completion of the bridge’s repair five years later, in 378/988.¹⁷⁵ The fragment from Fuentes may thus be a physical survival of an example of ‘Āmirid bridge construction.

Another is preserved on the Puente de Alcántara in Toledo (Figure 22, Appendix 4.9). This tells an interesting epigraphic tale that was reconstructed by María José Rodríguez and Juan Souto.¹⁷⁶ The bridge was reconstructed by Felipe II (r. 1556–1598) and bears several sixteenth-century

170 The important socio-economic impact of these campaigns, in terms of the availability of money and manpower from prisoners-of-war, is stressed by Echevarría 2000, esp. 109–110.

171 Echevarría 2011, 134.

172 Now in the Museu da Cidade (Inv MC.ARQ.CSJ.40. EP.0009), H: 111.2 cm × W: 40 cm × Depth: 29 cm. This was one of nineteen Roman inscriptions found during the excavations but, while these have been studied and published, the presence of an Arabic text was noted but assumed to be illegible. It was finally read and published by Barceló 2013.

173 Barceló 2013, 185. She says (p. 173) that this would also push the foundation date of the castle – previously thought to have been founded in the mid-eleventh century – back to the Umayyad period.

174 *Bayān* 11:309 [translation, 479], and al-Maqqarī, 219. On the fountains at Écija, see Lévi-Provençal 1931, 36–37 (#29), 37–38 (#30), and Anderson 2012, 661–4.

175 Barceló 2013, 183–184; the full inscription is reconstructed in her Figure 6.

176 Rodríguez and Souto 2000b.



FIGURE 21
Fragment of an inscription
commemorating the
restoration of a bridge at
Écija in 988; Museo Fuentes
de Andalucía, H 17 cm,
W 34 cm
© CARMEN BARCELÓ

commemorative inscriptions arranged around another inscription, which dates from an earlier rebuilding of the bridge by Alfonso X in 1259. Preserved in the text of this inscription are elements of a third, tenth-century inscription, since it summarises in Castilian an Arabic inscription from 387/997–8 commemorating the first restoration of this bridge by al-Manṣūr. The text of the original Arabic inscription can be reconstructed as reading: ‘Al-Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Āmir, the *wazīr* of the *amīr al-mu‘minīn*, al-Mu‘ayyad bi-llāh Hishām – may Allāh prolong his life! – ordered the reconstruction of this bridge. And it was completed, with the help of Allāh, under the direction of the *qā‘id* of Toledo, Khalaf ibn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī, in the year 387.’¹⁷⁷

Since no foundation inscription survives from al-Manṣūr’s mosque extension (Chapter 5), these

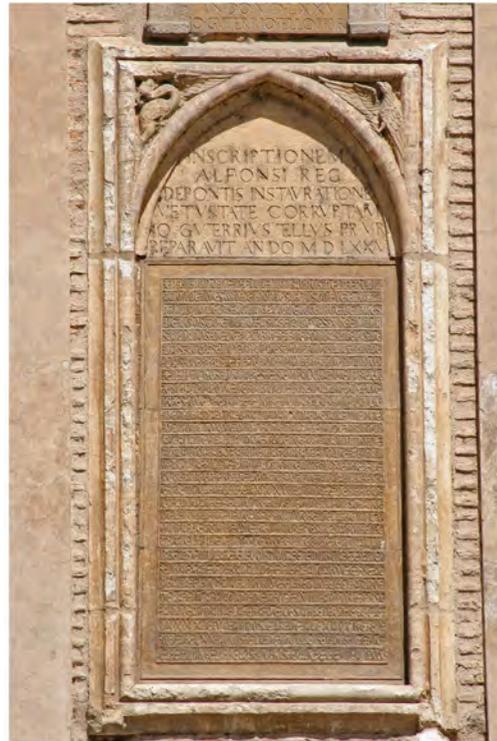


FIGURE 22 Inscription on the Puente de
Alcántara, Toledo
© KENT RAWLINSON

¹⁷⁷ Rodríguez and Souto 2000b, 202–5, discuss the identity of Khalaf ibn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī. He will be discussed here in Chapters 6 and 7, in relation to the structure of the luxury arts industry and his possible role in the creation of al-Manṣūr’s fountain basin (Appendix 4.7).

fortuitous epigraphic survivals preserve the only known construction inscriptions in his name. In the Lisbon inscription, he omits his *laqab* ‘al-Manṣūr’ but is identified as *ḥājib* and by the title Sayf al-Dawla; in the Toledo inscription, it is interesting that he should have chosen to give himself the relatively inferior title of *wazīr* at a date that marks the apogee of his career. Rodríguez and Souto attribute this to the fact that al-Manṣūr had designated his son ‘Abd al-Malik with the title *ḥājib* in 991–2 and had adopted the title *al-malik al-karīm* in 996–7, while retaining the title *wazīr* which can be held by more than one person; they do not attempt to explain why he does not appear in the inscription as *al-malik al-karīm* (a title of which Bariani is rightly dubious, see Chapter 1).¹⁷⁸ The Castilian word used in the thirteenth-century inscription is ‘alguacil’, deriving from the Arabic but still today a widely-used Spanish word for a governor or minister or someone with a legal role. The thirteenth-century inscription may have substituted the word ‘ḥājib’ with an already well-understood Castilian equivalent. In both cases, however, the inscriptions underline that Ibn Abī ‘Āmir’s authority derives from the caliph Hishām.

Returning to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, Ruggles may be right to note that al-Manṣūr ‘colonised’ the zone to the east of Cordoba, but his motivations were not to do with the effacement of the Umayyad zone to the west. Ultimately, the reasons were practical, associated with the efficient centralisation of government, the strategic dominance of the main approach to the Umayyad capital, and with the mustering and movement of troops on campaign. All that al-Manṣūr might stand accused of was aggrandising his palace-city to visualise and triumphalise his position as sole regent and *de facto* ruler of the state.

One final point relates to the deliberate and ideological use of onomastics by al-Manṣūr in the choice of the name ‘al-Zāhira’ for his palace-city, and the ‘Bāb al-Faṭḥ’ for the city’s main – or only – gate. Such naming strategies mark a new departure for Andalusī city gates, since those of both

Cordoba and al-Zahrā’ bore names that simply described them or the destination to which they led, such as the Bāb al-Jinān (Gate of the Gardens) in Madīnat al-Zahrā’, or the Bāb al-Qanṭara (Gate of the Bridge) or Bāb Ishbīliya (the gate leading to Seville) in Cordoba.¹⁷⁹ Hitherto, there seems to have been no deeper level of meaning to the nomenclature of city gates in al-Andalus, though the names themselves were significant enough that the twinning of the double capital, Cordoba/al-Zahrā’, was underscored by the recapitulation in the latter of the names and relative placements of the former’s Bāb al-Šūra and Bāb al-Sudda – what Safran calls ‘commemorative referencing’.¹⁸⁰ Rather, in naming the main gate of his city the Bāb al-Faṭḥ, al-Manṣūr approximated the Fatimid practice of naming gates or cities in accordance with their ideology and propaganda: all the Fatimid cities had gates that evoked the concept of victory and the rise of Isma‘ilism, such as the Bāb al-Naṣr and Bāb al-Futūḥ in Šabra-Manṣūriyya and Cairo. Furthermore, mutual referencing often occurred between the names of the Fatimid caliph and his city, for example, al-Mahdī and al-Mahdiyya, built *circa* 916, soon after ‘Ubayd Allāh had adopted the caliphal title; or al-Manṣūr and Šabra-Manṣūriyya, both names adopted in 947 to commemorate the victory of the third Fatimid caliph over the Kharijite rebellion led by Abū Yazīd.¹⁸¹ In this respect, the use of *faṭḥ* for the name of the ‘Āmirid gate might deliberately pun on the meaning of the founder’s *laqab*, and imply a similar element of referencing between the names of the ruler and his city.

179 For the names of the five city gates known for Madīnat al-Zahrā’, see Ruggles 2000, 64; for Cordoba’s seven city gates, see Lévi-Provençal 1957 [1996], 236–238; on the eight gates of the caliphal palace at Cordoba, see Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 592–593.

180 Safran 2000, 68: ‘Textual references make clear that the most important city gate (Bāb al-Šūra) and the most important gate into the *qaṣr* (Bāb al-Sudda) in Madīnat al-Zahrā’ were named after their counterparts in Cordoba.’

181 See ‘Al-Mahdiyya’, and ‘Al-Mansur bi’llāh, Ismā‘il’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

Was al-Manṣūr consciously evoking a Fatimid practice in thus naming his gate? It has been suggested that the Andalusi Umayyads engaged in a ‘war of words’ with the Fatimids, specifically that in giving his city the name ‘al-Zahrā’ (‘Shining’, ‘Resplendent’, bright with its white marble buildings), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III consciously evoked the epithet of the Fatimids’ ancestress, Fāṭima, also ‘al-Zahrā’, and thereby appropriated their ‘symbols and language’ in his attempt to represent his caliphate as the only legitimate one.¹⁸² Given the anti-heterodox messages that can be read in the epigraphic programme of al-Manṣūr’s eastern façade of the Cordoba mosque, it is not unlikely that the emergence of unorthodox religious trends in al-Andalus prompted the *ḥājib* himself to adopt this onomastic game in his own articulation of power (Chapter 5, section 3).

It should be remembered that the Bāb al-Faṭḥ was also the gate from which the ‘Āmirids marched their armies to battle – as Ibn ‘Idhārī said, ‘from [al-Zāhira] the standards marched direct to certain victory’ – and the adoption of this name may have had a more auspicious and ceremonial character. It may also have deliberately evoked the Surat al-Faṭḥ, the Qur’ānic sura of ‘victory’ that was recited in the Great Mosque of Cordoba during the ritual of knotting the banners, one of the culminating moments in the ceremonial of preparing for jihad as discussed in Chapter 5.

This would still indicate an awareness of onomastic and ideological resonances between the city’s gate and the ritual of preparing for war. Al-Manṣūr clearly used onomastics to express his ideology of rule, and it can be argued that he followed a pattern of name-selection similar to that of the Fatimids. Most significantly, his choice of name for his city in the same *z-h-r* root as al-Zahrā’ was surely as deliberate as his choice of a *laqab* in the same *n-ṣ-r* root as ‘al-Nāṣir’ (the title of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III) and ‘al-Mustaṣir’ (the title of al-Ḥakam II). In both cases, al-Manṣūr was making a statement of alignment with the Umayyads, and in choosing the name ‘al-Zāhira’ he was again

attempting to define himself as the practical (rather than actual) successor to the Umayyads. We will see this meaningful use of words again in the deliberate semantic punning employed in the inscriptions on ‘Āmirid luxury arts, discussed in Chapter 8. Interestingly, there was a contemporary Fatimid instance of ‘al-Zāhira’ as the name of a palace: upon the completion of the Eastern and Western Palaces at al-Qāhira, al-‘Azīz (r. 975–996), who himself bore the epithet ‘al-azhar’, renamed the entire complex ‘al-Quṣūr al-Zāhira’.¹⁸³ Perhaps al-Manṣūr again consciously adopted a central element of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s model of caliphal legitimacy – namely, the appropriation of Fatimid ‘symbols and language’.

5 What Did al-Madīnat al-Zāhira Look Like?

A small and scattered collection of architectonic elements – mainly capitals – can be associated with the ‘Āmirids through the deployment of the same motifs and vocabulary as seen on their portable objects (see Chapters 6–8). This allows us to propose that at least some of these elements came from ‘Āmirid buildings, whether in al-Madīnat al-Zāhira itself or in one of the family’s *munyas*. One group of capitals has stylistic elements that relate it closely to the ‘Āmirid marble basins, and if they came from the same spaces this would imply a decorative coherence and interplay between the architecture of these spaces and the works of art which furnished them. As with most capitals that were made in caliphal al-Andalus, the order employed is composite, in that they combine the volutes of the Ionic order with the acanthus leaves of the Corinthian order.¹⁸⁴ These works are characterised by a simplification of the Corinthian elements, a greater ‘flatness’ of style, and the use of what Marinetto Sánchez has called ‘less noble

¹⁸³ Rabbat 1996, 53.

¹⁸⁴ The terms used here for the different parts of the capital follow Vallejo 2013; in particular see the diagram on p. 106.



FIGURE 23

Capital with ducks and a worm in the echinus, late tenth century, sandstone; Museo de la Alhambra, inv. R.4489

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

materials', such as sandstone (though it is important to remember that Madīnat al-Zahrā' was by no means all marble – most of the wall decoration was carved from limestone).¹⁸⁵ But the picture is far from one of artistic decline: we see innovations such as double-capitals (Figures 37–40), as well as pieces which play with the capital form, 'melting' the rigid marble material and the standard elements of Andalusī capitals. There is a greater frequency of zoomorphic motifs, and the addition of a figural scene in the *echinus* (the space between the volutes) – as, for example on Figure 23 – is a stylistic and technical innovation of the 'Āmirid period which has never been noted and deserves more detailed investigation. The capitals discussed below all have different shapes, sizes and decoration, and as such probably come from different buildings and building types. None of them has a clear provenance.

Two capitals of unknown provenance now in the Museo de la Alhambra seem to come from

the same original location, since their material, size and carving style are basically identical (Figure 23), though only one of them bears figurative decoration in its echinus; this capital also has one row of acanthus leaves where the other has the usual two.¹⁸⁶ Both are carved from sandstone, which is not the usual material for architectural supports in the caliphal period – columns, capitals and bases made for Madīnat al-Zahrā' and other government buildings were usually formed from marble. However, if Arjona Castro was correct in suggesting that the location of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira should be plotted around the area of Las Quemadas, this communicates with the alluvial zone of the Arenal, or 'al-Ramla' as it was called in the Arabic sources, both toponyms deriving from words for 'sand'. As discussed at the start of this chapter, 'important archaeological remains' were found in this area, including large blocks of

¹⁸⁵ Marinetto Sánchez 1987c, 185–186.

¹⁸⁶ Marinetto Sánchez 1987c, 199–200.

sandstone.¹⁸⁷ It would be logical to use the stone quarried out for the levelling and foundations of the site to construct the buildings and carve architectural elements – especially if it were being built quickly – and it is therefore possible that these two sandstone capitals came from buildings in al-Madinat al-Zāhira. Being a softer material, this contributes to the more worn appearance of the carving, as well as to their red colour.

Furthermore, stylistically they relate to other objects whose manufacture can be attributed with certainty to ‘Āmirid patronage. One of the two capitals unusually features a figurative scene in the echinus at the front of the capital; on the back, the band is filled with vegetal scrolls.¹⁸⁸ The scene features two ducks both pecking at a worm or water-snake, which wriggles in the centre. These ducks are of exactly the same type as those seen in the ‘Āmirid marble basins (Figures 118A, 129, 157), in some of which the ducks also peck at worms. They are so close stylistically that the capitals must have emanated from the hands of the same craftsmen as the basins, which argues that the same artisans worked on the architectural decoration of the palaces as on the luxury objects produced in the Dār al-Šinā’a (discussed further in Chapter 6). The use of sandstone relates these capitals to the small basin also in the Alhambra Museum, while that in Seville is made of limestone, another ‘less noble material’ (Figures 164–168). The fact that there is only figurative decoration on one side of the capital suggests that this side faced forwards: it may have supported an arch in a garden pavilion, with one of the stylistically-related basins located close by, so that viewers could draw the visual connection between the two elements.

Its pair is a composite capital with two superimposed rows of eight ‘plain acanthus’ leaves around the basket (body), while its volutes project less

than on the previous example.¹⁸⁹ Its decoration is entirely vegetal, in a low relief style with minimal undercutting of the decoration, very similar to that of the previous capital; and on both sides the echinus contains floral scrolls identical to those on the back of that capital. These similarities and the fact that this capital is also carved from sandstone suggest that it shares a provenance with the previous capital.

A third capital can be related to these two, through its flat carving style and the presence of a wriggling worm or snake in the space above the front right volute (Figure 24), though this example is marble.¹⁹⁰ Its decoration is again entirely vegetal, formed by two rows of acanthus leaves, which rather than being plain are decorated quite naturalistically. It has the same characteristic flat carving style as the previous two examples, which can be most clearly seen in the large palmettes that fill the volutes. The word ‘amal appears in the gusset at the front of the capital, the beginning of a craftsman’s signature the rest of which is now lost. To the right of this is a small worm with a smiling face. Its proximity to the signature suggests this might be a visualisation of the craftsman’s name or perhaps a workshop marker. It is not uncommon to encounter rather playful motifs in ‘Āmirid art, especially on the basins: the nature of the figural carving sometimes conveys a real sense of humour, as well as a reference to the natural setting in which these objects were located. While the ducks, turtles and fishes seen on some of the basins allude to their function as water reservoirs, the presence of a worm out of context on this capital seems to have no significance apart from playfulness on the part of the carver. However, it is interesting to observe that some of the Roman capitals reused in the Great Mosque of Cordoba – in particular, late first- or early second-century AD examples which probably came from the theatre at Mérida

187 Measuring 1.20–1.30 m × 0.45–0.60 m: Arjona Castro et al. 1994b, 264.

188 Inv. R4489; dims: 19 (D) × 27 (W) × 18.5 (H) cm; Marinetto Sánchez 1987c, 185–186; *Arte Islámico en Granada*, 264 (cat. 62).

189 Inv. 3749; dims: 20 (D) × 23 (H); Marinetto Sánchez 1987c, 184–185, 199.

190 Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, Madrid, inv. 5.234. Bibliography: unpublished.



FIGURE 24 Capital with worm or snake above the volute, late tenth century, marble; Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, inv. 5.234, H 22.5, Max W 32, W (base) 22 cm
© CUAUHTLI GUTIÉRREZ



FIGURE 25
Capital from Mérida with fleurons in its abacus,
reused in Great Mosque of Cordoba, late first- or
early second-century AD, marble
© ROSE WALKER / PHOTO:
JOHNBATTENPHOTOGRAPHY

(Figure 25) – have a fleuron at the centre of their abaci containing a small serpentine motif, which looks a lot like a worm.¹⁹¹ Did the stone masons working on the ‘Āmirid mosque extension – who likely saw employment on other ‘Āmirid constructions, as we will see below – take inspiration from the Roman capitals they saw inside the mosque?¹⁹²

The echinus decoration of these ‘Āmirid capitals invites comparison with a number of other, rather more elaborate examples of this phenomenon, and leads to the consideration that these could also be examples of ‘Āmirid art. The first is a marble capital coming from the Casa del Gran Capitán (Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, 1453–1515) in Cordoba and now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Figures 26–7), whose figurative elements relate iconographically to the large ‘Āmirid basins.¹⁹³ Apart from the basin in León (Figure 159, discussed in Chapter 7), this capital is the only other object to make use of ‘stilts’ below the legs of both lions and griffins, which might serve to confirm its ‘Āmirid chronology. Another composite capital, the wide space between the volutes is occupied by scenes of two lions devouring a deer, and affronted pairs of winged griffins, which

alternate around the circumference of the capital. Gómez-Moreno clearly believed this capital to date from the ‘Āmirid period, since he introduced it by mentioning that ‘the appearance of marbles with animated themes’ was ‘a novelty in the closing stages of the caliphate ..., under al-Manṣūr and his sons’. The lion-gazelle combat on this capital recalls the prominent use of this motif on the large basins, as does the presence of the winged griffin, which we see on the narrow sides of the ‘Āmirid basins, though on the capital they are represented with an unusual loop in their hind quarters, which may recall the representation of seamonsters on Late Antique sarcophagi.¹⁹⁴ Both motifs of the lion-gazelle combat and the griffin are emblematic of the ‘Āmirids’ projection of their power and legitimacy as *ḥujjāb*, as argued in Chapter 8. This capital shows that these emblems were carried over into the architectonic decoration of ‘Āmirid spaces, marking these in the same way that the caliphs’ names and titles inscribed on earlier capitals physically marked those as ‘Umayyad’. It also indicates that a coherent programme was enacted in the decoration of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira – if that is where this capital ultimately came from – which served to underline the ‘Āmirids’ messages of power. Compared to the capital with the ducks and worm, the carving of the figures here is much more three-dimensional and sculptural. Though the undercutting is deeper, the flat-relief style of the background carving nevertheless relates it to the capitals just discussed, while the prevalent vertical motif of the basket is a version of the ‘chainlink’ seen on the double-capital, discussed below, which may be a chronological indicator of ‘Āmirid capitals.

A very worn marble capital now in Girona shifts the figurative decoration from the abacus

191 I am grateful to Rose Walker for discussing these Mérida capitals with me.

192 This inspiration might have happened at an earlier date. Vallejo 2013, fig. 113b (right) illustrates a capital from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II’s mihrab (carved c. 848), reused in al-Ḥakam II’s mihrab: at the centre of its abacus is a fleuron with an abstract circular element at its centre that could be interpreted as a worm. ‘Āmirid craftsmen may equally have been looking to earlier Umayyad capitals for their models.

193 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181, fig. 245a. Though he briefly discussed and illustrated this capital, Gómez-Moreno gave no indication of its dimensions or location, so its whereabouts were not obvious until the capital was displayed in the Islamic gallery of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid following its refurbishment in 2014. It entered the collection in 1912 and bears inv. no. 52.117; dimensions: H: 36 cm; diam of calathos: 28 cm; max W: 36 cm. Information and images are available on the museum’s online catalogue. I would like to thank Isabel Arias for discussing this object with me. It is also mentioned in Martínez Enamorado 2006, 52, n. 123, who references Revilla Vielva 1932, 63, no. 152, plate 16.

194 I discuss this motif and its Late Antique origins in Rosser-Owen 2015b, 41–2. In Chapter 6, I argue that Late Antique sarcophagi were a likely source for the huge blocks of marble from which the ‘Āmirids carved their fountain basins. It would be highly probable for their craftsmen to have been influenced by the designs on such objects.



FIGURE 26 Capital with lions and griffins in the echinus: side with griffins, late tenth century, marble; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 52117, diam. 28, H max 36 cm
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 27 Detail of the capital in Figure 26
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 28 Capital with elephant-headed volutes, late tenth century, alabaster; Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya-Girona, inv. 550, H: 22, diam 11.5, Max W: 14.3 cm
© ARXIU D'IMATGES. MUSEU D'ARQUEOLOGIA DE CATALUNYA-GIRONA

to the volutes, which are formed by the heads and trunks of four elephants, though only two corners remain (Figure 28).¹⁹⁵ Its lower part is composed of two superimposed rows of 'plain acanthus', and the elephants' trunks curve downwards to combine with the topmost row. The whole capital is very worn from water erosion, but between the heads runs a band of decoration that seems to be entirely vegetal, executed in the undercut technique familiar from Umayyad capitals. Castejón was unsure about dating this piece to the tenth century, partly because its proportions are slendrer than those of caliphal capitals (it is just over 14 cm in diameter at its widest point); he suggested instead a twelfth- or thirteenth-century date. The closest comparanda appear to be a set of capitals in situ in the early eleventh-century crypt of Vic Cathedral, which are carved from a local stone

195 Found in the Castillo de Peratallada, Girona; now in the Museo Arqueológico, Girona (acquired 1934). See Dubler 1945; Castejón 1924, 163–164, plate 11.

with very roughly-hewn decoration. Nevertheless, as Rose Walker discusses, the volutes are 'enlarged and, more inventively, turned into pairs of lions or birds whose hindquarters form the curl of the volutes, whilst their heads almost meet where the fleuron would otherwise be'.¹⁹⁶ The capitals at Vic might be another example of the legacy of 'Āmirid art on the Peninsula in the early eleventh century, as discussed in this book's Conclusion. Nothing comparable to the Girona capital exists to provide a strong 'Āmirid connection, besides that fact that its closest parallels are the capitals we have been discussing, with figurative decoration on their abaci. The volute from al-Rummāniyya with a lion-head and birds (Figure 29), which probably dates from the 960s, indicates a precedent for the use of figurative carving in the volutes of capitals; while a number of extraordinary examples from Carthage, dating to the fifth–sixth centuries, have projecting sculptural volutes in the form of eagles and rams.¹⁹⁷ Could the carvers of this capital have looked again to Late Antique precedents? It is tempting to associate the depiction of elephant heads on the capital with al-Manṣūr's control of the trans-Saharan trade routes, through his victories in North Africa and alliances with Zīrī ibn 'Aṭīyya, which gave him access to elephant tusks to be carved into ivory objects (Chapter 2). Elephants with similarly long, thin trunks with a curl at the end appear on the Pamplona casket (Figures 122, 124B), but otherwise the carving on the capital is too worn to discern any other comparisons between these two objects.

Another capital without clear parallels also came from the Casa del Gran Capitán in Córdoba and is now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Figure 30); presumably both this and the capital with lions and griffins (Figures 26–27) had an

196 Walker 2016, 262, fig. 107.

197 These capitals come from the rotunda at the site of Damous el-Karita. Made from marble, one group features rams as volutes while the other group features eagles. See Landes and Ben Hassen 2001, 151–4, cat. 53. My thanks to Glaire Anderson for bringing these extraordinary capitals to my attention.

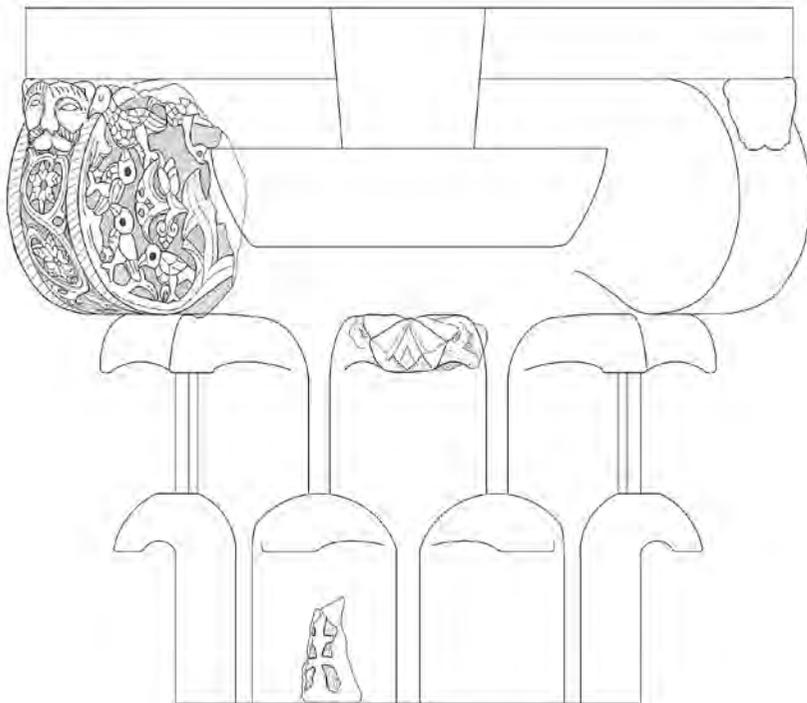


FIGURE 29 Volute from al-Rummāniyya, c. 960s, marble; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Córdoba. A. side with birds; B. front view with lion head © John Patterson/DAI Madrid; C. reconstruction drawing of the volute and associated fragments © Felix Arnold/DAI Madrid



FIGURE 30 Capital with lion-headed volutes, late tenth century, marble; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. 52118, diam. 25, H 37 cm
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

original provenance in the Cordoba area.¹⁹⁸ This unique capital is completely cylindrical, with an abacus of a wider diameter projecting above it, and four lions' heads as 'volute' which link the abacus with the body of the capital. Other than this, the body is not divided into zones, and instead is filled with a free and naturalistic decoration of vegetation which contains a single bird among its foliage. The lions' manes spread up above their heads and they have rather startled expressions on their faces. From their mouths descends a vegetal roll which spreads out into the body of the capital like water, and becomes the basis for the covering of vegetal decoration: thus, the relationship between

volute and body decoration functions 'metaphorically' like four lion-shaped fountain heads around a circular pond. The flat-relief surface of the capital again relates it to other possibly-Āmirid capitals, though much of the marble has been excavated from around the foliage, leaving a plain ground, which is technically sophisticated. The low relief further invokes the flat surface of water, through which the viewer looks to the plants waving below. Though the style of foliage does not really have close parallels, it can be related to the waving aquatic plants on the small Āmirid basins (Figures 164–168), though here it is more naturalistic. If this capital is not actually much later, it seems to represent a clever visual pun, and the naturalism of its decoration is a sophisticated technical accomplishment.

Finally, among the figurative capitals, is another unicum – the well-known but still enigmatic capital with musicians (Figure 31).¹⁹⁹ This large capital of the 'Madinat al-Zahrā' type' has a single lower zone of eight 'plain acanthus' leaves on which four musicians rest their feet; each musician occupies the centre of each side of the capital and forms its main decoration. The figures have all been decapitated, presumably victims of aniconism at a later period. Each musician carries a slightly different instrument, which seems to suggest a troupe: the figures at two 'sides' of the capital both hold an *'ūd* in their left hand and strum it with their right (Figures 31A, B), while the figure at the 'back' holds a smaller stringed instrument that Dwight Reynolds has identified as one of the earliest representations of a three-string fiddle (Figure 31C).²⁰⁰ The figure at the 'front' holds no instrument at all and has been identified as a singer (Figure 31D). Each musician wears an outfit of baggy trousers, whose folds are represented as prominent stripes. This way of depicting clothing is most closely related to the figures on the Xàtiva basin (Figures 146–147), though there the style is rather

198 Inv. no. 52.118. It entered the collection in 1912, together with 52.117 (see n. 193). Information and images are available on the museum's website, which dates it broadly to the tenth century. See Castejón 1945, 206.

199 See Dodds in *Al-Andalus*, 248 (cat 40); *Esplendor: Catálogo*, 135–136; Fernández Manzano 1995.

200 Cited in Anderson 2018, 242–4.



FIGURE 31 Capital with musicians: A. 'ūd player; B. 'ūd player; C. bowed instrument player; D. singer; late tenth century, marble; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Córdoba, inv. DOCC133, diam (base) 26, H 43 cm

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over-evolved. Musicians depicted on the ivories do not wear this style of short, baggy pants, though the comparison is not direct since few of them are depicted in standing poses. We see a standing 'ūd-player on the al-Mughīra pyxis (Figure 3), but this figure wears a long robe that reaches down to his feet; seated musicians are seen on the lidless pyxis in the Louvre and on the Pamplona casket, however in both cases their robes again appear to reach to their feet. Short tunics – though not gathered in the same way as the musicians' trousers on

the capital – are seen on the dancing figures on the rectangular ivory panel in the Metropolitan Museum, which has been attributed to the 'Āmirid period (Figure 32). Though not conclusive, this might imply that the capital is also of this period. Perhaps short, gathered clothes were the usual garb worn by musical performers.²⁰¹

201 Anderson 2018, 246–7, suggests that the singer on this capital is a woman: 'This empty-handed figure wears a garment with an undisturbed diagonal drape ... while

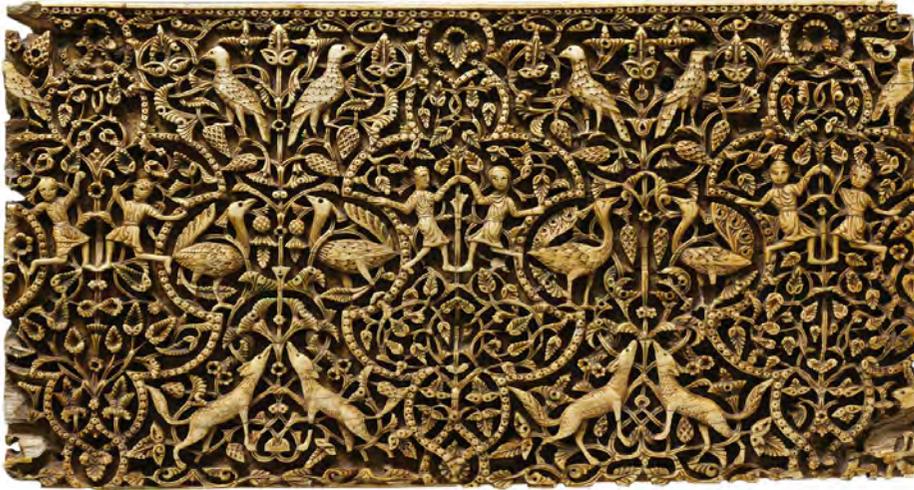


FIGURE 32 Panel with dancing figures, mid to late tenth century, ivory, inv 13.141
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

The background to the musicians is formed by deeply-undercut but simply-represented vegetation, which is almost identical to capitals produced under al-Ḥakam II; since capital-carvers working for al-Ḥakam no doubt continued to work for al-Manṣūr, this may not in itself be significant for dating purposes. If it were a caliphal-period capital it would be highly unusual in bearing figurative ornament, though perhaps it came from the private context of a *munya*, rather than the official context of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, where no figurative decoration has been found among the thousands of architectonic fragments recovered during excavation. In its original context, the ‘musicians’ capital’ presumably would not have been alone: at least two capitals are needed to support the standard three-arched porticoes of Umayyad buildings, and if it came from a garden pavilion in a *munya*, there might have been capitals like this supporting arcades on all sides, conveying an impression of being surrounded by music and song. These

the other three figures, who hold instruments, wear garments that appear divided up the middle to form what might be some type of pantaloons. Perhaps, then, the Musicians Capital gives us a representation of a female singer and three male instrumentalists’.

hypothetical other capitals may have provided the prototype for the concept of projecting three-dimensional decoration from the abacus and body, which was subsequently developed under the ‘Āmirids; but since the only other examples of this technique can be associated with ‘Āmirid art, it seems most logical to group this capital with them. It also fits well with the privileging of poetry and music at the ‘Āmirid court (Chapter 3) and, in the same manner as other ‘Āmirid examples, its physical location in a space where musical entertainments occurred would create a cycle of referentiality between the setting and the works of art which adorned it.²⁰²

The addition of decorative elements, especially figurative ones, to the echini of these capitals seems to be a development of the ‘Āmirid period. It is a playful invention, ‘melting’ the capital’s rigid marble form and subverting its classical orders. It

²⁰² Anderson 2018 discusses the musical performances that took place in the semiprivate and private residences of the ruler and court notables during the caliphal period, and comments (p. 245) on the striking ‘reflexive qualities’ of the physical settings, in which the architectural decor, the functional use of the space, and the metaphors within the lyric performance, all mirror each other.

is not seen on any of the many surviving capitals from Madīnat al-Zahrā', however there are other indications that experiments were made with adding figures to architectonic elements in the 960s. The site of al-Rummāniyya has yielded a significant quantity of material with figurative decoration. The marble volute found there decorated at its apex with a lion's head and on its sides with a procession of birds, indicates that the capital from which it came had, at the very least, three other such volutes, and may have been completely covered with figurative decoration (Figure 29C).²⁰³ Another fragmentary element recovered from al-Rummāniyya – from a basin or possibly an impost block – depicts the snouts of two sharp-toothed animals snarling at each other from either side of a floral motif.²⁰⁴ Two marble basins have also been found here, depicting the heads of moustachioed lions and horned gazelles peaking out between spirally curling leaves.²⁰⁵ Another significant architectonic object with figurative decoration is the cyma – the impost block that sat above the abacus of a capital, and from which sprung the arch above – inscribed with the date 353/964–5 and apparently bearing the name 'Ja'far

al-ḥājib' (Figures 33–35).²⁰⁶ This could refer either to Ja'far al-Šiqlābī, favoured eunuch and courtier of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II, or Ja'far al-Muṣḥafī, vizier at the end of al-Ḥakam's life and the first regent of Hishām II's reign. (This object will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, in the context of the architectural patronage of both Ja'fars.)

All these architectonic elements came from private villas (*munyas*) built by high level courtiers of al-Ḥakam II: al-Rummāniyya was constructed by Durri al-Saghīr for his own enjoyment some time before 973 when he gifted it to al-Ḥakam; while we know that al-Šiqlābī built a *munya* in the Cordoban hinterland around 964, and al-Muṣḥafī owned 'one of the most magnificent residences in Cordoba'. If architectonic experimentation with introducing figurative elements into capitals and impost blocks occurred during al-Ḥakam's reign, it is perhaps significant that it took place within the less rigid environment of the elite slave patronage that flourished at this time.²⁰⁷ The construction in a relatively short time of so many private spaces at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira – in which al-Manšūr relaxed with his close courtiers without being bound by the rigid protocol that governed access to the person of the caliph (Chapter 3) – perhaps provided the crucible in which the craftsmen of the Dār al-Šinā'a could indulge their ideas and experimentation, allowing the figurative capital to truly develop at this moment.

This also seems to have been part of a wider trend in the decoration of capitals in the late tenth century, though the common inspiration may have derived from Cordoba. Walker has discussed the figurative capitals which start to be carved for Mozarabic churches in Christian Spain at this same moment, highlighting the narrative

²⁰³ Velázquez Bosco 1912, 31–32, plate 10 (1); *Anales de la Comisión Provincial* 1926, 19; Castejón 1945, 206–208, 204; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181, fig. 245b, 245d; Castejón 1954, 155, 153; Mann, Glick and Dodds 1992, 214, cat. 53; O'Neill 1993, 77; Anderson 2013, 73; Arnold, Canto García and Vallejo Triano 2015, 138–40 (no. 10).

²⁰⁴ Velázquez Bosco 1912, 32, plate 35; Castejón 1945, 208–209, 205; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181, fig. 245c; Castejón 1954, 155, 154; Anderson 2013, 73–4. Arnold, Canto García and Vallejo Triano 2015, 132–3 (no. 1), believe this to be the fragment of a basin, as reconstructed in their Fig. 63b; Martínez Núñez 2015, 66 n. 33, has suggested that it might have come from a figurative cyma.

²⁰⁵ The larger of the two basins, which is housed in the Cordoba Archaeological Museum was published in: *Anales de la Comisión Provincial* 1926, 19–21; De los Santos 1926; Terrasse 1932, 166 n; Castejón 1945; Castejón 1949; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 191, fig. 252a; Castejón 1954. The second, smaller basin was published in Castejón 1945, 200–201, 203–206; Castejón 1949, 235–236; Gómez-Moreno 1951, fig. 252b; Castejón 1954, 155, 151; Anderson 2013, 73–5; Arnold, Canto García and Vallejo Triano 2015, 133–6 (nos. 2–3).

²⁰⁶ The main publication on this fascinating object (which is in the private collection of Fernando López Segura in Cordoba) is Martínez Enamorado 2006, though it was included in the small exhibition, *Madīnat Qurṭuba*, held at Casa Árabe, Cordoba: see Kedier 2013, 50–1, 83. It is discussed in Anderson 2013, 77–80, where it is described as a fountain basin.

²⁰⁷ Anderson 2012; 2013.



FIGURE 33 Cyma in the name of Ja'far al-ḥāḥib, front view; 960–980, marble; private collection, Cordoba
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 34 Left side of the cyma in Figure 33



FIGURE 35 Right side of the cyma in Figure 33



FIGURE 36 Evangelists capital, late tenth century? limestone; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Córdoba, inv. CE007931, W (abacus) 42, H 36 cm
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

examples located in the crossing at San Pedro de la Nave, just outside Zamora, which could date to the 970s based on comparisons with illustrations in Beatus manuscripts. She also dates to the tenth century the large limestone capital from a Cordoban church, with simplified volutes and large single figures of the evangelists occupying the entire body of the capital between the volutes (Figure 36). The drapery of these figures' clothes is treated in a very similar way to that on the musicians' capital, as well as on the Xàtiva basin (Figures 142–143, see Chapter 7 3.2). It seems coincidental that carvers of capitals start to play with figurative ornament and to subvert the capital form in similar ways at similar times, and Walker speculates that the carvers of the Christian examples were trained in al-Andalus.²⁰⁸

The development of figurativism in architectural elements may not have been the only example of the ingenuity of 'Āmirid craftsmen. Juan Souto has associated an unusual double-capital in the Córdoba Archaeological Museum with 'Āmirid patronage (Figures 37–38).²⁰⁹ Though badly dam-

aged, this was clearly a virtuoso piece of carving, as indicated by the fact that it is signed by three craftsmen – Bāshir (front right), Faraj (front left) and Mubārak (side right) – all of whom have signatures in the 'Āmirid extension to the Córdoba Mosque (Figure 50). It is probably no coincidence that a Faraj was the head of the ivory workshop that produced the Pamplona casket (Figure 126A, B): he was clearly a master carver leading a team, and the presence of three names on this double-capital probably indicates that it was also produced by a team of carvers. The undertaking to produce an unprecedented double-capital may have necessitated a pooling of skills in the workshop. According to Meouak, there was a Bāshir among the twenty-six *al-fityān al-kubarā* or *kibār* of al-Manṣūr's son and successor, 'Abd al-Malik, who had the privilege of exclusively serving the *ḥājib*; Souto wondered if this could be the same person who signed architectural pieces as well as objects, perhaps in the capacity of "supervisor," "director" or some other position of authority.²¹⁰ Another (single) capital, reused in the Alcázar at Seville, also bears three signatures, of Faraj, Mubārak, and Khayr (rather than Bāshir this time); significantly, Khayr was another signatory to the Pamplona casket.²¹¹ Mubārak's name occurs again in the 'Āmirid mosque extension as 'Mubārak ibn Hishām.²¹² This links the double-capital to the 'Āmirid period without a shadow of doubt, and the connections with the Pamplona casket probably also account for the shared motifs between casket and capital. The pointed palmette leaf with round buds at its base that fills the vegetal scroll on the capital's echinus is also seen on the lid of

208 Walker 2015. On the capital with evangelists, see also O'Neill 1993, 50, cat. 8. The label in the Córdoba Archaeological Museum calls this capital 'Visigothic' and dates it to the sixth/seventh centuries.

209 Inv. 28.529. Souto 2007, #2.8; inscription no. 8; plates VII, VIII; Souto 2010a, 214 (2.18), 260 (7.108). Dims:

H: 38 cm; total width of abacus: 68 cm; diam of each capital base: 25 cm.

210 Meouak 2004, 193, cited by Souto 2010a, 214 (2.18).

211 Souto 2010a, 221 (2.41), 260 (7.112), citing Martínez Núñez et al. 2007, n. 582.

212 Souto 2010a, 224 (2.55 and 2.56), 259 (7.107, fig. 26). Another capital signed by Mubārak is now in Cádiz, see Souto 2007, #2.9.



FIGURE 37 Double capital, front view, signed by Bāshir (right) and Faraj (left), 980–990, marble; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba, inv. CE028529
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 38 Double capital, back view, 980–990, marble; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba, inv. CE028529
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

the Pamplona casket (Figure 125B); but, more particularly, the cable or chainlink motif which runs vertically between the lower range of acanthus leaves on the capital is also seen as an axial element on the back of the Pamplona casket, on either side of the central medallion (Figure 125D). This 'chainlink' motif may be a simplification of a criss-cross device used on the stems of projecting acanthus leaves on caliphal capitals,²¹³ but in its simplified version it seems to become a characteristic device indicating an 'Āmirid chronology. We can see it on the capital with lion-gazelle combat and griffins (Figures 26–27). It is also seen on the only other known examples of double-capitals: an identical pair in the Cordoba Mosque, which were probably installed during an 'Āmirid intervention in al-Ḥakam II's *maqṣūra* (Figures 39–40, discussed in Chapter 5).²¹⁴ Additionally, the echinus decoration of these two capitals features an identical guilloche design to that which fills the bands surrounding the medallions all over the Pamplona casket (Figures 120–127).

All three capitals were carved as a perfectly integrated double-capitals, which introduces a new type of capital into Andalusi architecture. Again the idea for it may have derived from caliphal-period capitals: as Concepción Abad has noted, the perpendicular arcades of the Cordoba mosque's three *maqṣūra* naves have twinned columns at the point where they intersect with the façades of the mihrab, Bāb al-Sābāṭ and Bāb Bayt al-Māl (compare the plans in Figures 42 and 49), providing extra structural support for the domes above. These twinned columns are crowned by twinned capitals, which have been made 'double'

by the insertion of a vertical element; but the capitals are plain, like all the other capitals of al-Ḥakam's extension.²¹⁵ The 'Āmirid period is the earliest one for which we have preserved examples of this innovative double-capital, though this prefigures the use of double capitals at the Taifa palace of the Aljafería (Figure 41), which may be another example of the legacy of 'Āmirid artistic developments into the eleventh century. The surviving elements thus seem to verify the poetic description of arches supported by double columns in the Muniyat al-Surūr at al-Zāhira, discussed above.

It is difficult to say what the other elements of the palaces' architectural decoration could have looked like, as so many elements were decontextualized by the looting of the Fitna years. The walls of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira may have been lined by carved stone panels such as those now in Denia and Toledo (Figure 177), which present vertical patterns of floral scrolls featuring the distinctive pointed, star-like flowers that decorate the vegetal sides of al-Manṣūr's and 'Abd al-Malik's large basins. These may have been removed from al-Zāhira's palaces and taken to Taifa states by former 'Āmirid lieutenants (Denia was a post-'Āmirid Taifa state, as discussed in the Conclusion), or carved in the Taifa period but reflecting 'Āmirid style. In Chapters 7 and 8, we will examine the interplay between the decoration of objects which probably furnished palace gardens and the iconography of the poetry composed in and for these spaces, which can give further clues as to the appearance and setting of the 'Āmirid palaces.

Fragmentary survivals such as these can start to build a picture of what 'Āmirid architecture looked like. The capitals discussed here begin to indicate some of the innovative artistic developments that took place under al-Manṣūr's architectural patronage. These may have been highly experimental in their architectonic forms, and highly figurative in their decoration, with deliberately playful and punning references between

213 It is seen, for example, on a large composite capital from the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III at Madīnat al-Zahrā', dating 953–7, now in the Madīnat al-Zahrā' museum: Vallejo 2013, 106, fig. 95 (inv. 42.24077).

214 Abad Castro and González Caverro 2018, 235–9. I am grateful to the authors for bringing these capitals to my attention when they first began their study of the possible 'Āmirid intervention into what is now the Capilla Real at the Cordoba Mosque (discussed Chapter 5, section 2.1.4.2), and for discussing them with me as their research developed.

215 Concha Abad, personal communication (22 June 2015); Abad Castro and González Caverro 2018.



FIGURE 39 Double capital in 'Amirid tribune in Cordoba Mosque (east)
© CONCEPCIÓN ABAD CASTRO AND IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ CAVERO



FIGURE 40 Double capital in 'Amirid tribune in Cordoba Mosque (west)
© ANTONIO VALLEJO TRIANO



FIGURE 41
Twinned capitals at the Aljafería,
Zaragoza, late eleventh century
© KENT RAWLINSON

architectural spaces and the objects that furnished them. Grand capitals without any figurative decoration probably adorned the official spaces of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira's palaces, where al-Manṣūr gathered his court for ceremonial occasions. In the more private reaches of al-Zāhira, in garden retreats or pavilions, or in the 'Āmirid family's *munyas*, a more figurative style prevailed, enforcing the 'Āmirid dynastic emblems to underscore their message to those admitted to these spaces, but at the same time characterised by a playful inventiveness – breaking out of the rigidity of

traditional forms, and setting up visual puns and metaphors between the artefact being viewed and the surroundings in which it was set. It is highly likely that the craftsmen who worked on al-Zāhira's decoration also worked in other media within the 'Āmirid Dār al-Ṣinā'a, as will be discussed further in Chapter 6, as well as on al-Manṣūr's most audacious architectural project, the enormous extension he constructed at the congregational mosque of the Umayyad capital, Cordoba, as we will discuss next.

The Politics of Piety: Al-Manṣūr's Extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba

In this year [381/991–2] al-Manṣūr began Hishām's extension (*al-ziyyādat al-hishāmiyya*) to the Great Mosque of Cordoba. He extended it almost by half again of what had been made by earlier sovereigns. The works began on the first of Rajab of the year 381 [13 September 991] and the prayer could be made in Rajab of the year 384 [August–September 994]; they lasted, therefore, three years. On the works there laboured Berbers, noble knights from Galicia and Frankia, chained together with the workmen until it was concluded.

Dhikr Bilād 1:193–4 [11:182]



Al-Manṣūr pursued a policy of ostentatious piety, carrying with him on campaign an autograph copy of the Qurʾān, and a shroud woven by his daughters in which he should be wound on the event of his death, collecting dust from every campaign to be scattered over his grave. As Hugh Kennedy wryly observes, al-Manṣūr would have ensured this piety was widely publicised: 'We can be sure that news of these private austerities was not kept from the wider Cordoban public, any more than it has been kept from us'.¹ We should not undervalue al-Manṣūr's personal piety, but his more dramatic acts – in particular the purge of inappropriate and quasi-heretical works from al-Ḥakam II's library – had a public significance, undertaken to

secure the approbation of the strictest and most orthodox of the Maliki religious scholars in al-Andalus, whose support he needed to legitimise his adopted role as the State's religious champion, given the incapacity of the caliph himself to fulfil this role. This same motivation caused al-Manṣūr to lead the Umayyad armies in jihad against those deemed enemies of the State, whether in Christian Iberia or the Fatimid Maghrib. However, his single greatest and most conspicuous act of public piety was his massive extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba (Figures 42, 49).

While we possess textual and archaeological evidence for a handful of al-Manṣūr's public architectural projects – especially road and bridge-building, to facilitate the movement of the Umayyad army, as discussed in Chapter 4 – none of these had the symbolic status of the Umayyad dynastic monument: the Great Mosque of Cordoba. The massive extension he built here, with its attendant infrastructure, is the only example of al-Manṣūr's public works to remain largely in its original form and, unlike his palace-city, can be discussed from standing remains. However, it has not been subject to anything like the attention paid to the spectacular extension added by the caliph al-Ḥakam II between 961 and 965. As Pedro Marfil observed, 'the ʿAmirid extension has been unjustly undervalued, having been considered by many authors as a second rank achievement and not comparable to the previous constructions, in not providing the decorative profusion or artistic boasting of al-Ḥakam II'.² Studies of the Cordoba mosque have concentrated on al-Ḥakam's section, and have considered al-Manṣūr's extension in its light, finding it artistically wanting. In publications

1 Kennedy 1996, 119.

2 Marfil 2003, 78.

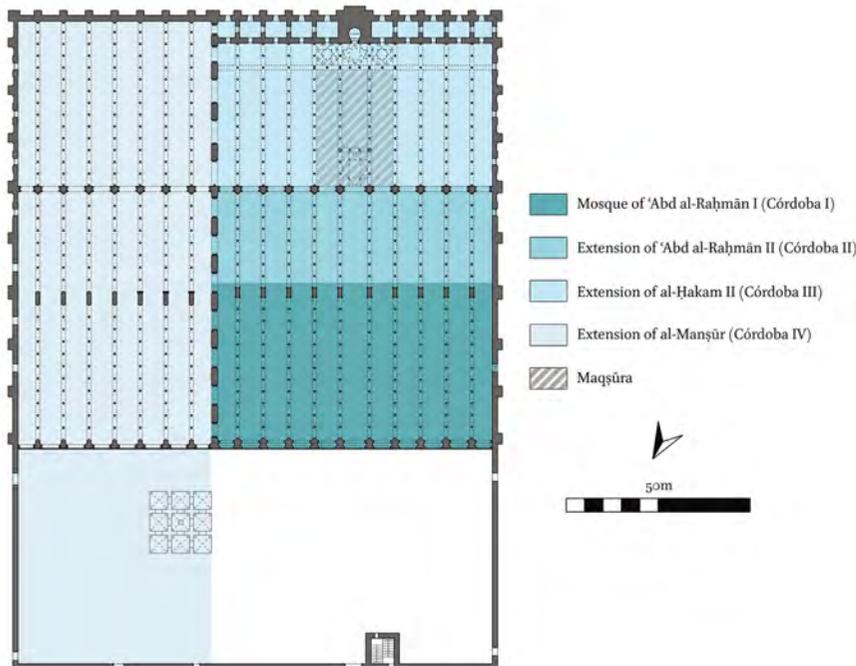


FIGURE 42 Phased plan of the Cordoba Mosque, indicating the different construction phases

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on the Cordoba mosque, there is usually no more than a short paragraph on the 'Āmirid extension, which is surprising given that it is by far the largest addition to the mosque and the only one to be built by a non-Umayyad patron.³ This lack of interest in al-Manṣūr's extension stems directly from the verdict passed on it by both Gómez-Moreno and Torres Balbás in the 1950s, which has been upheld, without question and almost without exception, by those who have written on the mosque since then: 'the new work copied exactly the arrangement of that of al-Ḥakam',⁴ or was a 'slavish copy' of Córdoba III, 'with hardly anything new

artistically'; its decoration was 'uniform and monotonous, ... repeated without the richness of designs and carving of that of the second of the caliphs'.⁵ On the other hand, Marfil sees it as 'the definitive crystallisation of the architectonic forms of the Cordoban mosque, contributing in a resounding way to the monumentality of the mosque'.⁶

Al-Ḥakam's extension utterly changed the aesthetic of the Cordoba mosque, and at the time was highly controversial. He contemplated changing the position of the qibla 'because it was oriented too far to the west, but he forsook this task, since the people (*āmmat al-nās*) were scandalised by the idea of breaking with ancestral practice'.⁷ As

3 For example, Torres Balbás 1957, 571–579; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 162–165; Creswell 1969, II: 144; Ewert 1981, 85–89; Dodds 1992; Singul 1997, 321–323; Pérez Higuera 2001; Puerta Vilchez 2013a, 52, who refers to al-Manṣūr throughout as 'el caudillo' and discusses the 'Āmirid extension in just three sentences. Marfil 2003 is the exception to this rule.

4 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 162.

5 Torres Balbás 1956, 578.

6 Marfil 2003, 78.

7 Al-Maqqarī 1968, I:561–562, cited in Rius 2000, 174. The same passage tells us that, in wanting to change the qibla, al-Ḥakam was 'in accordance with the astronomers (*ahl al-ḥisāb*), among whom were imams of great authority'.

Rius points out, the cohesion of the *umma* was considered more important than the accuracy of the qibla.⁸ Another controversy was generated by the expense of the project: the judge Mundhir ibn Sa'īd had to swear a legal oath with witnesses in front of the qibla in order to overcome the scruples of the people who refused to pray in al-Ḥakam II's extension because they doubted where the money had come from which paid for it.⁹

Nevertheless, today this extension has come to epitomise the monument: the decoration, of the *maqṣūra* especially, has become a metaphor for the high level of artistic and cultural excellence attained during al-Ḥakam's reign. One should, however, be careful never to judge a mosque by its *maqṣūra*: this section of any mosque will always be more elaborately decorated, because here religious, ceremonial, political and symbolic messages are at their most meaningful. While al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* is unique, the rest of his extension follows exactly the arrangement of both Cordoba I and II, which were also the models for al-Manṣūr's extension.

To understand the potency of the Cordoba Mosque as a monument, and the ways in which construction at this site has long been interpreted in terms of political symbolism, we need to introduce the building's pre-ʿĀmirid architectural history. But its postscript is also enlightening. The Christian conquest of Cordoba in 1236 was immediately commemorated by the consecration inside the mosque of the first cathedral of Santa María.¹⁰

8 Rius 2001, 426: 'the *fuqahā*' counselled a diplomatic position: if it was possible to convince all the believers that a change in the qibla was necessary, then such a task could be undertaken, but if this question came to be a cause of disputes, then it had to be rejected and the original orientation maintained. The qibla was secondary to such a fundamental concern as the unity of the community of believers'.

9 Calvo 2010, 177: n. 83. This oath took place between the date of the placement of the imposts of the mihrab arch (*dhū'l-ḥijja* 355/Dec 965) and his death (*dhū'l-qa'da* 355/17 Nov 966). On Mundhir ibn Sa'īd al-Ballūṭi, see Fierro 2010.

10 Dodds 1992, 24.

While this changed the fabric of the original building very little, the Baroque cathedral built between 1523 and 1607 was a huge, interventive construction, implanted mostly in al-Manṣūr's extension; the cathedral's expanse, high dome and clearly-defined nave 'proclaim its Christian identity to all who view the mosque from without'.¹¹ In addition, 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's minaret was encased in a new salient, and thus the most visible symbol of Muslim, indeed Umayyad, rule in al-Andalus, which had overlooked Cordoba for centuries, was 'christened' as a bell tower.¹² The superimposition of the Baroque cathedral made a loud political statement of Christian superiority over Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, and demonstrated that the significance of construction at this site was still as potent three centuries after the Castilian conquest as it was when the first addition to Cordoba I was conceived. It is not far-fetched to consider that modern scholars of the mosque have projected some of the issues raised by the Christian construction – of appropriation and usurpation – backwards on to al-Manṣūr's extension, whose motivation has consequently been understood in similar terms.

1 The Pre-ʿĀmirid Mosque

The congregational Mosque of Cordoba was the dynastic and ceremonial heart of Umayyad rule in al-Andalus. By the mid-tenth century, it had become the physical symbol of the Umayyad caliphs as the legitimate rulers of Islam, in opposition to the claims made by the Abbasids and Fatimids. From

11 Dodds 1992, 24.

12 Hernández Jiménez made soundings through the 1.58m thick casing, and found infilled windows with marble capitals, shafts and bases, and other carved marble elements which match the colour and style of those at Madīnat al-Zahrā', and the infilled passages of two helicoidal stairways: cf. Hernández Jiménez 1975. In recent years, these have been reopened and visitors to the monument can climb up the space between the minaret and its casing.



FIGURE 43 Vista through Cordoba IV, showing painted stone voussoirs and different coloured marbles of the columns (section 2.1.3.3)

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the beginning, the mosque's architectonic forms and decoration were symbolic of Umayyad rule in al-Andalus, as emphasised by foundation myths which are associated with construction projects at the site by the Arabic sources, and which explicitly relate Cordoba to that Umayyad dynastic mosque *par excellence*, al-Walīd's mosque in Damascus.¹³ As a consequence, its distinctive repeat unit, of double-tiers of horseshoe arches (Figure 43), was imitated and perpetuated by all later builders at

the monument, no doubt out of 'a respect for tradition and continuity',¹⁴ but also because of their architectural (what Flood styles 'architextual'¹⁵) allusions to the key Umayyad monuments of Bilād al-Shām, which showed 'Abd al-Raḥmān I's concern for 'the authority provided him by virtue of his lineage'.¹⁶

It is no coincidence that *every* Umayyad ruler of al-Andalus – with the single exception of al-Ḥakam I (r. 796–818), whose entire reign was occupied with quelling revolts and fighting the Christians – celebrated his rule by engaging in construction at this building.¹⁷ In its time, each

13 On which see Flood 2001. The Damascus and Cordoba mosques are specifically related through the 'myths' that both builders received gifts from the Byzantine Emperor of glass tesserae and a mosaicist to install them: on Cordoba, cf. *Bayān* 11:253 [translation, 392]; on Damascus, see Flood 2001, 22–24; Gibb 1958; and George 2021. Both mosques started out life as a church which the Muslims shared with the local Christians: cf. Ocaña 1942; Dodds 1992, 11.

14 Safran 2000, 65.

15 Flood 2001, 194.

16 Dodds 1992, 15.

17 'Al-Ḥakam I', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition: 'The reign of al-Ḥakam I was almost entirely devoted to suppressing the repeated rebellions which were ceaselessly



FIGURE 44 Minaret at the al-Qarawiyyin Mosque, Fez, 956
© PÉTER TAMÁS NAGY

addition would have been an important political statement as well as a visible symbol of rule and the aspirations of the ruler. However, their original meanings are now eclipsed by the architectural interventions of the first two caliphs. In 951, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III constructed a huge new minaret, 73 cubits (34 metres) high, surmounted by a domed pavilion, and containing two independent staircases which spiralled round each other.¹⁸ This minaret would have been the tallest building in Cordoba, visible for miles around, indicating the mosque ‘like a beacon’;¹⁹ furthermore, in so dramatically embracing the minaret as a form, it had

breaking out on the three frontiers of Toledo, Saragossa and Mérida’.

18 Al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 155–156; al-Maqqarī, 1:360; Torres Balbás 1957, 465–470. When its construction was finished, the caliph ceremonially visited it, inspected it by going up one flight of stairs and down the other side, and prayed two *rak’as* in the mosque: Ecker 1992, 44.

19 Ecker 1992, 45.

a clear polemical meaning, asserting the legitimacy of Umayyad rule *vis-à-vis* the Fatimids, who for doctrinal reasons had rejected the minaret in favour of the monumental *bāb*.²⁰ The Cordoban minaret would thus have ‘[called] the faithful to [al-Nāṣir’s] caliphate rather than any other’.²¹ A few years later, in 956, he commissioned a matching pair to this minaret at the al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Fez, which still survives in its original form to this day (Figure 44); again the symbolism of this architectural gesture was potent, claiming Fez for the Umayyads in the face of Fatimid expansionism (on which see Chapter 1).²²

Most spectacular, however, in terms of its decoration and Umayyad symbolism was the enormous extension (Cordoba III) which al-Ḥakam II began on the very day he acceded to the caliphate in 961 (Figures 42, 46).²³ He extended the mosque to the south by 12 bays, necessitating the destruction of the mihrab zone built a century earlier by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, and elongating the sanctuary to a total area of 9,087 m². The double qibla wall contained the *bayt al-māl* to the east (still today the site of the Cathedral treasury) and, to the west, the corridor leading to the *sābāt* and caliphal palace, preceded by a chamber where the caliph received homage. The mihrab at the centre took the form of a hexagonal chamber, though it appears to have imitated the form of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II’s mihrab, and we know from Ibn ‘Idhārī that al-Ḥakam ordered the four columns which ‘supported the entrance arch’ of the earlier mihrab to be carefully removed and reused in his own.²⁴ It functioned

20 On the minaret form in al-Andalus, see Bloom 1989, esp. 99–124; Bloom 2013, 137–188. See also Ecker 1992, 30–46, for a discussion of Bloom’s theory in specific relation to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s minaret.

21 Ecker 1992, 73.

22 Terrasse 1968, 12–14.

23 *Bayān* II:249 [translation, 385–386]. On this extension, see Torres Balbás 1957, 477–569.

24 *Bayān* II:254 [translation, 393]. Fernández-Puertas was convinced that, from the organisation and depth of the foundations at the interface between Cordoba II and III, uncovered in Hernández Jiménez’s excavations (viz. his 1961 publication), the earlier mihrab ‘was

as a sound-box to carry the imam's voice into the mosque behind, but also, metaphorically, as a 'gate opening towards the invisible or the unknown'.²⁵

Al-Ḥakam's extension was clearly demarcated by more intensely-articulated decoration, in particular of the three central naves, which constituted the new prayer hall's *maqṣūra*. This space was also physically enclosed by a wooden screen, described by al-Ḥimyarī as 'a balustrade of wood artistically carved with different decorative motifs', and which, according to Ibn 'Idhārī, measured 75 cubits long and 42 cubits wide. Concepción Abad has plotted these dimensions on a ground-plan of al-Ḥakam's extension, showing that they perfectly encompass the three central naves from the qibla wall all the way down to and including the space now called the Capilla de Villaviciosa (Figure 42).²⁶ The height of this wooden enclosure is likely to have reached the same level as the capitals, though it is not known whether it was solid or pierced. Perhaps, like the early eleventh-century wooden *maqṣūra* that still survives at the Great Mosque of Qayrawān, it was both, with a solid, elaborately carved framework, filled with smaller turned-wood windows.²⁷ The Cordoba *maqṣūra* also appears to have had a door, presumably located at the northern end (communicating with the mosque), since the caliph and his court habitually came and went via the Bāb al-Sābāt, located to the right of the mihrab. However, after the Fitna, in 1010, 'the people of Cordoba broke the door of the *maqṣūra*, took it and sold it to the Franks [probably the Catalans]', as mentioned by Ibn 'Idhārī.²⁸

The entrance to this privileged zone was marked by a particularly elaborate twenty-one lobed arch (Figure 45), leading into what is now

the Capilla de Villaviciosa, topped by one of the elaborate domes that were constructed in this new *maqṣūra*. The rectangular dome that crowns this space is frequently referred to in contemporary literature as the 'lucernario', because of the sixteen small windows that pierce its upper level, providing much-needed illumination to this deep zone of the mosque's interior (Figure 47). Ahead and to the east of this space is an elaborate screen formed of interlacing five-lobed arches, supported from below by three further lobed arches (Figure 46). Originally there was probably another of these screens to the west, forming a sort of enclosed vestibule to the *maqṣūra*, but any trace of what might have existed here in the late tenth century was destroyed at the end of the fifteenth, when the Gothic cathedral was constructed in this zone.²⁹ The bay to the east is now occupied by the Capilla Real, established in 1371. Ruiz Souza has argued that the dome above it is Umayyad, though refurbished and redecorated with *muqarnas* in the fourteenth century, to conform to the architectural fashions of the day. The western bay would have had a matching dome, so that this entrance zone recalled the tripartite portico of the courtly spaces at Madīnat al-Zahrā', in particular the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III. However, others have noted that the physicality of the architecture in this part of the mosque does not support this view: the size, height and number of the columns in this zone indicate support for one central dome, the so-called 'lucernario' (Figure 47).³⁰ Abad and González have recently revisited the eastern bay

a chamber with a probable horseshoe-arched plan', which projected from the building's south wall as a salient, and had a horseshoe-shaped entrance arch: Fernández-Puertas 2000, 229–230 and 235–238.

25 Grabar 1988, 115.

26 Abad 2009, esp. 13–14, figs. 4 and 5; Abad 2013, figs. 1 and 2.

27 On the Qayrawān *maqṣūra*, see Golvin 1970, 233.

28 Abad 2009, 14.

29 Ruiz Souza 2001b, 436.

30 Abad 2009, 17–18. Nieto 2005, 95–118, has no doubt that the Capilla Real's cupola was constructed in the fourteenth century when this space came to house the remains of Fernando IV of Castile (d. 1312) and later his son Alfonso XI (d. 1371). The high wall which surrounds the bay would have been constructed then to provide structural support for the dome. The style of the dome is Almohad, so either the fourteenth-century architects constructed it in an archaising manner, or there remains the possibility that it was one of the restorations undertaken by the Almohads in 1162, when Cordoba was briefly their capital (p. 109).



FIGURE 45 View of 21-lobed arch at entrance to *maqşūra* (now Capilla de Villaviciosa), with 11-lobed arch flanking entrance on north side
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 46 View of al-Ḥakam's *maqşūra*, from the screen of interlaced arches (Capilla de Villaviciosa) towards the mihrab
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

in this zone, now occupied by the Capilla Real, and have interpreted several interventions here as dating from the 'Āmirid period:³¹ this will be discussed in detail in section 4 below.

Nevertheless, the organisation of the *maqṣūra* in three bays reinterprets the palatine space of Madīnat al-Zahrā' inside the mosque, so that 'the space where al-Ḥakam and his court would arrange themselves in the Great Mosque deliberately recalled the great reception hall of the caliphal city founded by his father' (Figure 42).³² The final structure marking the entrance to al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* 'does not just mark the transition from one constructive phase to another, but from the amiral mosque to the caliphal'.³³ The windows above allowed a curtain of light to pour down amidst the gloom of the now extremely deep mosque, and from the naves constructed by 'Abd al-Raḥmān I and II, it would have been astonishing to observe this 'luminous façade' which announced the beginning of the exuberant extension.

At the opposite end of the three central naves opened by this internal façade, three other elaborate domes demarcate another vestibule which projected in front of the mihrab. These domes are more complex than those at the northern end of the *maqṣūra*, as they transition from square plan to octagonal dome.³⁴ The central dome, immediately in front of the mihrab entrance, is beautifully incrustated with gold mosaic, which al-Ḥakam II is said to have been gifted along with a mosaicist by the Byzantine Emperor. The unique – and, in al-Andalus, unprecedented³⁵ – use of mosaic deco-

ration in the immediate vicinity of the mihrab makes a clear visual allusion to the decoration of key Umayyad monuments: the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqṣā' in Jerusalem, al-Walid's mosque in Damascus, the Prophet's Mosque in Madīna – all of which are known to have had decoration in their key zones in the Byzantine technique of glass mosaic.³⁶ In terms of meaning, it seems likely that the entirely vegetal iconography of the mosaic friezes in Cordoba's mihrab chamber and ante-mihrab dome evoke Paradise, which is how the iconography of the mosaic decoration of other Umayyad mosques has been interpreted.³⁷ However, the style and content of the mosaics in Cordoba are rather different, since the architects of Cordoba III adapted the characteristic Andalusī decorative form of carved marble to this new medium, one to which its sinuous forms were not best suited.³⁸ The fact that such a decorative adaptation was contrived at all underlines the pan-Umayyad significance of the use of glass mosaic as a material, and gives emphasis to the messages

31 Abad and González 2018.

32 Ruiz Souza 2001b, 441.

33 Ruiz Souza 2001b, 440.

34 Abad 2009, 20.

35 Interestingly, Terrasse 1932, 101–102 observes, 'Il était dans le palais des Califes des mosaïques byzantines, faites par des artistes venus de Constantinople ... Toutefois un fragment d'enduit couvert de mosaïque d'émail, récemment retrouvé dans les fouilles, ne permet plus de douter de l'existence de ce renseignement'. Vallejo 2010, 364, pl. 307, mentions small fragments of glass mosaic found at various sites in the palace

quarters at Madīnat al-Zahrā', in similar colours to the tesserae used at the Cordoba mosque. He surmises that they might have formed part of the decoration of arches or domes.

36 The Prophet's mosque was rebuilt by the Umayyads in 88–91/707–710, by the future 'Umar II, under the orders of al-Walid I: see Fierro 1991, 134. Huge sums were spent on it, and al-Walid sent gold, marble and glass *tesserae* for its decoration. The evidence for a programme of mosaic decoration on the qibla wall, featuring 'representations of gardens and palaces' in the mode of the Damascus mosaics, is discussed by Khoury 1996, 90–94. For recent scientific analysis of the mosaic tesserae, see Gómez-Morón et al 2021.

37 See Flood 2001, 15–56. Calvo 2000, 25–26, interprets the mosaic-covered ante-mihrab dome in Cordoba III as representing the 'celestial sphere, ... the actual, physical representation of the baldaquin of the Throne of God'.

38 See Marçais 1965. Stern 1976, plate 38, features a pair of small birds, facing each other across the 'rincaux', though he does not discuss this interesting figurative anomaly in his book.



FIGURE 47
View up into Capilla de
Villaviciosa dome (the so-called
'lucernario')

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of continuity and legitimacy which Cordoba III embodies.³⁹

Above the mihrab is a fifth dome, in the form of a scallop-shell.⁴⁰ Great care was taken over the hierarchisation and planning of this space, and the pink and black marble columns used throughout this extension alternate in a carefully-articulated and rhythmical pattern.⁴¹ This use of Late Antique spolia, the copying by Andalusí carvers of Roman capitals, and the employment of Byzantine mosaics creates a Classicising aesthetic in Andalusí art that seems to be a way in which the Umayyads distinguished themselves artistically from the Fatimids.⁴² These messages are reinforced in the inscription programme used throughout the mosque, both in key locations of the interior as well as prominent places on the exterior, which assert the Sunni and especially Maliki orthodoxy espoused by the Andalusí Umayyads, against any

form of heterodoxy. We will return to the selection and meaning of the Qur'ānic passages which were employed in the *maqṣūra* and elsewhere in section 3 of this chapter.

When 'Abd al-Rahmān III began to stake the Umayyads' claim to be the only legitimate caliphs of Islam, the mosque's statements of dynastic continuity assumed new resonances: as Safran comments, 'The monument came to symbolise the continuity of Umayyad rule ... The expansion and elaboration of the mosque celebrated the success of Umayyad promotion of Islam on the Peninsula ... The mosque's architectural and decorative references to Syrian Umayyad monuments identified Cordoba as an Umayyad city and capital'.⁴³

The issues raised here defined the Great Mosque of Cordoba as a monument loaded with subtle and not-so-subtle visual messages – located especially in what is now the ceremonial heart of the building, al-Hakam's *maqṣūra* – which emphasise its Umayyad-ness by association with other Umayyad monuments, and make clear statements of the dominance and permanence of Umayyad rule in al-Andalus. The disinterest of modern scholars in al-Manṣūr's extension seems to reflect their

39 The use of veined marble veneer panels in the mihrab of Cordoba III may have been another visual reference to Syrian Umayyad mosques, which extensively employ this form of decoration, in particular the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqṣā': see Milwright 2005.

40 On the motif of the scallop shell in niches and mihrabs in Umayyad monuments, see Flood 2001, 53–54.

41 Ewert 1987, 189.

42 I argue this in Rosser-Owen 2009.

43 Safran 2000, 67.

disappointment that he did not express his own political aspirations in visual messages as clear as those of the Umayyad and Christian phases. Hence Cordoba IV is criticised as a 'slavish copy', the implication being 'if only al-Manṣūr had made his political statement more readable'. However, as we shall discuss below, his statement *is* readable, but modern scholars have been looking for the wrong message in the wrong place.

2 The 'Āmirid Mosque (Figure 49)

Robert Hillenbrand describes the Cordoba mosque as a 'palimpsest' of its successive building campaigns,⁴⁴ and nowhere is this more true than in al-Manṣūr's extension (Figure 43). It adjoins every earlier section of the mosque, and it was primarily in this section that the Christian additions were imposed, likely because it provided the largest surface area of repeat units and was decoratively less varied than other parts of the building. Apart from Pedro Marfil's brief chapter on the 'Āmirid intervention,⁴⁵ this part of the mosque has never been subject to a full and detailed discussion, until now.

The extension was begun in 377/987,⁴⁶ and probably completed in 384/994, since the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus* tells us that prayer was inaugurated in the space in Rajab 384/August–September 994. The mosque extension thus took seven years to build. The reliability of this information is not certain, however, since the *Dhikr Bilād* gives the commencement date as Rajab 381/September 991, a date which is not provided by other, earlier sources.⁴⁷ As Souto noted, this 'chronological imprecision' likely derives from the lack of a foundation inscription: al-Manṣūr 'did not want to leave any inscription commemorating his intervention, he did not allow that his name should be written in stone in the [Mosque]. He was extremely



FIGURE 48 Inscription naming Hishām II, late tenth century, marble; Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, inv. 5.266, H 40, W 38, D 7 cm
© CUAUHTLI GUTIÉRREZ

conscious of the importance of such a document and of the insult that it would imply against the Umayyad legitimacy that he claimed to be defending and in support of which claim this construction was clear propaganda. However, neither is there any foundation inscription in the building in the name of the caliph, Hishām II.⁴⁸

A few sources mention that al-Manṣūr's mosque extension was carried out on Hishām's behalf,⁴⁹ and it seems certain that, had a construction inscription survived from this extension, it would have been in the caliph's name in the same manner as those inscriptions commemorating

44 Hillenbrand 1986a, 182.

45 Marfil 2003.

46 *Bayān* 11:307 [translation, 477].

47 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:37 [2:43–44].

48 Souto 2007, 105. At p. 117, he talks of the 'tiránico silencio constructivo' imposed in this last extension.

49 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:96 [11:124], 1:182 [11:193] which says 'al-Manṣūr began work on Hishām's extension in the Great Mosque of Cordoba'; cf. al-Ḥimyarī 1938, 157, and al-Maqqarī, 1:220, 227, who say al-Manṣūr 'added to it by order of the caliph'.

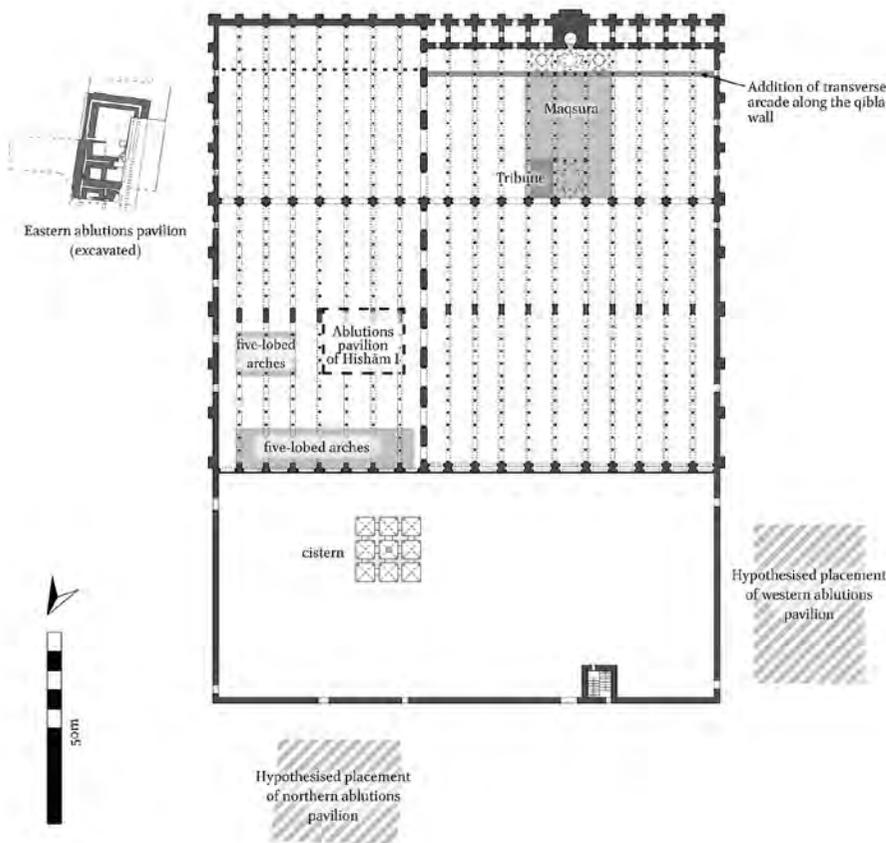


FIGURE 49 Plan of the Cordoba Mosque showing the 'Amirid interventions
© MATILDE GRIMALDI

the restoration of Lisbon's city walls (Figures 19–20, Appendix 4.6), the construction of bridges at Écija (Figure 21, Appendix 4.8) and Toledo (Figure 22, Appendix 4.9) or the new back-rest for the Andalusīyīn minbar (Figures 5–7, Appendix 4.4). Though Hishām would have been in his 20s by this time, as we saw in Chapter 1 he was likely incapable of overseeing such a construction himself. There is only one surviving inscription which names Hishām in the role of active commissioner: this is the small and fragmentary foundation inscription now in the collections of the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan in Madrid (Figure 48, Appendix 4.3).⁵⁰ It only partially preserves the beginning of his *laqab* al-Mu'ayyad

bi-llāh, though it clearly reads the active verb *amara* (at the start of the penultimate line) and the phrase *amīr al-mu'minīn*. No information survives about the monument ordered or its date.⁵¹ The preserved wording does not fit closely with the standard formulae for constructional inscriptions under the first two Andalusī caliphs (see

⁵⁰ Lévi-Provençal 1931, 27–28 (#20), plate 6d; Souto 2007, 115, 127–8 (inscription no. 11).

⁵¹ Lévi-Provençal 1931, 27, read the last visible word of the inscription as *fata'y*, i.e. the dual form of *fatā*, and wanted to associate this commission with the two *fityān*, Fā'iq al-Nizāmī and Jawdhar, the second of whom was assassinated in 977, implying a date before that for this inscription. Juan Souto was more cautious: 'No me atrevo yo a tanto'. Other pairs of *fityān* are known to have collaborated on commissions – Badr and Ṭarīf on the Girona casket, for example – and it is also possible that the final legible word reads the plural form (*fityān*) and not the dual.

the semantic discussion in Chapter 8). According to Lévi-Provençal's reconstruction, the third line contains part of a pious invocation, from which it could be argued that the foundation to which this fragment belonged was a pious work, such as a fountain or a mosque – could this be the missing foundation inscription from al-Manṣūr's mosque extension? However, in building his extension to the Córdoba mosque al-Manṣūr would surely have proclaimed his own role in the undertaking, albeit while acting in the caliph's name (as on the Andalusiyīn minbar inscription), and there is no mention here of the *ḥājib*. Hishām's role is expressed in the active not the passive tense. This epigraphic fragment thus offers a tantalising glimpse of Hishām's engagement in the patronage of pious works, of the kinds of architectural foundations which a caliph would normally be expected to undertake. Perhaps he was not so closeted from the operations of the court and its artisans as has long been assumed. However, to date, no other inscriptions have been found in his name at Madīnat al-Zahrā', which implies that unlike his energetic father, Hishām commissioned no additions or refurbishments at the palace throughout his long residence there.⁵²

If construction began in 987, this was only twelve years after the completion of al-Ḥakam's extension. The primary motivation for the expansion given in the sources was the need for space due to the swelling population.⁵³ This is something of a topos in the accounts of all the mosque's extensions, but a significant level of demographic growth at this period is not unlikely,⁵⁴ and may

well have influenced the decisions to enlarge the Friday mosque. Immigration may also have been an important factor in population growth, especially under al-Manṣūr who, from the late 970s, actively encouraged Berbers displaced by the Umayyad war with the Fatimids to cross the Straits and join the Umayyad army (see Chapter 1).⁵⁵ Berber soldiers continued to cross into al-Andalus throughout the 'Āmirid period. Many of them were enrolled in al-Manṣūr's army and became personally loyal to him, which probably contributed significantly to the increased efficiency of the Andalusī army under his command. Did these thousands of 'Āmirid troops attend the mosque on Fridays, filling the new extension?

The construction was likely paid for by 'part of the riches which al-Manṣūr had garnered through his campaigns against the Christians and in the Maghrib'.⁵⁶ Direction of the works was entrusted to 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'īd ibn Batri (d. 1010), who was *ṣāhib al-shurṭa* of Cordoba, but about whom very little else is known.⁵⁷ Something more can be said about the labour force who produced the new stone supports in the mosque extension, thanks to the more than seven hundred signatures and masons' marks have been recorded on columns, bases and capitals in Cordoba III and IV (Figure 50).⁵⁸ Their presence was interpreted by

52 Martínez Núñez and Ación Almansa 2004, 128: 'Exista ningún indicio de intervenciones por parte del califa Hishām II. Frente a lo que sucede en el caso de al-Ḥakam, Hishām no aparece mencionado en ningún epígrafe, ni como heredero designado ni como califa.'

53 *Bayān* II:307–308 [translation, 477–478].

54 Various attempts have been made to estimate the size of Cordoba's population: see Torres Balbás 1955; Bulliet 1979, 114–127, graphs 20 and 22; Glick 1979, 34–35, fig. 1; most recently, Chalmeta 1992.

55 Ibn Khaldūn 1934, 241; *HEM* II:266; Idris 1964, 80.

56 Echevarría 2011, 188. She comments further that the part used 'corresponded to the 'fifth' allotted to the caliph', without providing a reference.

57 *HEM* II:229, n. 2, citing the biography of al-Manṣūr in Ibn Bashkuwāl's *Kitāb al-Ṣila*, no. 562.

58 Juan Souto wrote on this phenomenon several times throughout his career: Rodríguez and Souto 2000a, Souto 2001, 2002a, 2002c, 2004, 2010a, 2010b. There are some 150 columns in Cordoba III and 350 in Cordoba IV, and these numbers can be trebled to provide an approximate total number of 1500 architectonic supports (columns, capitals and bases). This means that on average there is a 'lapidary sign' on every second column/capital/base. In reality, however, more than one name or sign occurs on the same piece, or the same name occurs more than once. In 2010b, Souto's last word on this was (p. 49) 'son las [marcas] de otros



FIGURE 50 Selection of signatures in the Āmirid extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba: Aflaḥ, Faṭḥ, Mas'ūd, Naṣr, Āmir, Khalaf al-Āmirī
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Ocaña as representing the presence of Christian workers in the mosque, basing this idea on a passage in al-Maqqarī in which he mentions the employment of chain-gangs of prisoners-of-war in the construction of al-Manṣūr's extension.⁵⁹ Ocaña's 'extremely suggestive theory' was that the most common Arabic names found in the monument (Mas'ūd, Mubārak, Naṣr) have 'exact Latin equivalents in Felix, Benedict and Victor ... which leads one to presume that [the names] belonged to Christian craftsmen'. His argument was compounded by 'certain undoubtedly Christian signs' among the masons' marks: the Greek letter Thau, the Anchor, the Ship of Fishermen, the Morning Star and the Mustard Seed. Were these secret declarations of Christian faith and identity? Moreover, on one column in Cordoba IV, the name Naṣr occurs on the same column as a Thau symbol.⁶⁰

This theory was debunked by Juan Souto in one of his last publications.⁶¹ What he called 'marcas de identidad' had a practical function, to identify the author of a particular piece of stone carving (p. 36); 'they had no symbolic character, they had no intention or implication beyond identifying their authors, with a practical purpose within the process of constructing a building' (p. 58); 'I firmly believe that before pronouncing on the religious confession of an individual who is dispossessed of any references that are unequivocally religious, it is necessary to investigate the documentation and

refer it to the context to which it belongs' (p. 46); 'I am convinced that if the authors of these marks had wanted to represent crosses, they would have carved them' (p. 49). Finally, 'it is obvious that the signatures in the mosque could have belonged to some of those individuals of a certain rank who acted at the time as 'supervisor', 'chief' or some other office linked to the carving of the pieces'.⁶²

In fact, this large number of signatures comprises only twenty-five names,⁶³ of which thirteen occur as signatures in contexts outside the mosque, including on objects.⁶⁴ The repetition of such a small number of names on such a large number of architectonic elements argues for the production of those elements within a regulated workshop which was part of the Dār al-Ṣinā'a, as we will discuss in Chapter 6.

Cordoba IV was by far the largest of the three extensions to 'Abd al-Raḥmān I's mosque. Al-Manṣūr extended the mosque to the east along its entire length, including the courtyard, in which he installed a massive new cistern. He added to the prayer hall eight aisles, which are on average narrower than the original aisles,⁶⁵ and widened the building by nearly 50 m.⁶⁶ It increased the

tantos autores, o bien la del autor junto con la del aparejador, el maestro, el aprendiz, el jefe, el transportista, la cantera, repeticiones ...'

59 Al-Maqqarī, *Analectes*, 1:359: 'And the people considered that the most beautiful thing about the construction of this 'Āmirid extension was the sight of captured Christians, from the land of Castile and elsewhere, bound with iron and employed on the work instead of Muslim labourers, out of scorn for polytheism and for the glory of Islam'. However, as Ocaña 1986, 66, himself points out, these signatures were carved by 'a perfectly qualified personnel', who were literate in Arabic, which seems unlikely for Christians just brought from the wars. These chain-gangs probably engaged in, literally, the dirty work.

60 Ocaña 1981; reprinted 1986.

61 Souto 2010b.

62 Souto 2010a, 221 (2.38: Khalaf).

63 See the index provided in Rodríguez and Souto 2000a, 384–387 (this has been checked against the index provided in Souto 2010a). The full 25 names are: Aflaḥ/Aflaḥ al-Farrā'; Badr; Badr ibn al-Ḥ[...]?; Ibn Badr; Bāshir; Bishr; Bushrā; Ḥakam; Khalaf/Khalaf al-'Āmirī; Khayra; Durri; Rashīq; Rizq; Sa'āda; Faṭḥ; Faraj; Qāsim; Kāḥ; Mubārak/Mubārak ibn Hishām; Muḥammad; Mas'ūd; Maysūr; Naṣr; Ibn Naṣr; Yaḥyā.

64 This information is collated and discussed in Souto 2001, Souto 2010a. The 13 names are: Aflaḥ/Aflaḥ al-Farrā'; Badr; Khalaf/Khalaf al-'Āmirī; Khayra; Durri; Rashīq; Sa'āda; Faṭḥ; Faraj; Muḥammad; Maysūr; Naṣr and Ibn Naṣr.

65 Grabar 1987, 106, gives the widths of all 19 aisles from west to east as follows (in metres): 5.35; 6.86 (× 4); 7.85 (the wider central nave); 6.26 (× 4); 5.35 (× 2, the second of which is the first aisle of Cordoba IV); and 6.86 (× 7). The average width of the aisles in Cordoba IV is thus 6.14 m, which is narrower than those in rest of mosque by about a metre (av. width 7.2 m).

66 Ewert 1968, 6 and figure 34. The width of the new extension was 49.12 m, making a total width of 128.41 m

surface area of the prayer hall by more than 5,300 m², or 8,167 m² including the courtyard. Through this work the mosque acquired its definitive dimensions: a total surface area of 22,400 m², and the capacity of some 40,000 Muslims at prayer. It thus became the third largest mosque in the medieval Islamic world, only surpassed by the two Samarra mosques.⁶⁷ As Ana Echevarría points out, the extended mosque thus also surpassed any of the Fatimid mosques.⁶⁸

The sources tell us that east was the only direction in which al-Manṣūr could build, since further south lay the river, to the west was the caliphal palace, and to the north was ‘Abd al-Rahmān III’s minaret. To the east were only houses, and Ibn ‘Idhārī reports that al-Manṣūr amply compensated the owners in order to acquire their land.⁶⁹ However, in building towards the east, al-Manṣūr was also establishing a geographical and physical relationship between his mosque and the palace-city he had established a decade earlier. His ‘colonisation’ of this side of the city – as opposed to the west, which contained both the Cordoban *qaṣr* and Madīnat al-Zahrā’ – further indicated that this was an ‘Āmirid, rather than an Umayyad, mosque.

As Marfil notes, al-Manṣūr’s builders faced the challenge of setting out eight new naves over a built-up space, whose ground level was descending towards the river: in the northern zone, this was approximately 2 m below the mosque’s interior level, dropping to more than 3 m below in the southern zone. To maintain a single level in the new interior, the builders laid a solid foundation of masonry reused from the demolition of parts of the old eastern façade (which had to be penetrated in order to connect the new extension with the old mosque – this will be discussed further in

Section 2.1.3.5) and the lateral platform and street: excavations in this zone have revealed the original street that ran alongside al-Ḥakam’s mosque extension.⁷⁰ The space was infilled by river pebbles and earth, on top of which courses of masonry blocks were laid until they reached ground level. His builders thus constructed an enormous artificial platform on which to erect the mosque extension, and a wide terrace flanked the new eastern façade, allowing access to the mosque from the new street that was also constructed alongside.

The covered prayer hall thus became almost a square (114.6 m N-S × 128.41 m E-W), though this had the effect of decentralising the mosque’s old axis, along which lay the minaret, the main entrance gate (now the ‘Puerta de las Palmas’) adorned with the eighth-century foundation inscription,⁷¹ and al-Ḥakam’s *maqṣūra* – all key elements in the mosque’s Umayyad identity. One of the main criticisms expressed by modern historians is that ‘al-Manṣūr destroyed [the mosque’s] symmetry’,⁷² though to maintain it would have meant the destruction or subordination of these focal elements, in order to create a new axis. Echevarría considers that the ‘Āmirid extension displaced the mihrab and *maqṣūra*, ‘leaving it semi-hidden in a corner’. She notes that whoever leads the community in prayer would need to place himself in a central position along the qibla wall, thus ‘leaving the caliph in a lateral position, as corresponded with Almanzor’s vision.’⁷³ However, there is no indication of any feature that could be defined as a subsidiary mihrab, either in Cordoba IV or along what would have been the mosque’s new central axis, so we must assume that the main axis of the mosque remained as it had been, and that it was the congregation assembled in Cordoba IV who instead found themselves in ‘a lateral position’. The construction of an even

for the north and south walls. Fernández-Puertas 2000 theorises that the mosque’s architects consistently used the Pythagorean geometric system, which resulted in the building always doubling itself, a system which al-Manṣūr continued in his extension.

67 These calculations are from Marfil 2003, 78.

68 Echevarría 2011, 188.

69 *Bayān* 11:308 [translation, 478–479].

70 Marfil 2003, 79–80. I am extremely grateful to Pedro Marfil for taking me under the mosque in November 2009, to see this excavated zone.

71 On which, see Lévi-Provençal 1931, 8–9 (#9).

72 Ewert 1968, 6.

73 Echevarría 2011, 188.

number of aisles in Cordoba IV precluded any one of them being privileged as a central nave, and none of the aisles is articulated through greater width or more elaborate decorative features as more important than the other seven. This contrasts with the articulation of the central nave of the western part of the mosque through its greater width (7.85 m) in relation to the others (an average width of 7.2 m), and the concentration of decorative elements in the *maqṣūra* area of Cordoba III. The lack of such features indicates that Cordoba IV was not meant to displace the original axis of the mosque. Indeed, as Pedro Marfil has pointed out, the extension along the eastern flank allowed the very elongated mosque to regain proportion, and improved problems with illumination, as we will discuss below.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, there are indications of possible 'Āmirid interventions in al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*, which indicate the continued importance of this zone during the 'Āmirid period, as will be discussed below.

Extending the mosque to the east required the destruction of the mosque's original eastern façade and its gates, constructed only a few years earlier by al-Ḥakam. Al-Manṣūr pierced eleven large arched holes in this wall, to communicate between Cordoba IV and the older mosque (Figure 51). The traces of the pre-existing façade were blocked up and covered over, though Pedro Marfil believes that the Treasury gate (popularly known today as the Puerta del Chocolate) remained visible (Figure 52).⁷⁵ What was left of the original decoration of al-Ḥakam's gates remained hidden until the restoration work by Velázquez Bosco in the early twentieth century, and these remains are now visible in the mosque today. Their traces, though sometimes ghostly, can be related to the seven new gates of al-Manṣūr's eastern façade with interesting conclusions, as will be discussed below.

The mosque's north and south walls were also extended, and the courtyard was proportionally enlarged and refurbished. Certain other 'Āmirid additions to the mosque complex were entirely practical, and reformed the mosque's infrastructure. The first of these was the construction of a large subterranean cistern, abutting the foundations of the original eastern façade of Cordoba I.⁷⁶ This cistern presumably fed the new ablution pavilions (on which see below), and any new fountains which might have decorated the courtyard, as well as irrigating the trees.⁷⁷ It is a square enclosure, measuring 14.5m a side and 5m deep, divided into nine equal compartments by cruciform pillars, supporting round arches below a vaulted ceiling, in which are pierced three openings. All the surfaces are covered by a hydraulic coating of ochre.⁷⁸

It is curious to note that the cistern was built on a nine-bay plan, a plan sometimes used for the construction of mosques and churches across a widely dispersed geographical area. One of the most famous is the Mosque of Bāb al-Mardūm in Toledo, built only a few years after the 'Āmirid extension, in 390/999–1000.⁷⁹ It is still enigmatic in the sense that it is not clear whether there was architectural precedent for this mosque within al-Andalus, though the scholars who have studied it tend to concur that there must already have been

74 Marfil 2003, 78.

75 Marfil 2003, 79.

76 See the nineteenth-century drawing of a hypothesised elevation reproduced in Ruggles 2009, Figure 58. Ibn 'Idhārī (*Bayān* 11:308 [translation, 478]) says al-Manṣūr merely enlarged the cistern. He also says it was as large as the perimeter of the courtyard, which is not substantiated by the physical remains.

77 Ruggles 2009, 96: 'A larger prayer hall and courtyard meant more worshippers and more trees, both of which demanded water, and so ... a very large deep cistern was excavated in the courtyard floor.'

78 For details, see Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 579–582; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 165; Marfil 2003, 83–4. Gómez-Moreno notes that, 'in modern times', the 'Āmirid cistern was converted into an ossuary for the cathedral.

79 King 1972; Calvo 1999. I am also grateful to Asunción González Pérez for sharing with me her unpublished MA thesis on this subject: González Pérez 2009.



FIGURE 51 View along the communicating wall between Cordoba III and IV, showing al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 52
Puerta del Chocolate
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

a mosque of this form in Cordoba. The nine-bay concept was certainly already present in Cordoba as it was used in the 'Āmirid cistern. Could this be one of the earliest uses of this form in al-Andalus? Gómez-Moreno noted that the vaulted arrangement of the ceiling of the 'Āmirid cistern was the same as in a cistern found at Madīnat al-Zahrā'.⁸⁰ But according to Vallejo, 'the palace did not have cisterns or subterranean tanks for storing rainwater';⁸¹ rather, the pattern at Madīnat al-Zahrā' was one of open reservoirs which evacuated directly into a network of drains, qanats and aqueducts.⁸² Monumental, vaulted cisterns are not in themselves unusual: one of the best-preserved in Iberia is in the city of Cáceres, on the western frontier of al-Andalus. This huge cistern measures 14 by 10 metres, and had a capacity of 700m³ when full. It is arranged in five naves separated by twelve columns supporting horseshoe arches, forming 20 bays covered by barrel vaults. The date of the cistern is debated, but is likely to be in the twelfth century, when Cáceres was heavily fortified under Almohad rule.⁸³ It is thus unlikely to be a precedent for the 'Āmirid cistern at Cordoba. Much earlier precedents existed in the Islamic East, such as the cistern constructed in Ramla in 789, by order of the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. This had 24 bays, and according to Creswell manifests the 'earliest known systematic and exclusive employment of the free-standing pointed arch'.⁸⁴ With the limited state of knowledge – pending the excavation

and publication of more medieval cisterns – it is difficult to say whether al-Manṣūr's architects were innovating in their construction of this cistern, or working within a model that had already been established in al-Andalus.⁸⁵

Archaeological investigations undertaken in 1996 indicated that part of the courtyard had been paved with slabs of purple-coloured limestone, and also located the remains of a large drain that diverted the waters towards the new eastern street. Marfil also notes that new gates were opened in the courtyard's extended perimeter wall: one of these is the gate known today as the Puerta de Santa Catalina, now a large Baroque gate that opens into the patio close to the entrance to the mosque's new wing (Figure 67: Gate 8 on the East side). Another small gate was opened on the northern wall, abutting the precinct that had been constructed by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (Figure 67: Gate 2 on the North side).⁸⁶

Another important aspect of al-Manṣūr's refurbished infrastructure for the mosque was only discovered during rescue excavations in 1998, in the street that runs parallel to the mosque's eastern façade.⁸⁷ The remains of an ablutions pavilion, or *mīḍa'a*, were found, orientated at a slightly oblique angle to the mosque's façade but undoubtedly related to Cordoba IV.⁸⁸ The mosque's first *mīḍa'a* had been built to the east of Cordoba I by Hishām I, but was destroyed during al-Ḥakam's construction of a new eastern façade.⁸⁹ Al-Ḥakam himself constructed four new ablution halls, 'two large ones for the men and two smaller ones for the women', one of each on the east and west sides of the mosque.⁹⁰ Al-Manṣūr's extension would

80 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 165.

81 Vallejo 2007, 10.

82 Vallejo 2010, chapter on 'La infraestructura hidraulica'. In a personal communication dated 6 September 2020, he wrote 'En Madinat al-Zahra no hay cisternas, pero existen diversas construcciones lineales que cubren sus tramos cuadrados con bóvedas de arista. También alguna letrina, de planta cuadrangular, se cubre de la misma manera'.

83 See <https://caceres.online/item/museo-de-caceres>, and Gibello 2014 (both consulted 30/10/20), who argues that the cistern was converted from an earlier mosque. I am grateful to Antonio Vallejo for bringing this example to my attention.

84 Creswell and Allan 1989, 284–5.

85 Ruggles 2009, 96, says that the 'Āmirid cistern 'was a classic Andalusian type with nine vaulted bays arranged in a square', but offers no comparanda.

86 Pedro 2003, 83.

87 The remains were found at 23 Calle Magistral González Francés, next to the Hotel Conquistador. See Montejo 1998, 253 and Montejo 1999, 209.

88 Montejo 1999, 211. The *mīḍa'a* is oriented NW–SE.

89 For the details of the excavation of this *mīḍa'a*, see Marfil 1999, 187–189, plates 5–7.

90 Torres Balbás 1957, 579.

have necessitated the destruction of the two eastern ablution halls, and he built at least one huge replacement (plotted on Figure 49). However, the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus* records his construction of ‘three hydraulic complexes dedicated to the ritual ablutions (*wuḍūʿ*)’,⁹¹ to the east, west and north of the Mosque: ‘each one of these complexes (*sāqiyāt*) had 20 cubicles (*buyūt*) for private use (*taṣarruf*) and a patio (*ṣaḥn*) for ablutions with a pond (*ṣahrj*), at the centre of which was a fountain (*fawārra*) of clear water’. The text dates their completion to 390/999–1000.⁹² Though there would have been no practical need to reconstruct the western and northern ablution halls, which would have been unaffected by the construction of Cordoba IV, al-Manṣūr may have refurbished them for the sake of symmetry with his new eastern pavilion.⁹³

The excavated foundations of this *mīḍaʿa* reveal a rectangular plan,⁹⁴ of dimensions *c.* 16 m wide × 28.23 m long (until the foundations disappear beneath the Hotel Conquistador). It was a free-standing structure, of a ‘monumental quality’, with roads on all four sides. Its foundation walls are extraordinarily wide, varying between 1.5 and 2.25 m. The most outstanding feature is its network of water channels measuring 50–60 cm wide × 90 cm high, indicating a high volume of water flow. These channels run around the perimeter of the structure’s interior, and are supplemented by

smaller transverse channels. The walls were rendered impermeable by the usual hydraulic coating. The upper structure seems, from the remains and the textual description, to have comprised 20 latrine cubicles around the perimeter, with a central paved area in which there was a pond and stone fountain, presumably intended for the ablutions.⁹⁵ Though we have no idea what it would have looked like, Montejo comments that the decoration would probably have had ‘the same characteristics of solidity and permanence observable in [al-Manṣūr’s] extension to the mosque’.⁹⁶

This *mīḍaʿa* was obviously a massive and expensive structure, all the more so if al-Manṣūr built two others like it. Together with the huge new cistern under the courtyard, we can understand the building campaign as ‘not an isolated monument but ... integrated into an architectural and urban complex’⁹⁷ – a complex whose Umayyad origins were respected and enhanced under ʿĀmirid patronage. Though the construction of such features in al-Manṣūr’s extension stem from a practical need to reform the mosque’s associated infrastructure, they were also significant pious works, and the kind of necessary institution which rulers were expected to provide for their subjects. Indeed, the supply of life-giving water is a topos associated with the good ruler, as is shown by the following *qaṣīda* which Ibn Shukhayṣ composed in celebration of al-Ḥakam’s reform of the mosque’s water infrastructure in 967, when he refurbished a Roman aqueduct to bring water to the mosque from the Sierra Morena:⁹⁸

91 Montejo 1998, 254.

92 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:40 [11:46]; cf. Pinilla Melguizo 1998, who analyses this passage and produces a new translation which takes into account the archaeological remains (p. 231).

93 Montejo 1999, 219, says that documentary evidence from 1333 locates an Arab ‘lavatorio’ in the Corral de Cárdenas, on the western side of the mosque, to the north of the caliphal palace, where the Hospital Mayor de San Sebastián was built in the early sixteenth century. This has not been verified archaeologically. The northern ablution hall cannot be located with certainty either, and Montejo suggests a location between Calle Céspedes and Calle Velázquez Bosco.

94 These details are condensed from Montejo 1998 and 1999.

95 According to Montejo 1999, 216, the surviving fragments of the fountain bowl indicate that it had various holes, and it was probably designed, like the Fuente de los Leones in the Alhambra, to feed out of different spouts around the fountain.

96 Montejo 1998, 254. It is likely to have had a similar form to the ablutions hall of the Almohad mosque in Seville: Vera Reina 1995, 161–166.

97 Montejo 1998, 255, and 1999, 219.

98 *Bayān* 11:256 [translation, 396–397]; Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 579. According to Anderson 2013, 112, the refurbished aqueduct was the Fontis Aureae. This presumably now fed al-Manṣūr’s cistern.

“You have torn the sides off the mountain in search of water springs of great purity, which you have brought to the house of worship in order to clean bodies of their impurities and to ease the thirst of men. At the same time you have done a rare thing, a glorious act and a work of piety for the people, whose pastor and protector you are.”⁹⁹

We will return in Chapter 8 to the poetic image of the ruler’s role in bringing life-giving water to his subjects, however it should be noted here that panegyrics composed in honour of al-Manṣūr likewise praised him in terms of water metaphors. His reforms of the water infrastructure of Cordoba IV, indeed the ‘Āmirid mosque extension as a whole, were meritorious public works, and in commissioning them al-Manṣūr was, at a fundamental level, fulfilling his duty as *de facto* ruler.¹⁰⁰

2.1 *Analysis of the Interior*

Turning to the interior of Cordoba IV, its internal decoration has been called ‘uniform and monotonous’, ‘a slavish copy’ of Cordoba III with ‘hardly anything new artistically’; in the prayer hall, ‘there isn’t a single innovation’.¹⁰¹ The critical neglect of al-Manṣūr’s extension has perpetuated such views, which suppose that there were no artistically innovative features in Cordoba IV. On closer inspection, however, such views are unfounded, since there are a number of decorative differences and technical innovations that distinguish this campaign from earlier phases. For the most part, these are ingenious practical solutions to problems posed by or lessons learned from the pre-existing structure, though in a few cases these features are purely decorative, possibly representing the evolution of certain forms. In combination, these features indicate a more general theme, which is that no expense was spared in making Cordoba IV look

just like the rest of the mosque. As Christian Ewert conceded, a distinctive element of al-Manṣūr’s extension was its adaptation to the pre-existing construction, even the subordination of it in order to highlight even more the extraordinary quality of the caliphal works.¹⁰²

In the following sections we will discuss:

1. those differences in the decoration of Cordoba IV that can be explained through the need for practical solutions to existing construction issues;
2. architectural differences that seem purely decorative, and can be read as ostentatiously costly;
3. architectural features that were imitated from the earlier mosque;
4. evidence for ‘Āmirid intervention into al-Ḥakam’s *maqṣūra*.

In section 3 of this chapter, we discuss the Qur’ānic inscriptions that are employed in the mosque, especially in Cordoba III and IV, and on the new eastern façade of al-Manṣūr’s extension.

2.1.1 ‘Decorative Differences’ That Can be Explained through the Need for Practical Solutions to Existing Construction Issues (See plan in Figure 49)

2.1.1.1 *Double Qibla Wall Not Continued*

The double qibla wall of Cordoba III was not continued into Cordoba IV, probably because the Bayt al-Māl stayed where it was. This would explain why its gate – the so-called Puerta del Chocolate, originally an external gate of al-Ḥakam’s eastern façade – has been so well preserved (Figure 52). As noted above, Pedro Marfil believes that this gate remained visible in Cordoba IV,¹⁰³ presumably providing a secondary point of access to the Bayt al-Māl. The naves of al-Manṣūr’s extension are therefore two bays deeper than in the western portion of the mosque.

99 *Bayān* II:256 [translation, 397], quoted in Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 579–580.

100 Cf. *Bayān* II:307–309 [translation, 477–479].

101 Torres Balbás 1956, 578; Ewert 1968, 6.

102 Cited by Marfil 2003, 78.

103 Marfil 2003, 79.



FIGURE 53 Window grille in situ in Cordoba IV
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 54 Window grille from Cordoba IV,
987–994, marble; Museo
Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba,
inv. 3.448, 153 × 98 cm
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

The perpendicular arcades thus run all the way to the exterior wall at the south, and large windows pierced high up in the walls allow this zone farthest from the courtyard to be illuminated (Figure 53).¹⁰⁴ This solved one of the problems created by al-Ḥakam's extension, which had made the prayer hall excessively long. Not only was the new *maqṣūra* area far from the courtyard arches, which illuminated as well as ventilated the mosque, but the double qibla wall with ancillary spaces behind (the *sābāt*, chamber for the minbar, mihrab, and the Bayt al-Māl) had no communication with the exterior wall and thus no illumination, apart from the small windows which surrounded the *maqṣūra*'s domes. As discussed above, Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza has argued that the windows piercing the dome above the entrance space to al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* (Figures 46–47) created a symbolic curtain of light that penetrated the shade of the mosque's interior, thus drawing attention to the monument's most potent space.¹⁰⁵

However, the *tabula rasa* of the 'Āmirid wing allowed a chance to resolve these illumination problems. These new windows were also filled with large marble window grilles, carved with elegant geometric designs, each of them different (Figure 54). Similar grilles are also seen flanking the gates of al-Manṣūr's eastern façade (for example, Figure 71). While no windows were necessary on the southern façade of al-Ḥakam's extension, window grilles were used in the lights that punctuated the domes of the *maqṣūra*: in 1998, one extant original grille was found in the dome over the Capilla de Villaviciosa, which is pierced by sixteen windows. In the window situated most to the west of the dome's northern side, the grille consists of a piece of marble with a design of intersecting lobed arches, imitating the elaborate arcaded 'screens' inside the Capilla de Villaviciosa space beneath, its painstaking carving even going so far as to include

104 Marfil 2003, 80.

105 Ruiz Souza 2001b.

miniature capitals and column shafts.¹⁰⁶ The use of marble window grilles was thus not an 'Āmirid innovation in the mosque, but the skill with which they are carved, their huge size and the sophistication of their designs speaks to the artistic skill of artisans working under 'Āmirid patronage, as we will see in Chapters 6 and 7, in relation to other marble objects carved for the 'Āmirids. It also speaks to the availability of large rectangular sections of marble which could be used for carving these new grilles, and as we know from the 'Āmirid basins (discussed in Chapter 7) this material was indeed readily available.

2.1.1.2 *Five-Lobed Arches to Resolve Disparity along the New Courtyard Façade*

The north wall, which opens onto the courtyard, is thicker in the western part of the mosque than in Cordoba IV, since when 'Abd al-Raḥmān III refurbished the courtyard in 346/957–8, he added an outer layer of piers to those which survived from 'Abd al-Raḥmān I's original mosque, to provide greater stability to this otherwise weak façade.¹⁰⁷ This resulted in a double thickness of piers supporting the northern façade. When al-Manṣūr extended the courtyard façade to the east, he only continued the outermost layer of piers, to maintain a consistent appearance along this façade. This results in a disparity between the depth of the first few bays of Cordoba IV's north wall, and those of the western part of the mosque. This is compensated for in al-Manṣūr's extension by the uncharacteristic replacement of the usual horseshoe arch by five-lobed arches in the first two bays of each of the seven naves which begin at the north wall (Figure 55). Only the lower arches are lobed, while

the upper arches are semicircular as in the rest of the mosque. After this 'compensatory zone', the arches in Cordoba IV maintain parity with arches in Cordoba I, II and III, and the style reverts to the superimposed arrangement of semicircle-above-horseshoe-arch that is the mosque's standard repeat unit, except in one other location which we will discuss in the next section (2.1.1.3).¹⁰⁸

The interior of the courtyard façade of al-Manṣūr's extension seems originally to have had painted decoration, now hidden behind the lateral chapels of the northern wall. An archaeological survey in this zone revealed the partial survival of these painted schemes, which can be accessed in the elevation of the wall above the low ceiling vaults of the lateral chapels. According to Pedro Marfil, large Arabic inscriptions painted in a red pigment were discovered here, on the interior of the courtyard façade facing into the mosque. These seem to have been framed within long rectangular friezes above the arches that communicated with the courtyard, of the same type that frame the carved inscriptions on the mosque's eastern façade (see below). While the content of these painted inscriptions is not yet known, it is likely that, like the inscriptions on al-Manṣūr's eastern façade, they were citations from the Qur'ān that affirmed the ideological messages of the Cordoba Mosque's pre-existing epigraphic programme.¹⁰⁹

106 Marfil 1998, 252–3. Unfortunately he includes no image, but Fernández-Puertas 2009, 195, illustrates an internal and external view in plates 97 and 98.

107 According to the inscription still affixed to the Puerta de las Palmas (Lévi-Provençal 1931, 8–9 (#9), and *Répertoire*, IV: 141–2), in 346/957–8 he enlarged the courtyard and reinforced the sanctuary façade, by adding a second, outer pier to the original piers of Cordoba I.

108 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 574. Marfil 2003, 80, notes that the distance between the first and second column from the courtyard is 2.26 m; between the second and third it is 2.29 m.

109 This information comes from Pedro Marfil (personal communication, November 2009); see also the photograph published (without commentary) in Marfil 2003, 83. While red pigment is clearly visible, it is not possible to make out any trace of inscriptions. According to Marfil, these spaces were fully documented and measured with laser scans, in order to facilitate the reading of the inscriptions. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain further information from him about the results of this survey, since he first kindly shared this information with me.

2.1.1.3 *Five-Lobed and Pointed Arches to Resolve Disparity within the Northern Zone*

The use of the five-lobed arch occurs again in al-Manṣūr's extension, in an area where it is easy to miss.¹¹⁰ When 'Abd al-Raḥmān II built the first extension to Cordoba I, he incorporated the earlier building's external buttresses into his extension by using them as the springers for his new arcades.¹¹¹ In Cordoba IV, the thickness of these buttresses creates a new problem of symmetry. The plan published by Christian Ewert suggests that this problem was solved by the imitation of these buttresses, however the buttresses in Cordoba IV only occur in the westernmost four aisles, in the area which is now occupied by Hernán Ruiz's cathedral. It is likely that these buttresses are architectural traces of Hishām I's *mīḍa'a*, which is known through excavations to have been located in this area, or that constructed by al-Ḥakam II.¹¹² For the three arcades to the east, al-Manṣūr's architects resorted to the same solution as at the north wall, which was to compensate for the disparity in width created by these buttresses by inserting three bays with narrower intercolumniations, capped by five-lobed arches (Figure 56).

Some of the arches in this zone are pointed. Herrero Romero suggests that these were added by Hernán Ruiz,¹¹³ but these could also date from the tenth century, as there are other examples of the pointed arch in the mosque. Ruiz Cabrero accepted these as dating to the 'Āmirid period, attributing the narrower intercolumniations here



FIGURE 55 Cordoba IV: double bays of lobed arches in the compensating zone along the interior of courtyard façade (section 2.1.1.2)

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to an error in planning on the part of al-Manṣūr's architects.¹¹⁴ In discussing the pointed arches used in the transverse arcade that runs parallel to the qibla wall in al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* (Figure 75, discussed below), Antonio Momplet observes that these might be the earliest known examples of the pointed arch in Andalusī architecture. Following Torres Balbás, he cites a number of examples from the Islamic East, including the palace at Mshatta, the mosques of Samarra, and early Egyptian examples such as the Nilometer and Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn; however, in accordance with his own argument about Byzantine structural influences on the Córdoba Mosque, he opts for several

110 It is only mentioned in Fernández-Puertas 2000, 246.

111 Fernández-Puertas 2000, 226–231.

112 Marfil 1999, 187–189. Archaeologists excavated at exactly this transitional zone between Cordoba I and IV. Their trench covered the width of one nave, and its length was delimited by the Capilla de la Epifanía to the north and the Baroque cathedral to the south. The walls of Hishām's *mīḍa'a* were found to stretch 20 m N-S and 16 m E-W, which would bring its eastern façade to somewhere between the third and fourth buttress of Cordoba IV.

113 Herrero Romero 2017, 199. I am grateful to Antonio Vallejo for bringing this book to my attention.

114 Ruiz Cabrero 1990, 70–71.

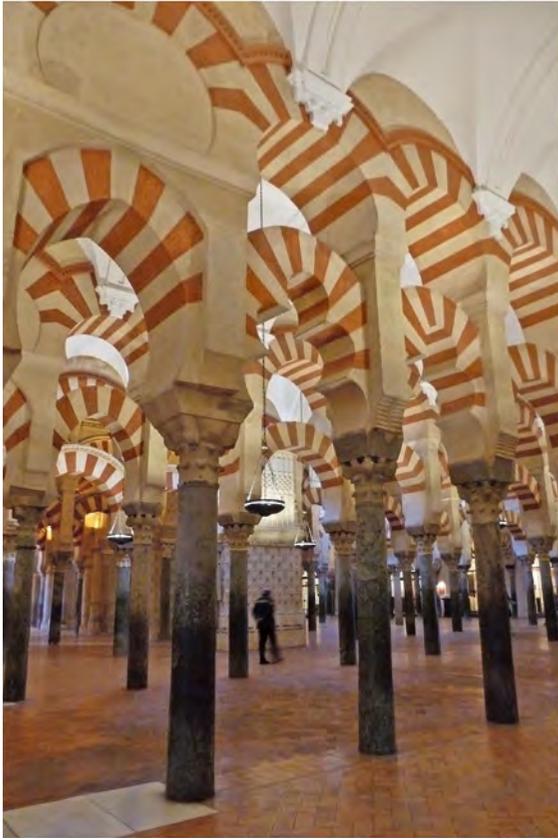


FIGURE 56 Cordoba IV: five-lobed and pointed arches in the compensating zone around where Hishām I's *mīḍa'a* was located (section 2.1.1.3)
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Byzantine models, including from Armenia.¹¹⁵ Since the transverse arcade is possibly an 'Āmirid intervention in the *maqṣūra* (see 2.1.4.1 below), the introduction of the pointed arch in the Cordoba Mosque may be an innovation of al-Manṣūr's architects; the idea might have been suggested by the overlapping arches in the frieze above the Puerta del Chocolate, which creates a series of pointed profiles (Figure 52). As we will see, this is not the only location in which unusual arch profiles can be associated with the 'Āmirid extension.

2.1.1.4 Introduction of Lead Discs

Another innovation in the 'Āmirid extension was to introduce the use of lead discs between base and column, column and capital, and capital and cyma. This acts as a bond between these rigid elements, as well as serving as a cushion between them and allowing for better damping of the elements in relation to each other. At the same time the column shafts are anchored into the building's foundation by resting on top of large blocks of marble or limestone, which are in turn supported on a strong bed of lime mortar.¹¹⁶

2.1.2 Architectural Differences in Cordoba IV That Seem Purely Decorative, and Can Be Read as Ostentatiously Costly

2.1.2.1 Stone Construction

Most obviously, the whole extension is built from stone, rather than stone combined with brick as in the western mosque. The arcades are plastered and the voussoirs painted in imitation of the rest of the mosque. There seems no practical need for this, and since the use of stone throughout such a large surface area would undoubtedly have been extremely costly, the most likely explanation is that the expense was intended to be conspicuous. Pedro Marfil calls it a sign of 'the maturity of caliphal architecture at the end of the tenth century'.¹¹⁷

2.1.2.2 Increasing Complexity of Roll Corbels

Roll corbels (modillions) made from plaster are employed throughout the Cordoba mosque, including along the courtyard façade, above the abacus of every column, in the position where they effectively serve as springers for the upper of the two superimposed arches (Figure 57).¹¹⁸ In the earlier phases of the mosque, these have a simple form: between five and seven horizontal rolls are intersected at the centre by a vertical band, which is usually decorated simply with

¹¹⁶ Marfil 2003, 81.

¹¹⁷ Marfil 2003, 81.

¹¹⁸ Pavón Maldonado 1987.

¹¹⁵ Momplet 2012, 251–2.

incised lines. This element of the corbels, however, becomes increasingly decorative in Cordoba IV, and comes to feature quite complex vegetal or geometric designs. In some cases, traces of paint survive (especially red and blue), though these are likely to be from later Christian interventions in the space. In three cases in the ʿĀmirid extension there are also inscribed examples, containing religious phrases carved in relief in simple Kufic script (Figures 58, 67, Appendix 3B).¹¹⁹ A fourth is now blank, its Arabic inscription having been carved away at some point; another bears the *shahada*, the Muslim declaration of faith; the third contains the verse 65:3, ‘Whosoever puts his trust in God, He is sufficient for him’, which does not occur elsewhere in the Mosque. This may be an example of the phenomenon noted by Calvo, of the use in the mosque’s inscriptions of pious formulae that may have been common in everyday life.¹²⁰

These subtly more decorative modillions may be no more than an example of stylistic evolution, though these elements in Cordoba III remain conservatively in the style of the previous two building campaigns. Alternatively, it may be a subtle indicator of the great expense on this extension.

2.1.2.3 *New Decorative Elements on the External Gates*

We will discuss the decoration of the exterior façades in more detail below, however we should note here what Torres Balbás calls the ‘most important variation’ of the façade of Cordoba IV:¹²¹ on the western façade, each gate is flanked by a carved marble window grille, hooded by a blind five-lobed arch, the whole group set in a rectangular panel filled with decoration in carved stone and inlaid brick. The gates on al-Manṣūr’s eastern façade preserve this arrangement but shift it upwards, introducing below it an additional element: a pair of small, blind horseshoe arches, filled with panels of carved vegetal designs (Figure 82).

This new element has the effect of enlarging the decorative surface area of each gate and, again, would have been more expensive to produce than the decoration of the western façade gates.

While it is important for a more balanced appreciation of Cordoba IV to enumerate the ways in which it differs from the previous building campaigns, these features contribute to two simple conclusions: firstly, that its architects were highly skilled in their invention of practical solutions to the problems of leftover architectural features from earlier construction phases; and secondly, that the use of increasingly decorative features for their own sake implies that no expense was spared on this extension, and that its patron wished this to be made obvious (albeit subtly). It is also important to examine those features that were *imitated* from the earlier mosque, since it is in these elements that there resides al-Manṣūr’s own conception of the relationship of his extension to the building’s Umayyad phases.

2.1.3 Architectural Features That Were Imitated from the Earlier Mosque

2.1.3.1 *Continuation of Transverse Arcade Running Parallel to Qibla Wall*

The feature of continuity that is most obvious when one studies a plan of the mosque is the continuation of the transverse arcade running parallel to the qibla wall twelve (fourteen in Cordoba IV) bays from the south (Figure 49). In the western part of the mosque, this arcade, composed of large double semicircular arches each spanning a nave and supported by two pairs of columns and capitals, marked the junction between Cordoba II and III at the time of al-Ḥakam’s extension. Today this junction is most visible at the entrance to the Gothic cathedral. The same style of arcade is found at the junction between Cordoba I and II. While the appearance of some of this transverse arcade, in the vicinity of the Baroque cathedral, has been altered in later interventions, it is clearly visible in the four easternmost bays of Cordoba IV, especially at the points where it intersects with the

119 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 575; Marfil 2003, 81–2.

120 Calvo 2010a, 180.

121 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 576–577.

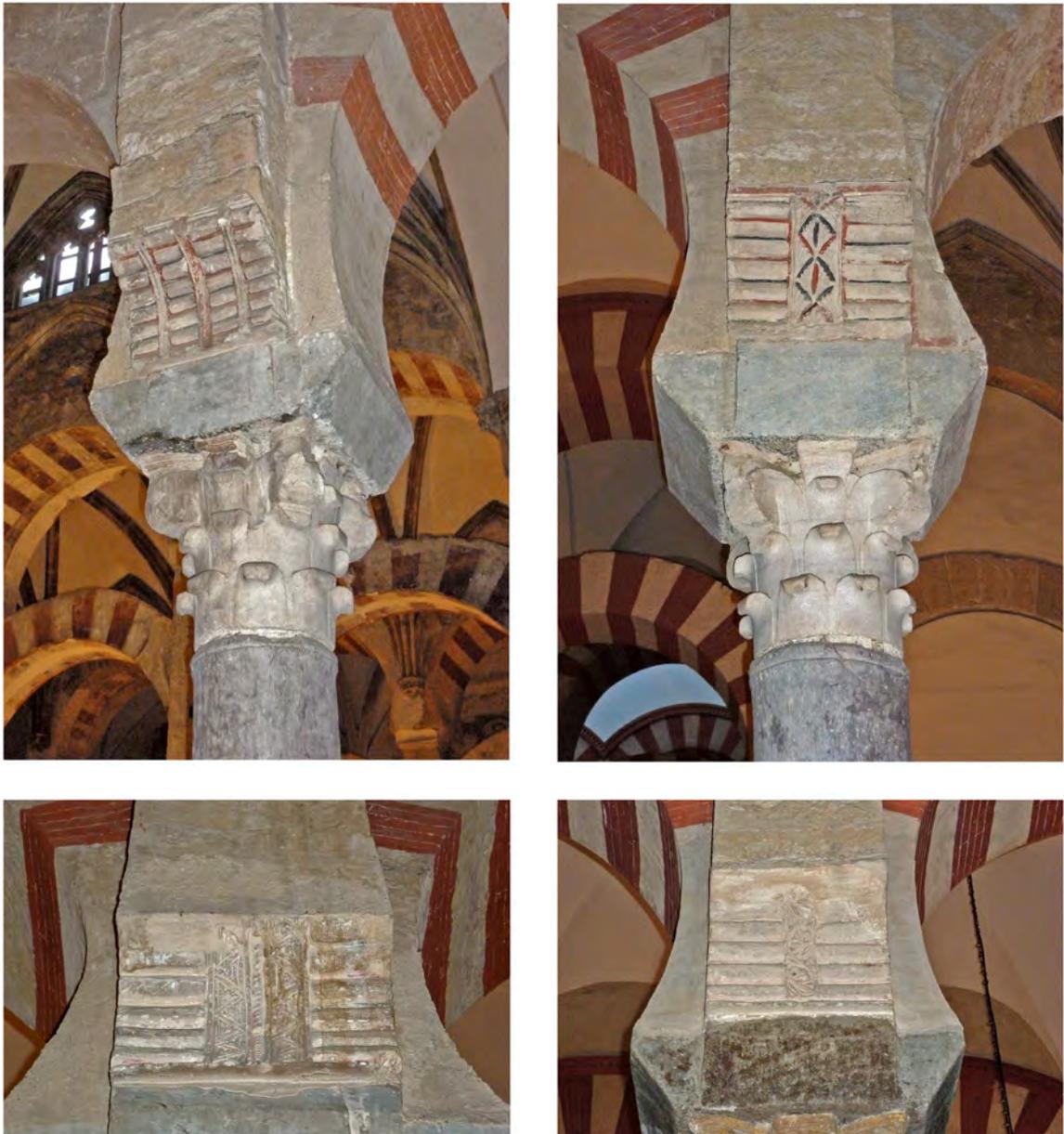


FIGURE 57 Cordoba IV: increasingly decorative roll corbels, some with traces of colour (section 2.1.2.2), and the standard capital used throughout the 'Amirid extension (section 2.1.3.4)

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FIGURE 58 Cordoba IV: roll corbels with inscriptions the 'Amirid extension (section 2.1.2.2, Appendix 3B)

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perpendicular arcades. This intersection is mediated by means of a thick pier, with the two pairs of columns carrying the transverse arcade and the single columns carrying the perpendicular arcade embedded into it, resulting in a cluster of six columns (Figure 59). These column clusters are still visible at the perimeter of the Baroque cathedral, despite the fact that the piers have been refurbished in a more sixteenth-century style.

There was no earlier building at this point in Cordoba IV which necessitated such a transverse arcade, though it does add structural support to the perimeter walls of the new extension. However, Ruiz Cabrero observes that the channel which drained rainwater from the mosque's roof ran along this section: it was constructed when al-Ḥakam extended the mosque, and had to be extended by al-Manṣūr's architects, in order to drain the roof. The greater weight of the water channel was thus supported by these much larger arches.¹²² Nevertheless, the imitation in Cordoba IV of the appearance of these arches created symmetry and physically identified the new extension with the earlier phases of the mosque.

2.1.3.2 *Arcade of Large Horseshoes along Longitudinal Wall*

The same style of arcade – large double horseshoes supported on pairs of columns and capitals – is found running longitudinally north-south at the junction between Cordoba IV and the mosque's original eastern exterior wall (Figure 51). As noted above, adding an extension along the mosque's entire eastern flank necessitated the destruction of its original exterior façade – those entrance gates constructed by 'Abd al-Raḥmān I, 'Abd al-Raḥmān II, and, only a few years earlier, by al-Ḥakam II (discussed in 2.1.3.5). Eleven large arched holes were pierced into this wall to communicate between Cordoba IV and the older mosque. Again, at the points at which this longitudinal

arcade intersects with the transverse arcade, the six columns meet in clusters set into thick piers.

Where this longitudinal arcade joins the courtyard façade, at its northernmost end, it culminates in a single large eleven-lobed double arch supported on paired columns and capitals, at the junction between Cordoba IV and Cordoba I (Figure 60). Unlike in the rest of Cordoba IV, the marble capitals used here appear to be earlier spolia, perhaps reused from a previous phase of the building (such as an external gate built by 'Abd al-Raḥmān I or II?) that was demolished as a result of the 'Āmirid extension.

This is not the only location in the mosque where a large eleven-lobed double arch is found: two such arches are found at the northern entrance to al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*, flanking the even more elaborate central arch of twenty-one lobes that leads into the space now occupied by the Capilla de Villaviciosa (Figure 45). The easternmost of the two spaces designated by these eleven-lobed arches is now occupied by the Capilla Real (Figure 78); the southern side of this space is marked by a further eleven-lobed arch (though not double), supported on pairs of columns which are topped by double-capitals, carved from a single block of marble (Figures 39–40, 79). As discussed in Chapter 4 (5), double-capitals like these may have been an 'Āmirid innovation, and in fact this southern eleven-lobed arch seems to have been part of an intervention by al-Manṣūr in al-Ḥakam's prayer hall, as will be discussed below (2.1.4.2). If so, perhaps this inspired his architects to try the feature again, in another part of the 'Āmirid extension.

The fact that the precedent for this decorative arch at the northernmost end of the longitudinal arcade was the symbolic entrance to al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* indicates a special significance to this point of junction between Cordoba IV and Cordoba I. Was it because here the 'Āmirid mosque was connecting with the oldest and most venerated part of the Umayyad dynastic monument? This significance might be underlined by

¹²² Ruiz Cabrero 1990, 71–72. My thanks to Michele Lamprakos for bringing this article to my attention.



FIGURE 59 View of the transverse arcade running from junction of Cordoba II+III into Cordoba IV (section 2.1.3.1)

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the reuse of spoliated capitals, in a manner similar to the respectful reuse of the columns and capitals from 'Abd al-Raḥmān II's mihrab in the new mihrab erected by al-Ḥakam II.

There is no balancing eleven-lobed arch at the southern-most end of the longitudinal arcade because this is where the caliphal treasury and its now-internal entrance, the 'Puerta del Chocolate', was located.

2.1.3.3 *Alternating Pattern of Coloured Columns*

Ewert complains that al-Manṣūr 'brusquely abandoned the simple rhythmical order of the columns' which he so admires in al-Ḥakam's extension, and instead 'imitated the chaos of reused pieces in the mosque's first two phases'.¹²³ He is referring

to the unbroken pattern in Cordoba III in which red marble columns alternate with black marble. However, in general the columns in Cordoba IV *do* maintain an alternating pattern, although this extension employs three coloured marbles (red, black and grey, colours which Ewert calls 'sober') (Figure 43).¹²⁴ More than twice the number of columns were required for Cordoba IV than for al-Ḥakam's extension, and the breaks in the pattern may be due to marble of one colour being less available than another. However, since al-Manṣūr's builders imitated a pattern established by al-Ḥakam, and were also careful to maintain the original pattern at the junction with Cordoba III,

¹²³ Ewert 1987, 189. For the discussion of al-Ḥakam's extension, see Ewert and Wisshak 1981, 72–85, 89–94.

¹²⁴ Marfil 2003, 81, says that the column shafts of violet colour were made from marmoreal limestone from the Sierra of Cordoba, while the breccia or red conglomerate was obtained from the Sierra de Cabra, in the mountains of the Subbéticas to the south of Cordoba.



FIGURE 60
11-lobed arch at the junction
of Cordoba I and Cordoba IV,
terminating the longitudinal arcade
(section 2.1.3.2)

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they were clearly aware of it and used it as another subtle means to identify this extension with its predecessor.

2.1.3.4 *Newly-Carved Stone Capitals*

The capitals in Cordoba IV were all custom-made from stone, and imitated the simplified Corinthian capitals used throughout al-Ḥakam's extension. On the basis of one capital per column, some 350 new capitals were specially produced for this extension,

which would have been a further huge expense.¹²⁵ In Cordoba I and II the majority of the capitals were reused spolia, from ruined Roman and Late Antique buildings in Cordoba itself or brought by river from Seville and Mérida (Figure 25). By the

¹²⁵ According to Marfil 2003, 81, Cordoba IV employs a total of 342 columns: 44 in the courtyard wall, 32 in the transition zone with the old eastern façade, and 266 in the new prayer hall.

time of the construction of Cordoba III, there cannot have been as many standing ruins available to despoil, hence a standardised design was introduced for the mosque's capitals. Ewert suggests that this simplified Corinthian design was deliberately used in Cordoba III as a 'means of contrast with [its] decorative accents',¹²⁶ and seems disappointed by the fact that only in one small section of Cordoba IV does al-Manṣūr introduce some variation in the design of his capitals.¹²⁷ However, this imitation of the design of the capitals from Cordoba III provides another example of the deliberate relation of Cordoba IV to the immediately preceding extension.

2.1.3.5 *Imitation of al-Ḥakam's Original Eastern Façade*

The last but most significant way in which al-Manṣūr's extension imitated Cordoba III is now difficult to appreciate, but would have been obvious to contemporaries who knew both façades. Evidence from the remains of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade, which now forms the transitional wall between Cordoba III and IV (Figures 51, 61–65), shows that al-Manṣūr *imitated* the scheme of its gates on his eastern façade (Figures 66, 68–74).

All the mosque's external gates follow the same basic scheme as introduced by the Bāb al-Wuzarā', built by Muḥammad I in 855–6.¹²⁸ All

are surmounted by a frieze of five blind arches. On al-Manṣūr's eastern façade the types of arches in these friezes alternate with each gate (Figure 82): Gate 3 bears five small horseshoe arches (Figure 70), Gate 4 bears five trilobed arches (Figure 71), Gate 5 horseshoes (Figure 72), and so on. Accordingly, we can extrapolate that the decoration of the friezes that have not been reconstructed on Gates 1 and 2 consisted of horseshoe and trilobed arches, respectively (Figures 68, 69).

On the basis of comparison with the surviving gates of the western façade, it would appear that the decoration of the gates on al-Manṣūr's eastern façade was very different, even that al-Manṣūr introduced a new decorative system for the façade gates. This would be surprising, given the ways in which al-Manṣūr otherwise physically identified his extension with Cordoba III through the architectural imitations and allusions just discussed. However, the true relationship between the two eastern façades has not been fully appreciated. As mentioned, the best-preserved gate of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade is that popularly known as the 'Puerta del Chocolate' (Figure 52), which is decorated with an upper blind arcade of intersecting horseshoe arches. It has been assumed that all the remaining gates on both eastern and western façades originally had the same intersecting horseshoe design in their upper frieze.¹²⁹ Two gates on the western façade were in fact restored by Velázquez Bosco in the late-nineteenth century as exact copies of the Puerta del Chocolate.¹³⁰ One of these restored gates is the Bāb al-Sābā, whose façade would not originally have been visible, since this was the entrance that opened into the covered passageway connecting the mosque with

¹²⁶ Ewert 1987, 189.

¹²⁷ Ewert 1987, 189. He does not provide photographs of these few instances of more decorative capitals in Cordoba IV, however Souto 1990, 129, discusses them: this group is characterised by substituting the third row of plain acanthus leaves by an interlace of two small leaves with curly ends. I am grateful to Elise Franssen for bringing this to my attention: see Franssen 2008, 62–3.

¹²⁸ Fernández-Puertas 1979–1981 and 1999; Marfil 2009. According to Fernández-Puertas' drawn reconstructions, the upper frieze was formed by three independent horseshoe arches, between which were panels with carved decoration. Over time it seems these panels were also incorporated into arches, producing a five-arched arcade. The original pattern of the Bāb al-Wuzarā' continues in all later gates: two arches filled

with carved decoration occur between three arches filled with decoration of inlaid brick.

¹²⁹ Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 552: 'In the other three [gates] of the [eastern] façade, and in the corresponding gates of the western [façade] ... there would have been a band of small decorative arches above the gate, as described for [the Puerta] del Chocolate'.

¹³⁰ Herrero Romero 2017, 81–85, 87.

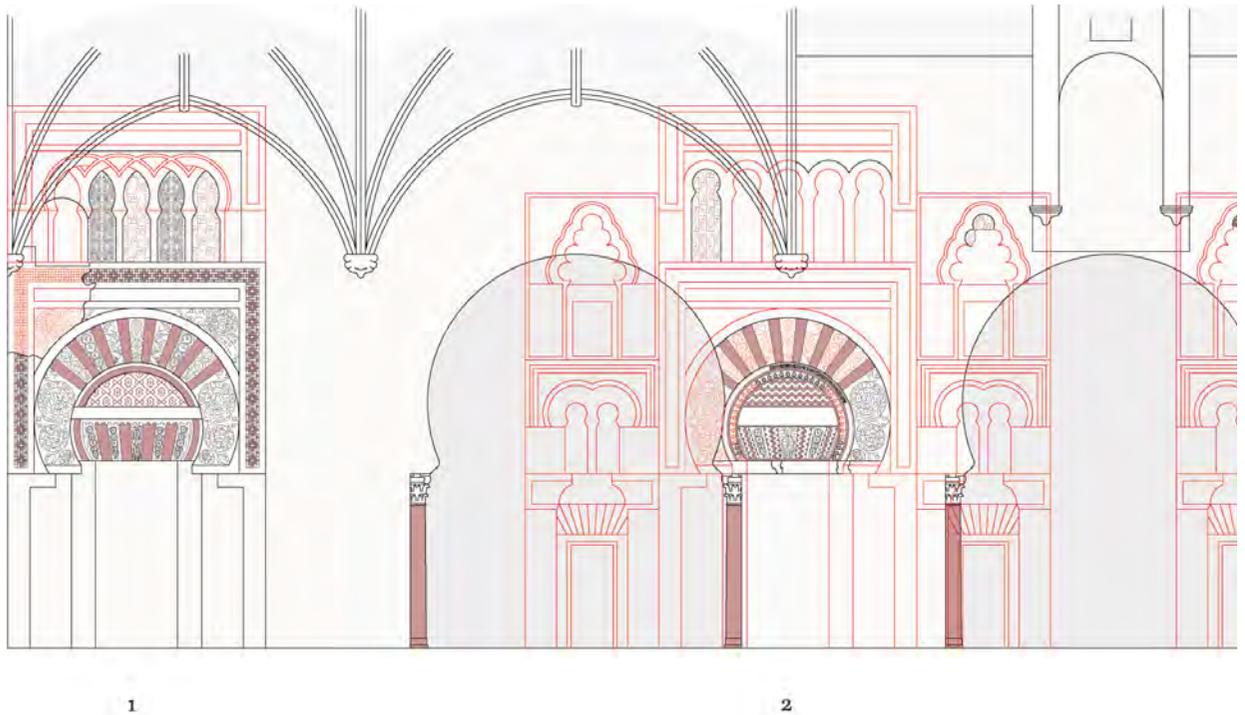


FIGURE 61 Reconstruction of the elevation of al-Ḥakam's original eastern gates
© MATILDE GRIMALDI

the palace. However, there is no evidence to suggest the existence of such a design anywhere but on the Puerta del Chocolate, a special entrance (from the street into the Bayt al-Māl) that could be expected to be more elaborately decorated.¹³¹ Just as al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* was marked as a privileged space through decoration different from the rest of his extension, it is likely that the original exit from the mosque's treasury was also marked as special by means of a different decorative theme, one which evoked the interlacing arches of the *maqṣūra* itself.

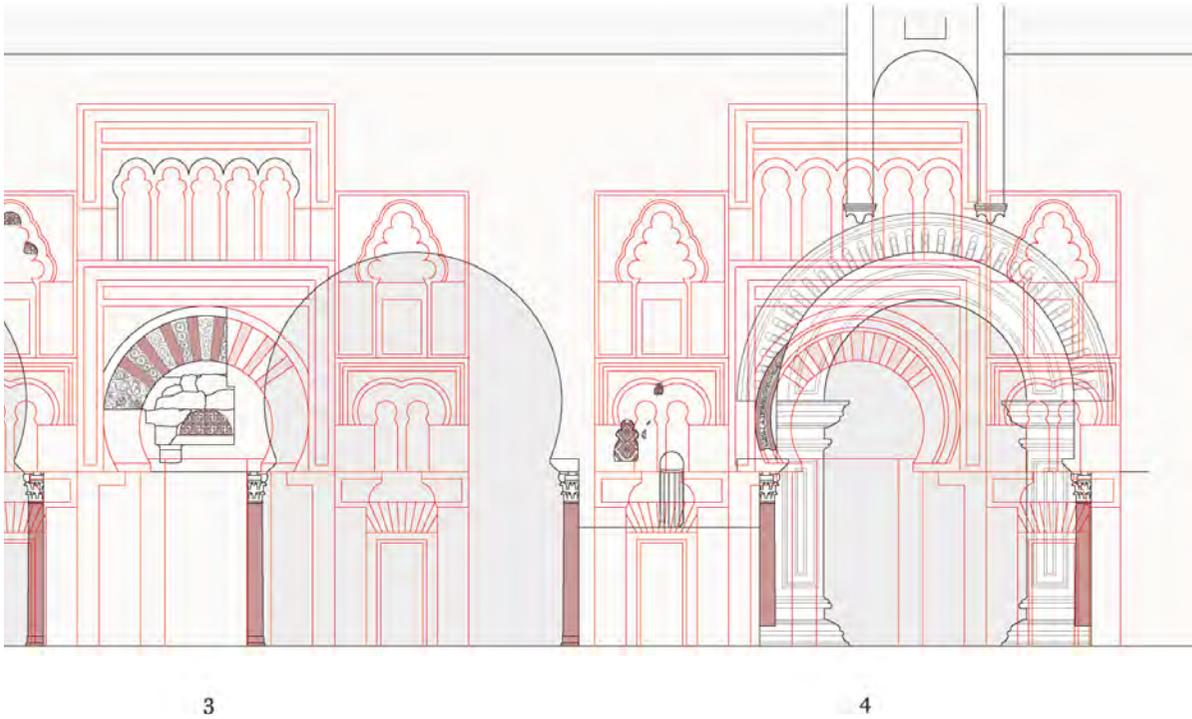
The ghostly evidence of the surviving gates of al-Ḥakam's eastern façade tells a different story (Figures 61–65): that they originally bore alternating friezes of horseshoe and trilobed arches

in exactly the arrangement as seen today on al-Manṣūr's eastern façade; furthermore, that the location of al-Ḥakam's gates corresponds exactly to those of al-Manṣūr's gates; finally, that the alternating horseshoe/trilobed arrangement occurs in the same place on al-Manṣūr's gates as it did on al-Ḥakam's gates. In sum, far from being a stylistic innovation, the decorative system employed on al-Manṣūr's eastern façade seems to have been a copy of al-Ḥakam's eastern façade.

It must be acknowledged that Gates 3 to 7 of the Āmirid façade were restored by Velázquez Bosco between 1908 and 1914.¹³² In line with his restoration approach throughout the Mosque, he conserved as many original elements as had survived, albeit in a deteriorated state, and only executed anew those parts which had totally disappeared. On the eastern façade, the decoration above the gates was in a particularly bad state of preservation, having suffered from interventions in the eighteenth century. Velázquez's original proposal

¹³¹ Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 553: 'The two [gates] which flank [a third gate which was redesigned in the sixteenth century] have been very much restored in modern times, copying the central part of the decoration of the [Puerta] del Chocolate, including the upper zone of small interlacing arches, of which there seem to remain no traces which could indicate their existence.'

¹³² Herrero Romero 2017, 85–92, 98.



3

4

was to substitute copies of the interlacing arcades above the *Puerta del Chocolate*, as he had done on the western façade. However, this was not the scheme that was ultimately executed. Though the documentation does not survive to explain this change of direction, given what we know of Velázquez's approach to preserving the original integrity of the building, it is probable that it was due to discoveries of aspects of the original decoration of al-Manṣūr's eastern façade.¹³³ While the overall scheme clearly relates to that of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade, there are significant differences in the details, in the surviving decoration and in the content of the inscriptions, for example, so it is clear that Velázquez's interventions did not merely produce a reconstructed copy of al-Ḥakam's façade.

Looking more closely at the vestiges of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade that survive inside the mosque, we can reconstruct three gates, in addition to the *Puerta del Chocolate*: their locations are marked on Figure 67 and the elevation of

the façade is reconstructed in Figure 61. The tympanum of the first gate from the south (Gate 2) is well preserved, though its left edge is cut off by the first of the large arches which al-Manṣūr inserted into this wall to connect his extension with the rest of the mosque (Figures 51, 62). Above and to the left of this tympanum, a lone, blind horseshoe arch decorated with a pattern of inlaid brick is the only trace of the original upper frieze of five horseshoe arches which once decorated this gate. The remains of the next gate (Gate 3) occur just to the left of where the third large arch of the transitional arcade opens, and though the voussoirs of its arch retain much of their original carved decoration, this tympanum is otherwise quite damaged (Figure 63). Immediately above it, this section of the wall retains the ghost of this gate's original blind arcade of five trilobed arches (Figure 64). A fourth gate (Gate 4) retains only a small portion of the archivolt of its arch (Figure 65), which contains a Qur'ānic inscription (see section 3, and Appendix 3B). To its left are fragments of decoration in inlaid brick, including a small trilobed arch, whose function it is difficult to determine in

133 Herrero Romero 2017, 89.



FIGURE 62
Detail of the arch of al-Ḥakam's original
Gate 2
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FIGURE 63
Detail of the arch of al-Ḥakam's original
Gate 3
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 64
Traces of blind arcade above al-Ḥakam's
original Gate 3
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 65 Surviving section of al-Ḥakam's original Gate 4
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comparison with the gates on the current eastern façade: it is possible these fragments represent an aspect of the original decoration of all the gates, which has not been preserved by the other extant examples.

A last element occurs between Gates 2 and 3: located in the spandrels of the second arch of the transitional arcade are fragments of two blind, lobed arches. From their lower position relative to the blind horseshoe arcade of Gate 2, and also from the size of the lobes, it is possible to identify these as a gate's lateral decoration, in which a blind arch of five (sometimes more) lobes framed the marble window grilles that flanked the gate. However, it does not seem likely that the two lobed arches seen here indicate the two flanks of one gate, since this would presuppose the existence of a third gate set very closely between Gates 2 and 3: it would be

located where the transitional arch is now, and would therefore not correspond to an opening on the current eastern façade. It is more likely that the left-hand arch represents the right-hand flank of Gate 2, and the right-hand arch the left-hand flank of Gate 3, as reconstructed in Figure 61.

This analysis of the surviving traces of three gates of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade allows us to conclude that the arrangement employed by al-Manṣūr on his façade was copied from that of his predecessor – if we allow that Velázquez Bosco based his restoration on the identification and incorporation of original elements. This decorative imitation would have been obvious to contemporary viewers of the mosque, accustomed to walking past al-Ḥakam's eastern façade until a few years before. It would have been read by them as a clear (and clearly visible) statement by al-Manṣūr of the continuity of his extension with that of al-Ḥakam. What we cannot judge with certainty, due to the lack of extant decoration on Gates 1 and 2 of al-Manṣūr's façade, and the extent of the twentieth-century restorations, is whether the decoration itself – the patterning of the brick inlay or the carved stone – was also imitated. However, as will be examined in section 3, the Qur'ānic inscriptions used on al-Manṣūr's façade did *not* imitate those on al-Ḥakam's, although they conveyed the same overall messages.

The only gate which al-Manṣūr did not copy was the Puerta del Chocolate (Figure 52), and the reason for this is clear: there is no gate in this location on the current eastern façade. The mosque's treasury (and contents) stayed where it was. Nor was there a need to replicate the Sābāṭ exit on the western façade for the sake of symmetry, since this was not originally an exterior gate.

It is also clear from the survival of ornamental elements of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade inside the mosque that, though al-Manṣūr's builders stripped them back, they did not reuse their decorative features as building material, and this is another testament to the amount of money lavished on the 'Amirid extension. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, excavations under the



FIGURE 66
 Vista along the ‘Āmirid
 eastern façade
 © MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

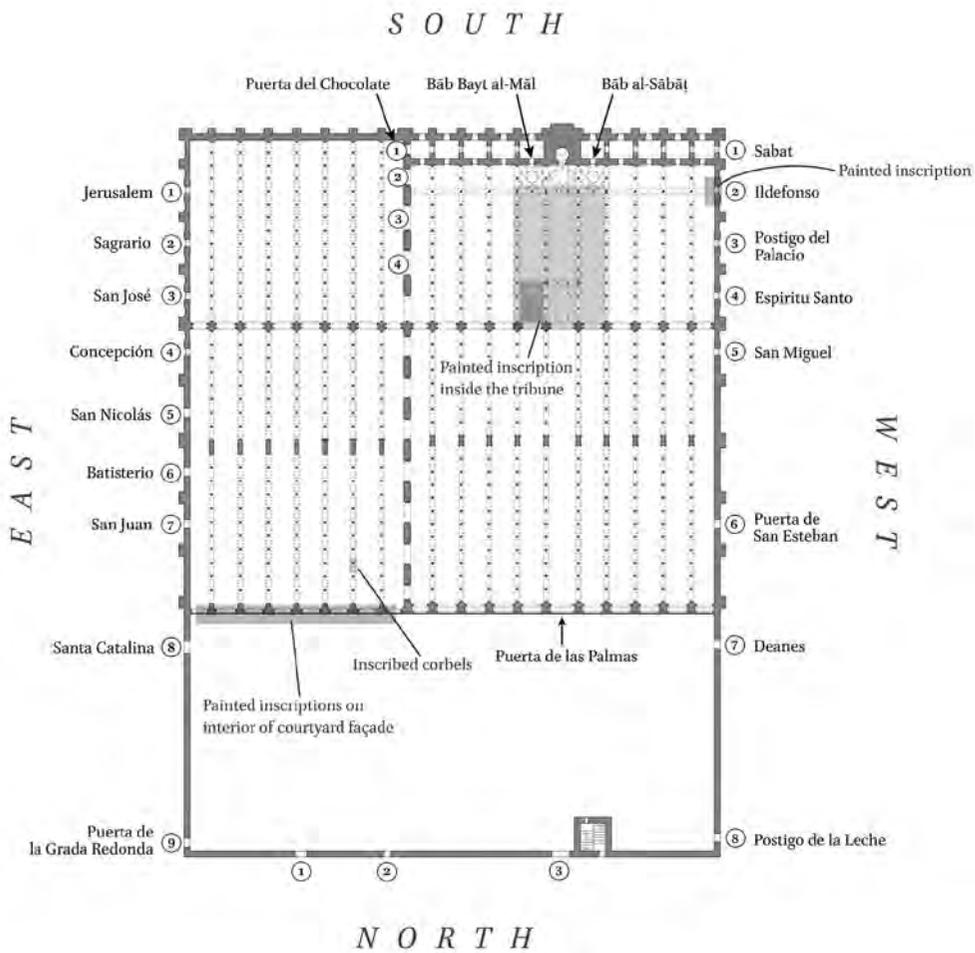


FIGURE 67 Plan showing the names and locations of the mosque's gates and key internal inscriptions
 © MATILDE GRIMALDI

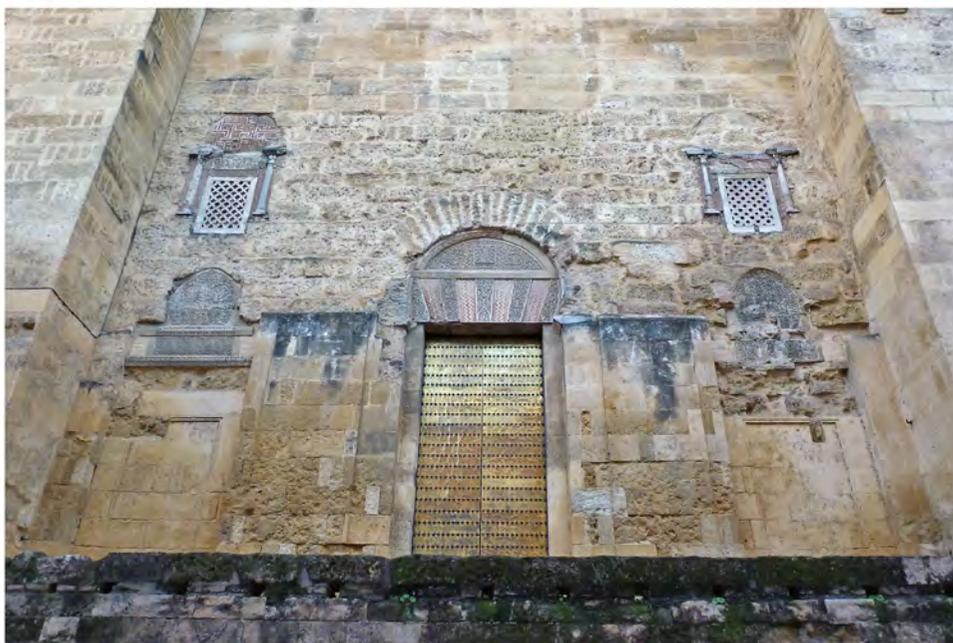


FIGURE 68 Āmirid eastern façade: Gate 1: view and detail of inscription in archivolt
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 69 Āmirid eastern façade: Gate 2: view and detail of inscription in archivolt
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FIGURE 70 'Āmirid eastern façade: Gate 3; view and detail of inscription in archivolt
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FIGURE 71 Āmirid eastern façade: Gate 4: view, detail of inscription in archivolt, detail of inscription in frieze above arch
 © MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 72 Āmirid eastern façade: Gate 5: view, detail of inscription in archivolt which retains traces of red pigment on the surface of the letters, detail of inscription in frieze above arch

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

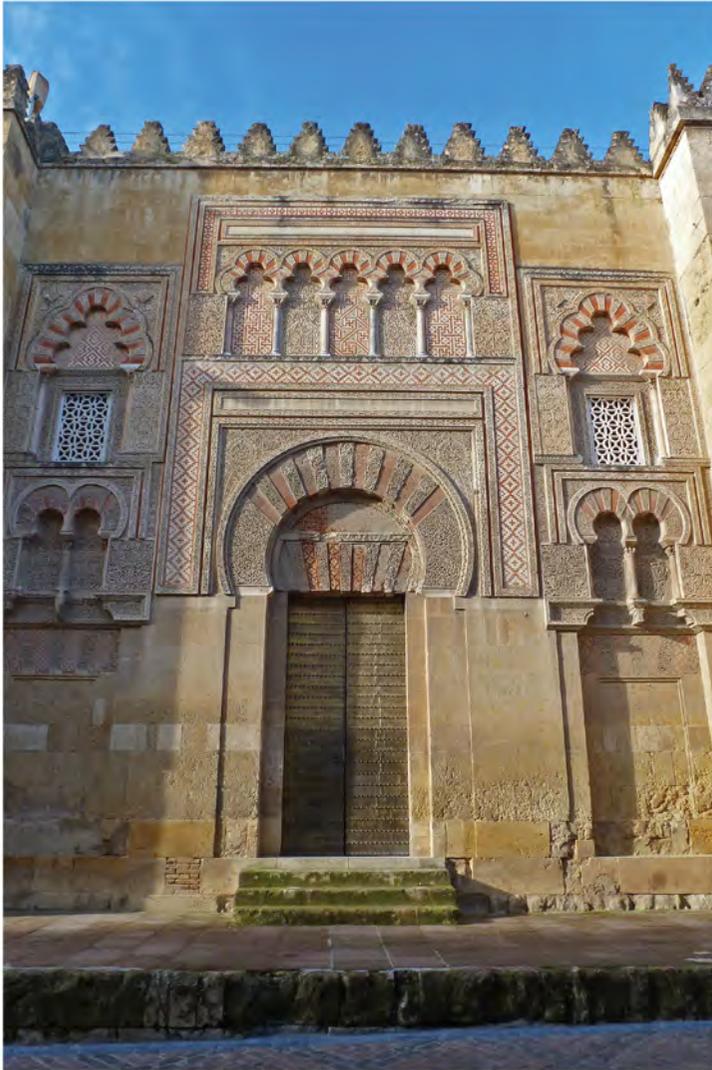


FIGURE 73
ʿAmirid eastern façade: Gate 6: view and
detail of inscription in archivolt
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

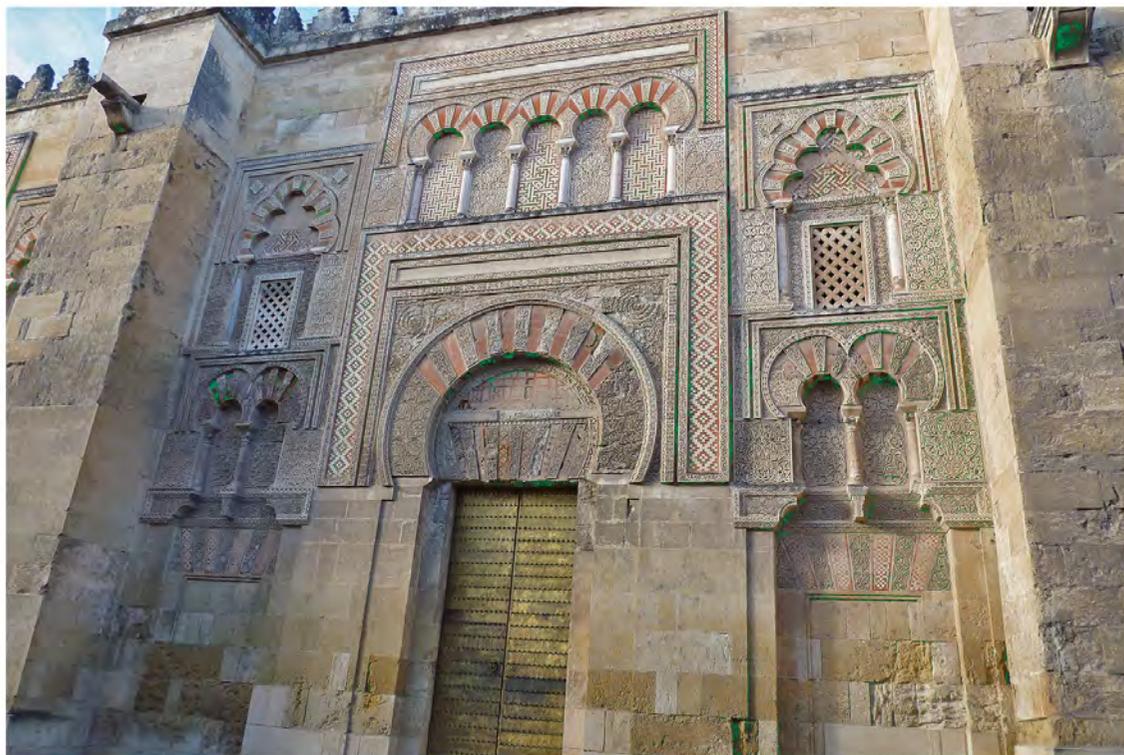


FIGURE 74 Āmirid eastern façade: Gate 7: view and detail of inscription in archivolt
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

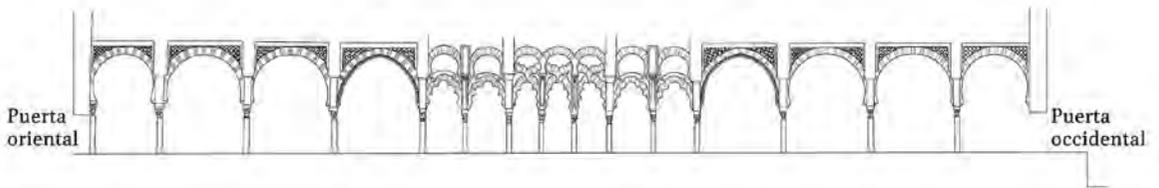


FIGURE 75 Elevation of the transverse arcade along the qibla wall

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pavement of the mosque have shown that some of the masonry from the demolished eastern façade was reused in levelling the ground and laying the foundations for the new construction.¹³⁴

2.1.4 'Āmirid Interventions into al-Ḥakam's Prayer Hall

There is intriguing evidence that al-Manṣūr sponsored interventions in two places in al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*, one of which (2.1.4.1) seems to have been born from technical needs to add greater strengthening to the structures of the qibla zone; the other (2.1.4.2) is a more mysterious space and may have had a more ceremonial function.

2.1.4.1 *Addition of Transverse Arcade along the Qibla Wall*

The first possible intervention is the transverse arcade that runs parallel to the qibla wall two bays from the south (Figures 49, 75), to east and west of the screens of polylobed arches that frame the three central bays of the *maqṣūra*. At its westernmost end, the arcade abuts the external wall of al-Ḥakam's prayer hall right in the middle of the interior lintel of Gate 2 (Puerta de San Ildefonso, see Figure 67), indicating that the transverse arcade was constructed when the perimeter of the prayer hall was already built. Antonio Momplet first pointed out that this feature was a late addition to al-Ḥakam's extension, but he understood it as implying a change of project halfway through the construction of the prayer hall, according with his theory that the three ante-mihrab domes were not part of the original architectural concept of al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*. Once it was decided to add

them, the exterior walls had already been constructed, and the transverse arcade was therefore retrofitted to provide greater strengthening for the heavy weight of the domes.¹³⁵

However, the qibla wall of the *maqṣūra* was probably always intended to be crowned by three domes, mirroring the tripartite palatine structures of Madīnat al-Zahrā' (Figure 42). Moreover, Momplet did not take into account how the transverse arcade abutted the eastern end of the prayer hall, an issue which Concepción Abad has since resolved.¹³⁶ Here the arcade is supported by a column, located in what would have been the centre of Gate 2 of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade (Figure 76). These gates were blocked up when the 'Āmirid extension was constructed, in order to create the regular openings of the longitudinal arcade which runs south to north at the zone of transition between Cordoba IV and the rest of the mosque (2.1.3.2). As Abad points out, this column has to have been placed here after the original gate had been blocked up, thus indicating that the column can be associated with the 'Āmirid extension.¹³⁷ Indeed the diameter of the shaft relates it to the other columns of Cordoba IV, which are slightly slimmer than those of Cordoba III. The column

¹³⁵ Momplet 2012, 240–1.

¹³⁶ Abad 2013, esp. 15–20 on the transverse arcade. I am deeply grateful to Concha Abad for sharing her further thoughts and ideas about this architectonic intervention, which she attributes to the 'Āmirid period, in a personal communication of 22 June 2015.

¹³⁷ Abad 2013, 20. Marfil 2003, 79, noted the 'existencia de una columnilla de la ampliación de Almanzor colocada en el oratorio de al-Hakam II', though it was difficult without an illustration or a thorough knowledge of this part of the building to clearly understand his meaning. Abad's study finally clarifies this.

¹³⁴ Marfil 2003, 78.



FIGURE 76 Transverse arcade, where it abuts the eastern end of prayer hall, supported by an Āmirid column
 © CONCEPCIÓN ABAD AND IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ CAVERO



FIGURE 77 Transverse arcade along the qibla wall: arch to the west of *maqṣūra* naves, with rolls in intradoses
 © CONCEPCIÓN ABAD AND IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ CAVERO

also bears the name *Mas'ūd*, one of the masons' marks which, as discussed above (Figure 50), are particularly characteristic of the mosque's 'Āmirid extension.

Logically, then, the transverse arcade came to rest on this column after it had been added to the building during the construction of Cordoba IV, indicating that the transverse arcade is itself an 'Āmirid addition to the building. Since Gate 2 on the western façade remained in use as an entrance to the building, the architects had no option but to brace the arcade's western end against the gate's interior, with additional support coming from the existing perpendicular arcade of Cordoba III's westernmost nave.

Why build this transverse arcade? As Abad notes, when the original eastern façade of al-Ḥakam's prayer hall was opened up to construct al-Manṣūr's extension, the domes of the *maqṣūra* lost the bracing support of the external wall.¹³⁸ This was, therefore, another ingenious solution by al-Manṣūr's architects (Figure 75). Ruiz Cabrero also notes the presence of another water channel running along the roof above this location.¹³⁹ He admits that the post-Islamic works on the roof make it difficult to determine if this channel had been constructed by al-Ḥakam or later, or even if it continued into the 'Āmirid extension; but if this arcade is an 'Āmirid addition, so too is the water channel. Supporting the channel is thus the reason why the line of this arcade continues west to east across Cordoba IV (see Figure 49), as well as giving extra bracing support.

This arcade incorporates the 'screens' of the three bays of the ante-mihrab domes, which previously would have projected as a kind of portico within the mosque, the arcade is almost invisible – it blends in to the extent that it is not included on several published plans of the mosque.¹⁴⁰

The outer three arches on either end are simple open horseshoes, high, wide and lightened by the unusual solution that their spandrels are pierced. As Momplet notes, the structural support is provided by the arch itself, so the spandrels here are not doing anything.¹⁴¹ The spandrel designs are simple: at the far eastern end they consist of rows of eight-lobed rosettes, resembling sliced oranges (Figure 76). The idea for piercing the decoration may have come from the 'screens' in front of the Bāb al-Sābāṭ and Bāb Bayt al-Māl, where the pair of five-lobed arches at the lower level each have a single polylobed shape pierced in their spandrels. The arcade that continues on either side of these screens picks up on this idea but elaborates it. At the same time, al-Manṣūr's builders were carving window grilles in openwork, so this innovative notion could have transferred from there.

The arches that directly flank the three central naves of the *maqṣūra* are more decorative, and again of an unusual type (Figure 77). Only the western arch survives, though part of the eastern arch is visible, embedded into the later projecting wall of the Capilla del Cardenal Salazar. They are pointed, and thus among the earliest examples of the use of the pointed arch in al-Andalus.¹⁴² As mentioned above (2.1.1.3), pointed arches may have been used by al-Manṣūr's architects in Cordoba IV, to adapt the intercolumniations of the new extension to those of the existing structure (Figure 56). Perhaps this gave them the idea to monumentalise this new feature, to develop a special architectonic device that was appropriate to their privileged location, flanking the royal *maqṣūra* in front of the qibla wall. These two arches also feature more complex decoration in their openwork spandrels than the flanking arches, and they are rendered yet more

¹³⁸ Concha Abad, personal communication (22 June 2015).

¹³⁹ Ruiz Cabrero 1990, 71–72.

¹⁴⁰ As noted by Momplet 2012, 241–2. Compare, for example, Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], fig. 274: the pointed arches with rolls on their intradoses are marked, but not the arcade that continues to east and west.

¹⁴¹ Momplet 2012, 252.

¹⁴² Momplet 2012, 251: 'No conocemos ejemplos anteriores en la arquitectura omeya de al-Andalus y son muy escasos posteriormente'. See also Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 488: 'El arco agudo hizo su aparición ... en esta ampliación'. Torres Balbás gives a range of earlier Umayyad and Abbasid examples of the pointed arch which might have provided the model for Cordoba.

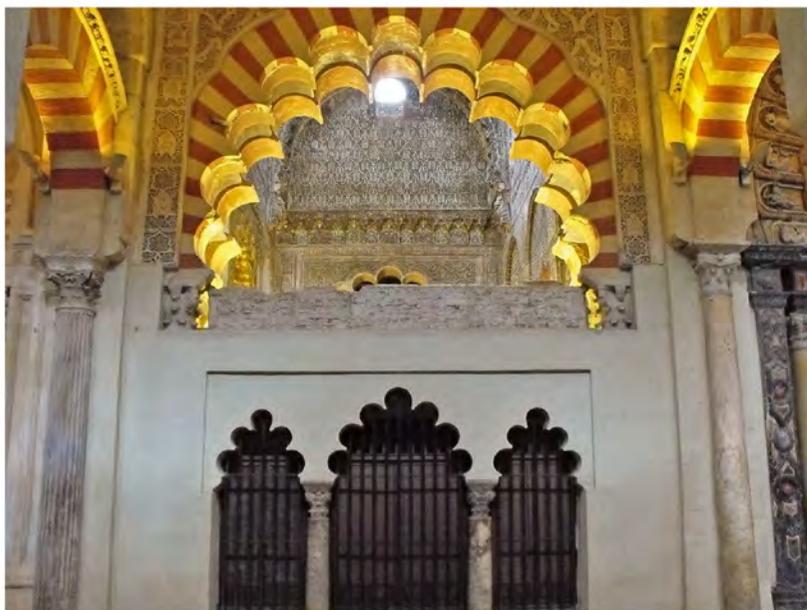


FIGURE 78
Āmirid tribune: 11-lobed arch at northern end, showing crypt of fourteenth-century Capilla Real beneath

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FIGURE 79
Āmirid tribune: 11-lobed arch at southern end. The western double-capital is just visible at the bottom of the photo.

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decorative by another unusual feature, which also seems to have been used here for the first time:¹⁴³ their intradoses are filled with rolls, twenty-two on either side of the arch, a purely decorative device added in plaster. At the outer surface of the arch, the profile of these rolls are painted in red pigment; a central vein is also painted along the inner length of each intrados, evoking the shallow recess between double arches that we see elsewhere in the Mosque (Figure 78, for example). This painted decoration is not original but probably follows the original paintwork. These rolls seem to be monumental versions of the more decorative modillions added above the capitals throughout Cordoba IV (2.1.2.2). As such, this monumentalised combination of two experimental elements from Cordoba IV – the pointed arch and increasingly elaborate modillions – draws a visible connection between the two spaces: the new ‘Āmirid prayer hall, and al-Manṣūr’s intervention in the *maqṣūra*. As the sources tell us, the three central naves of the *maqṣūra* were enclosed by a wooden screen (indicated on Figure 49), and as a result the arches with rolls in their intradoses would have been particularly visible, flanking the most ‘privileged’ space on either side of the *maqṣūra*.

Finally, there is evidence of further decoration in this area, or at least the implication of the transverse arcade into the *maqṣūra*’s epigraphic programme (discussed in detail below; see also Appendices 3A and 3B). As Calvo notes, the far western end of this arcade bears a painted inscription, visible on entering the mosque through Gate 2 of the western façade. Containing the Qur’ānic passage 10:106–7, this verse reaffirms the theme of predestination which had been introduced in the inscriptions outside the Mosque.¹⁴⁴ If the transverse arcade is an ‘Āmirid addition, this

painted inscription is also, and introduces the way in which al-Manṣūr’s choice of Qur’ānic inscriptions to adorn his additions to the mosque recapitulated and emphasised the existing epigraphic programme devised for al-Ḥakam’s extension. The medium of painting also calls to mind the inscriptions that were painted on the interior wall of al-Manṣūr’s new courtyard façade (2.1.1.2), whose content would also no doubt have underscored the building’s existing messages. These will be discussed in detail in section 3 below.

2.1.4.2 *An ‘Āmirid Tribune in the Maqṣūra?*

In their detailed study of the Capilla Real, located in the bay to the east of the Capilla de Villaviciosa, Concepción Abad Castro and Ignacio González Caverro have noted an interesting series of features which appear to antedate any Christian interventions in this space (Figures 49, 80–81).¹⁴⁵ As discussed above, the bays now occupied by the Capilla Real, Capilla de Villaviciosa and the bay to the west, formed a tripartite space that functioned as an internal façade and entrance vestibule into the *maqṣūra* constructed by al-Ḥakam; the wooden *maqṣūra* screen would have run along the front of these bays, and its door was probably located under the elaborate central arch. The eastern and western bays were introduced by eleven-lobed double arches that rested on plain stone capitals like those used throughout al-Ḥakam’s extension. Ruiz Souza has posited that the bays were also enclosed on their southern sides, by screens of interlaced arches matching those opposite them at the far south of the naves, in front of the Bāb al-Sābāṭ and Bāb Bayt al-Māl.¹⁴⁶ However, according to Abad, it is unlikely there were originally closing arches on the southern side of these bays, as the column of the perpendicular arcade

143 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 490: ‘No conocemos ejemplo anterior’. See also Momplet 2012, 252, who draws a connection with the ‘pillowed’ arch profile seen in Fatimid architecture, such as the Bāb al-Futūḥ in Cairo, constructed 1087 (see Bloom 2007a, 121–8), where it is also combined with a pointed arch.

144 Calvo 2000, 22–3; 2010, 161, citing Brisch 1959, esp. 184–5.

145 Abad and González 2018 (though published in 2020). I am extremely grateful to both authors for discussing with me their thoughts on this space, as well as sharing the unpublished text of their article at various stages of preparation. The ensuing discussion is heavily based on their findings, as I have not yet had the opportunity to visit this space in person.

146 Ruiz Souza 2001b, 436–7.

delimiting the eastern side of the *maqṣūra* gives no indication that it supported an additional arch at this point.¹⁴⁷ She considers that both eastern and western bays would originally have been open to the *maqṣūra*, leaving the central domed space projecting into the central nave.¹⁴⁸

All agree, however, that the eleven-lobed arch that now closes the southern end of the eastern bay (Figure 79) was added later, in imitation of the arch on its northern side. But while Ruiz Souza attributes this addition to Christian interventions in the fourteenth century, Abad and González associate this and other features with an 'Āmirid transformation of this space.¹⁴⁹ This southern arch has no central vein, as we normally see in the larger arches inside the mosque (including that other eleven-lobed arch added by al-Manṣūr, at the intersection of Cordoba IV and Cordoba I: 2.1.3.2, Figure 60). This is a single arch of double-width, and presumably originally its voussoirs were painted to match those on the northern side, just as the arcades of Cordoba IV have painted voussoirs. The capitals that support this arch are carved, composite capitals, in the style known from Andalusī palatine structures, and thus call particular attention to this space because elsewhere in Cordoba III and IV the capitals employed are plain. Ruiz Souza attributes this to spolia from Madīnat al-Zahrā' introduced into the Capilla Real in the fourteenth century, as are the miniature capitals and columns supporting the arches of the chapel's crypt at its northern and southern elevations (Figure 78).

However, the capitals employed here are carved as perfectly integrated double capitals, which, as discussed in Chapter 4, were probably an 'Āmirid innovation (Figures 39–40). The only other example of such double-capitals is that which bears the

signatures of its three carvers, now in the Cordoba Archaeological Museum and discussed by Juan Souto (Figures 37–38).¹⁵⁰ As Abad has noted, the perpendicular arcades of the *maqṣūra*'s three naves have twinned columns at the point where they intersect with the façades of the mihrab, Bāb al-Sābāṭ and Bāb Bayt al-Māl (Figure 49), providing extra structural support for the domes above. These twinned columns are crowned by twinned capitals, which have been made 'double' by the insertion of a vertical element, but the capitals are plain, like the other capitals of al-Hakam's extension.¹⁵¹ Stylistically the two capitals here match each other, and seem to have been carved as a matching pair. While the interlacing guilloche bands along the abacus between the volutes are plaster additions, possibly from the fourteenth-century refurbishment of the chapel,¹⁵² both capitals make much use of the vertical 'chain link' motif that is also employed on the double-capital in the Cordoba Museum. That capital is too fragmentary to see if other motifs are shared with the mosque capitals. No egg-and-dart motif is used in the mosque capitals, but there is a similar treatment to the spikiness of the leaves on the bodies of all three. It thus seems that the two double-capitals used in this space were created specifically for it by al-Manṣūr's architects, or brought as an existing pair from another 'Āmirid monument (presumably at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira). The double-width arch that rises above was thus adapted to the double-capitals beneath.

Most significant, however, is Abad and González's observation that the bases of the columns do not reach the same groundlevel as the pavement of al-Ḥakam's extension, but fly in the air 70 cm above it (Figure 80).¹⁵³ This confirms the existence of another groundlevel at this elevated height,

147 Concha Abad, personal communication (22 June 2015): 'De hecho la columna de la fila longitudinal que discurría en el límite oriental del espacio se conserva y no presenta ningún elemento que haga pensar en la existencia de un arco transversal'.

148 Abad and González 2018, Illustrations 1 and 2.

149 Abad and González 2018, 233; Ruiz Souza 2001b, 437, n. 11; Ruiz Souza 2006, 19.

150 Souto 2007, §2.8, pp. 112–3, 125 (inscription no. 8).

151 Concha Abad, personal communication (22 June 2015); Abad and González 2018, 235.

152 Abad and González 2018, 239; personal communication from Antonio Vallejo (6 September 2020).

153 Abad and González 2018, 233–4 (Image 3, Illustration 3). This is only visible from inside the crypt of the Capilla Real.

approximately three steps up from the ground-level of the *maqṣūra*. This indicates, then, a space with a slightly higher elevation in relation to the rest of the mosque, monumentalised by the polylobed arches that delimit it at north and south sides; to its west was the screen of intersecting polylobed arches of the domed central bay, and to the east perhaps it was open to the mosque, though this bay was also enclosed at north and east by the wooden screen of the *maqṣūra* (see reconstruction in Figure 49). Perhaps the steps up to the elevated platform opened into the mosque at the bay's southern side, facing towards the qibla and connecting this space with the *maqṣūra*. The fact that the double capitals are decorated, in contrast to the plain capitals used elsewhere, gives a sense of greater privilege to this space. There may also be evidence of another painted inscription at high level: during restoration work on the exterior of the Capilla de Villaviciosa dome in the 1990s, a painted inscription was found around the embrasure of the northern-most window on the western side of the Capilla Real, 'written in floriated Kufic, in letters of a monumental character, which correspond to the repetition of the word "al-mulk" ("sovereignty")'.¹⁵⁴ Because the transformations of the Capilla Real space have traditionally been considered to date from the fourteenth century at the earliest, Pedro Marfil interpreted this inscription as preserving the traces of an *external* decorative programme around the central dome, dating from the period of al-Ḥakam II: they represented the 'few preserved remains of what must have been a frieze that crowned the exterior of the caliphal lantern'.¹⁵⁵ However, the exterior decoration of the Capilla de Villaviciosa dome support is also the *internal* decoration of the space now occupied by the Capilla Real. Could this painted frieze, repeating the phrase *al-mulk* in floriated Kufic around the upper walls, have related to the transformation

of this space by al-Manṣūr? Such a phrase could equally exalt God and highlight the royal associations of the space beneath.

Why would al-Manṣūr have presided over the transformation of the *maqṣūra*'s northeastern bay in this highly interventive manner? There is no evidence that the bay to the west was monumentalised in a similar manner, because all traces of the mosque's tenth-century structure were erased by the construction of the Gothic cathedral. Abad and González consider the possible function of this space (Figures 80–81). One possibility they consider is an early example of a *dikka*, the elevated 'respondents' platform, used by a *muballigh* for Qur'ānic recitations, chants and calls to prayer inside the mosque (*iqāma*).¹⁵⁶ Given the vast size of the mosque after the completion of Cordoba IV, such a feature might have become necessary to relay the words of the imam or the stages of the prayer to the assembled congregation. However, if this were a *dikka*, it seems to be placed too deep in the mosque, in a location where the *muballigh*'s calls would not be effectively heard by congregants closer to the courtyard end of the prayer hall. Extant *dikkas* tend to be located midway between the mihrab and the mosque's courtyard, on the same axis as the qibla; they are also generally raised on columns two to three metres high, and are thus much more elevated than the platform at Cordoba, allowing the voice of the *muballigh* to carry further. Though George Michell notes that 'the *dikka* is a very early innovation and was already in widespread use by the eighth century, increase in congregation size having decreed its invention',¹⁵⁷ all extant *dikkas* are much later in

154 Marfil 1998, 252–3. He provides no illustration of this inscription, but there is a very small image in Fernández-Puertas 2009, 196, plate 100.

155 Marfil 1998, 253.

156 Abad and González 2018, 244–5. There is little available literature on the architectural feature of the *dikka*, which has not been much studied. See: 'Dikka', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; Behrens-Abouseif 1989, 54; Dickie 2011, 37.

157 Apud Dickie 2011, 37. He gives no reference but he is probably thinking of the same source as mentioned in 'Masjid', D.2.e: 'The platform or *Dakka*', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, where Maslama, Mu'āwiya's governor in Egypt, is attributed with the invention of platforms (*manābir*) for the call to prayer. Pedersen

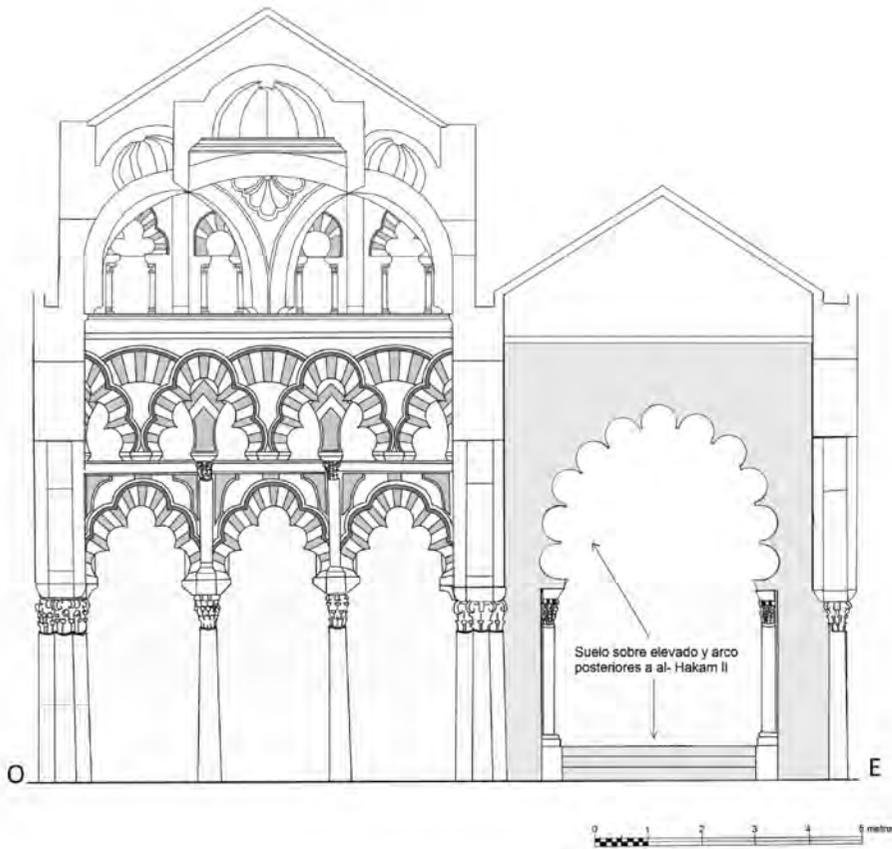


FIGURE 80 Āmirid tribune: reconstructed elevation
© Concepción Abad and Ignacio González Cavero

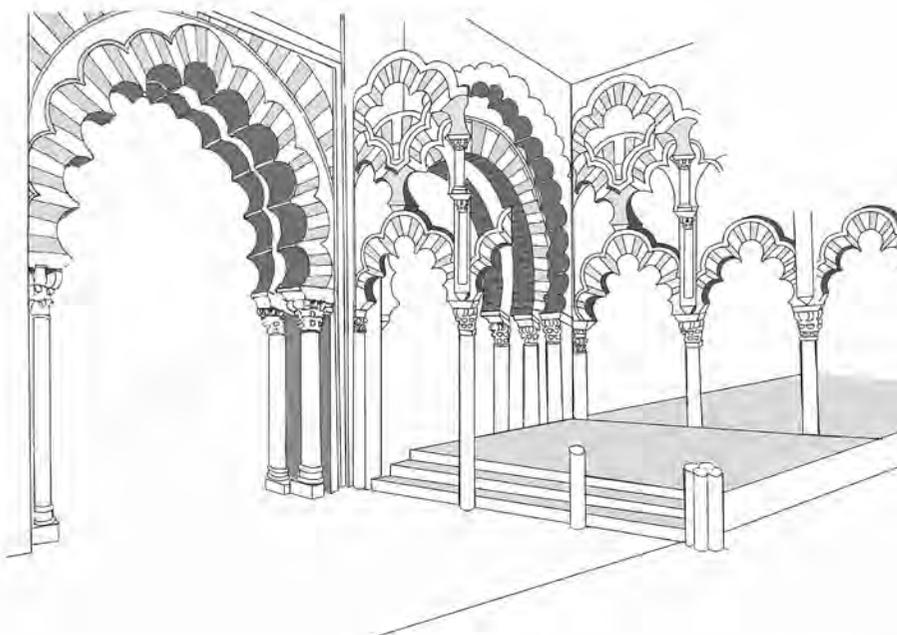


FIGURE 81 Āmirid tribune: reconstructed interior view
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date. They are seen especially in Mamluk and Ottoman mosques, and in Cairo the earliest dated examples were erected in the fifteenth century; the *dikka* at the al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem was built with reused Crusader capitals, and thus appears to date from the twelfth century at the earliest.¹⁵⁸ In the absence of apparent precedents for such a feature, it is potentially anachronistic to associate this intervention with the architectural feature of the *dikka al-muballigh*. In the same way, this only slightly elevated platform located so deep in the mosque and not on the qibla axis would not have been particularly effective for relaying the *iqāma* or stages of the prayer.

However, there are many other activities for which such a space might have been used, indeed it may well have been multipurpose, for special activities and ceremonies. Recitations of the Qurʾān may well have happened here, as well as discussions of Qurʾānic interpretation (*tafsīr*) and *hadith*. An Arabic inscription found in the Capilla de Villaviciosa in 1766 was translated as indicating that ‘this is the room where our learned doctors dispute our law’.¹⁵⁹ It is entirely plausible that this liminal zone, connecting the *maqṣūra* with the public areas of the mosque, was used to dispense justice, one of the regular activities that took place inside the mosque. As Lévi-Provençal has discussed, there was no special building in Cordoba that the *qāḍī* used for his audiences, which took place in an annex (‘une dépendance’)

of the Great Mosque or in the prayer hall itself, if not in the judge’s own home.¹⁶⁰ The paraphernalia of justice did not require much space: the *qāḍī* sat, legs folded or leaning on cushions, surrounded by councillors and his clerk (*kātib*). The two parties stood before him, while the other litigants waited their turn to be called by an usher (*ḥājib*). They could be assisted by advocates (*khasm* or *wakīl*), who presented their defence. The judge dealt with complaints of all sorts – marriages, repudiations, alms donations, certificates of bankruptcy; Calvo notes that acts of conversion to Islam or repentance for or condemnation of apostasy also took place before him.¹⁶¹ The chief *qāḍī* could also summon the *majlis al-shūra*, or council of *fuqahāʾ*. Perhaps this is what the inscription found in 1766 was referring to. Abad and González also suggest it could have been used as a space for teaching *fiqh*, and that by creating a dedicated space for this in such a privileged location in the mosque, al-Manṣūr was courting the favour of the *fuqahāʾ*, whose support he needed to legitimise his regime.¹⁶²

Other public acts took place in the mosque, including the swearing in of public officials and all types of legal oaths, which Maliki jurisprudence recommended to be taken on foot and next to the minbar.¹⁶³ However, with the construction of al-Ḥakam’s *maqṣūra*, the minbar was largely inaccessible to the Cordoban populace, not just because during the week it was stored in a chamber next to the mihrab and only brought forward for the *khuṭba* on Fridays. The public *bayʿa* (*bayʿat al-ʿamma*) to Hishām as al-Ḥakam’s heir apparent took place next to the (new) minbar – which, as Fierro argues, may have been commissioned specifically to be used on this occasion – and this may well have been one of the few instances on which members of the public were allowed into the new *maqṣūra*; this would have underlined the

(the author of this part of the article) notes that ‘this story ... is not at all reliable’.

158 Nees 2015, 87, 141–2; Folda 1995, 441–456, pls. 10.13a–10.13w.

159 Abad and González 2018, 245, referring to Eugenio de Llaguno y Amírola and Juan Agustín Ceán-Bermúdez, *Noticias de los arquitectos y arquitectura de España desde su restauración* (Madrid, 1829), vol. 11, pp. 188–9: ‘Esta es la sala donde los santos doctores disputan nuestra ley. Alabado sea Dios todopoderoso’. As they note, it is possible that this is the space referred to by Jules Gailhabaud, *Monuments anciens et modernes* (Paris, 1850), vol. III, n.p., who mentions ‘a particular construction was found where questions relating to the Qurʾān were discussed’.

160 HEM III:126–136.

161 Calvo 2010a, 178.

162 Abad and González 2018, 248–9.

163 Calvo 2008, 99; Calvo 2010a, 177.

specialness of the occasion.¹⁶⁴ Could al-Manṣūr have conceived of a subsidiary, quasi-public space, near enough to the minbar, where such activities could have taken place? Could the rituals associated with the Qurʾān of ʿUthmān and the weekly viewing of the relics have taken place in this new space?¹⁶⁵

Decrees, such as those condemning the work of Ibn Masarra or other heterodoxies, could have been proclaimed from here as well as from the mosque's external gates, as could important declarations, such as the regular reports of al-Manṣūr's victories in campaigns against the Christians and the Fatimids. Indeed, this elevated area could have provided a more public space for the rituals surrounding the declaration of jihad, which required religious authority and was thus undertaken within the physical framework of the congregational mosque. In particular, the new space could have provided a stage for the ritual of knotting the military banners to their lances (*ʿaqd al-abwiya*) before the Umayyad army set off on campaign.¹⁶⁶ This 'religious ceremony' was an important part of initiating the ceremonial of war: it took place in the Cordoba Mosque on the Friday before the date of the army's departure, presided over by a high member of the caliphal administration – as Bariani notes, it was ʿAbd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr himself during his *hijāba*, and it is not unlikely that al-Manṣūr would likewise have presided over this ritual in person. While the banners were being tied to their lances, the mosque's imams recited the sura of Victory (Sūrat al-Faṭḥ, Qurʾān 48), which contains numerous passages relating to the conduct of jihad.¹⁶⁷ The final verse was

recited at the same moment that knotting the banners was concluded. These banners were the symbols of power which the army carried with them into battle, and this ceremony placed the banners and by extension the entire army and its leaders under divine protection. The sources do not tell us but perhaps the banners were stored in the mosque's treasury when not in use, to invest them with yet more *baraka*.¹⁶⁸ Three banners are named in al-Rāzī's *Annals*: *al-ʿuqda*, *al-ʿalam* and *al-shaṭranj*; the last apparently bore a chequered design, and seems to have been the most important ensign during al-Ḥakam's reign.¹⁶⁹ These symbols of the Umayyad army were also significant for the ʿĀmirid *ḥājibs*' role as leaders of jihad on the caliph's behalf: we will return in Chapter 8 to the importance of the military banners and their designs, in particular relation to the visual imagery of ʿĀmirid art.

This elevated space, or tribune, at the heart of the mosque could thus have been constructed as a site of ceremonial, a stage for activities relating to the prosecution of justice, religious orthodoxy and jihad. Its location was offset in relation to the mosque's axial nave, so it did not interrupt the visual axis of the Umayyad mosque or the possible processional route in and out of the *maqṣūra*. The western side of the *maqṣūra* was orientated towards the Umayyad *qaṣr*, and during the reign of al-Ḥakam, following earlier tradition, the caliph was accustomed to sit in the bay in front of the Bāb al-Sābāṭ, or in the room just inside the door, to hold audiences after the congregational prayer.¹⁷⁰ In contrast, the tribune was orientated towards the east, in the direction of al-Manṣūr's mosque extension and, beyond, his own palatine city,

164 Calvo 2008, 99; Fierro 2007.

165 For al-Idrīsī's description of the weekly ceremonial viewing of the Qurʾān of ʿUthmān, see Calvo 2008, 98. See also Bennisson 2007b.

166 García Gomez 1967, esp. 168–9; *HEM* III:90; Lévi-Provençal 1932, 142; Bariani 2003, 211, following Ibn Ḥayyān 1965, 25–6/48–9; *Bayān* III:5 [translation, 13], and verses from Ibn Darrāj, cited in *Bayān* III:9 and *Anales*, §9 (pp. 48–50).

167 It is intriguing that apparently no verses from Sūrat al-Faṭḥ were selected to be inscribed on the walls of

the mosque as part of its epigraphic programme (see Appendices 3A and 3B).

168 *HEM* III:90, and Lévi-Provençal 1932, 142, says that at the end of the campaign, these 'insignia of command were hung again on the walls of the sanctuary'.

169 García Gomez 1967, 168–9.

170 Abad 2009, 14: on one occasion, al-Ḥakam is said to have sat here with Ghālib discussing the Christian frontier.

al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. This was also the direction in which the Umayyad armies departed. As we have noted, architectural features, such as the painted voussoirs and the double-capitals, relate this space with al-Manṣūr's other architectural projects. Was this space used by al-Manṣūr for his own audiences after Friday prayers? It is unlikely that he would have sat here during the prayers, which would have been an explicit and visible statement that he was placing himself at an elevated level *vis-à-vis* the caliph (whether or not Hishām was physically present in the mosque) and the chief *qāḍī*, who led the prayers.¹⁷¹ What we have seen of al-Manṣūr's delicate balancing act in terms of his relations with the *'ulamā'* makes such a statement highly improbable. Another or additional possibility is that this space was occupied by Hishām II on the rare occasions when he visited the mosque, such as at the end of the *waḥsha*.¹⁷² Given the pains taken to hide Hishām and his condition from the Umayyad court and Cordoban people, the space could have been configured with textile hangings to enclose the person of the caliph and hide him from the congregation.

This section has discussed in detail for the first time the 'Āmirid extension to the Cordoba Mosque. It has surveyed what we know of the labour force used in building the mosque and creating its physical elements; the new infrastructure that was created to support the expanded mosque, in the form of a new cistern and ablutions pavilion, and the possible restoration of the two remaining caliphal ablutions pavilions; the ingenious engineering solutions found to level the terrain on which the mosque was constructed, and the architectural solutions used within the mosque to solve disparities caused by building over or connecting to existing structures; the subtle but increased

level of decorative devices within Cordoba IV; the features that were imitated from Cordoba III, in particular in the arrangement of the gates on the eastern façade, that underlined the relationship of continuity from the caliphal into the 'Āmirid mosque; and the probability of 'Āmirid interventions in al-Ḥakam II's *maqṣūra*, for reasons of structural necessity as well as to provide a stage for a range of ceremonial activities that took place inside the mosque, including the prosecution of justice, the teaching of religious law, and the preparation for *jihād*. All these elements combine into an extremely significant building which has not been recognised as such. We now turn to discuss another significant and understudied aspect of the Cordoba Mosque, which is its epigraphic programme.

3 Qur'ānic Inscriptions at the Great Mosque of Cordoba

See the plan indicating the location of the gates in Figure 67. The Qur'ānic inscriptions in the Cordoba Mosque and on its external gates are detailed in Appendices 3A and 3B.

As discussed, no foundation or commemorative inscription survives from al-Manṣūr's extension to the Cordoba mosque. However, an important set of inscriptions *do* survive, whose potential significance has only recently begun to be considered.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ *HEM* III:135.

¹⁷² 'After having conducted the prayer in the congregational mosque in Cordoba, contrary to his custom of not attending the Friday prayers in public, [al-Mu'ayyad] directed his horse towards al-Zāhira with his mother Ṣubḥ': *Dhikr Bilād* 1:156–7 [11:196].

¹⁷³ I undertook this study of the eastern façade inscriptions as part of my doctoral research, submitted in 2002, at which point I was indebted to Susana Calvo's 2000 study of the epigraphic programme in al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*. Since then she has published two further studies dedicated to this theme: Calvo 2008, which largely recapitulates her earlier discussion of the inscriptions, but makes suggestions about the symbolism of the *maqṣūra*'s decoration; and Calvo 2010a, which deals with the epigraphic programme on the mosque's external gates, including the gates added to the east and west of the mosque by al-Ḥakam II, and the 'Āmirid gates on the eastern façade. I have integrated the salient points of her more recent articles into my argument,

These are the Qur'ānic inscriptions that form an essential element of the exterior decoration of the seven gates on the mosque's eastern façade. Since these inscriptions contain no 'historical' information, they have suffered the same fate as many purely religious monumental inscriptions all over the Islamic world, which is to be 'dismissed as mere banalities'.¹⁷⁴ In general, Qur'ānic verses have only been identified if they form part of an historical inscription; otherwise the use of religious writing on buildings has been considered no more than decoration, what Grabar styles 'the faithful handmaiden of architecture', or Ettinghausen 'symbolic affirmation before God of the faith'.¹⁷⁵ However, more recent studies have begun to appreciate that 'any text presupposes a readership', that the selection of certain Qur'ānic passages for a decorative programme is never mere accident, but instead part of 'the discourse of architecture', in which iconographic and epigraphic imagery illuminate each other, and 'constitute ... an address to multiple audiences'.¹⁷⁶ Thus, Oleg Grabar's reading

of the anti-Christian statements in the mosaic inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock,¹⁷⁷ Irene Bierman's study of the 'Fatimid public text',¹⁷⁸ and Finbarr B. Flood's discussion of the lost epigraphy of the Damascus Mosque as a complement to its iconography,¹⁷⁹ have led the way in suggesting how political or religious statements were encoded in the choice of Qur'ānic inscriptions by the patrons of such monuments, how these statements may have been read by the contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim populations, and how reading the inscriptions can lead to a better understanding of a building's decorative programme.

This consideration of the significance of religious epigraphy was first applied to the Cordoba Mosque by Nuha Khoury, and more recently by Susana Calvo Capilla. Both scholars largely focus on the inscriptions of al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* and mihrab, though Calvo has also considered the external façade inscriptions of both al-Ḥakam's and al-Manṣūr's extensions.¹⁸⁰ As with the Damascus Mosque, the emphases in the Cordoba inscriptions are on the spiritual obligations of all Muslims that will lead to the rewards of Paradise, such as prayer and faith in God, while rejecting Christian trinitarianism and appealing to other 'Peoples of the Book' to turn to Islam. Khoury's main conclusions are political: the inscriptions on the two impostes of the mihrab's arch stress the truth (*ḥaqq*) and divine guidance (*hudā*) of Islam,

and cross-referenced my own readings of the façade inscriptions with hers (see Appendices 3A and 3B).

174 Blair 1998, 19. Her article contains an interesting summary of the historiography on this issue. Van Berchem established the model for the compiling Islamic epigraphy, with the publication in 1894 of the first volume of the *Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum*, and since then the trend to record only those texts which 'furnish some historical data' has been persistent. There is no volume of the *Corpus* on al-Andalus; that gap was partly filled in 1931 by Lévi-Provençal's *Inscriptions*, which nevertheless closely followed the Van Berchem model of a chronological ordering within geographic divisions. The work of the late Juan Souto aimed to compile the definitive corpus of Andalusī inscriptions, though again his work was concerned solely with historical inscriptions.

175 Grabar 1987, 126; Ettinghausen 1974, 307.

176 Flood 2001, 213. Moreover, the political or propagandistic use of Qur'ānic passages in monumental inscriptions of the Umayyad period has been taken as evidence for the early codification of the text of the Qur'ān. On the Dome of the Rock, for example, see Whelan 1998, 10, who says 'there is abundant evidence from the Umayyad period that [the Qur'ān] was already sufficiently familiar to the community at large to provide easily recognisable claims to political

legitimation and for religious propaganda'. Milwright 2016, 228–9, summarises the arguments for this.

177 Grabar 1959, 33–62; and idem. 1987, Chapter 3, 'The Symbolic Appropriation of the Land'.

178 Bierman 1998.

179 Flood 2001, esp. 192–206, 222–225. The inscriptions, which once existed in a series of superimposed bands above a dado of marble revetments along the qibla wall, were destroyed in the post-Umayyad period, when the practice of inscribing Qur'ānic texts on the walls of mosques came to be criticised as a potential distraction from prayer, though it may also have been the result of Abbasid vilification of the Umayyads and appropriation of their key monuments: see Flood, 2001, 126, 242. Flood has recovered the Qur'ānic verses used from historical sources, and compiles them in his appendix (pp. 247–251).

180 Khoury 1996, 86–89; Calvo 2000, 2008, 2010a.

and by extension, of the Andalusī caliphate.¹⁸¹ In the mihrab itself, below the scallop-shaped dome, is the exhortation ‘Believers, ... cling one and all to the faith of God and let nothing divide you’ (3:103): this can be said to ‘issue a call for a unified caliphate’.¹⁸² Janina Safran also reads a political meaning in the epigraphy – ‘The inscriptional programme in its entirety ... explicitly asserts the caliph’s guidance and leadership of the community’ – but she adds that an essential aspect of this role was as ‘spiritual guide’.¹⁸³

These interpretations of the Cordoba inscriptions emphasise the caliph’s position as God’s earthly representative and thereby the divinely-ordained head of the Muslim *umma* in al-Andalus. These statements have potentially global implications, seeming to lay claim to the Andalusī Umayyad caliphate’s superiority over its competitors, the Abbasids and especially the Fatimids. The message that many of the verses convey is that the population – including Jews and Christians – should unite in the worship of God (*islām*), and thereby in obedience to their ruler. This concern for political and religious unity hints at something deeper, and Calvo has convincingly identified this as the Maliki response to a local debate on heterodoxy that was of great significance in tenth-century al-Andalus.¹⁸⁴ The state-sponsored proselytising on the part of the Shi‘ī Fatimids at this period created an atmosphere of anxiety in which anyone professing unorthodox religious views could fall under suspicion.

One heterodox trend in al-Andalus was the rational theology of Mu‘tazilism, in which the main ideas were free will, human responsibility for their acts (encompassing both human agency and the denial of intercession), an insistence on the created, non-eternal nature of the Qur‘ān, man’s ability to interpret the Qur‘ān for himself, and the

denial of God’s corporeality.¹⁸⁵ As Stroumsa discusses, while some Mu‘tazilī ideas certainly infiltrated al-Andalus, mainly through travellers to the Islamic East, ‘enough to influence some people and make others quite anxious’, the number of adherents to these ideas remained very small, and it seems clear that there was no Mu‘tazilī school as such in al-Andalus.¹⁸⁶ The term ‘Mu‘tazilī’ seems merely to have been used as a term of opprobrium, ‘designed to black-smear an unorthodox opponent’.¹⁸⁷ Ibn Ḥazm, for example, accused the 979 plot to assassinate Hishām II and replace him with another grandson of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III as having a Mu‘tazilī ideology behind it, since one of the ringleaders – ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Mundhir, son of the former chief *qādī*, who was the only one punished for this conspiracy – professed Mu‘tazilī beliefs.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, as Fierro notes, it is evident that he was not crucified for being a Mu‘tazilī, as his brothers were unharmed, but for his role in the conspiracy against the caliph.¹⁸⁹ There is no indication that other Mu‘tazilīs recorded by the sources were persecuted or charged with heresy.¹⁹⁰

A more radical heterodox movement that gained some adherents in al-Andalus in the mid-tenth century followed the mystical and Neoplatonic philosophical tenets developed by Ibn Masarra (883–931). His philosophy was poorly understood until 1972, when two of his writings were rediscovered in a manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. These have been used to reconstruct elements of his thought. As Stroumsa and Svirī discuss, Mu‘tazilī and Sufī elements undoubtedly fed into this, but the greatest influence was Neoplatonic trends as preserved in pseudo-Aristotle. There are also unmistakable elements of Ismailī/Shi‘ī teachings: during Ibn

181 Khoury 1996, 88.

182 Khoury 1996, 86.

183 Safran 2000, 63.

184 Calvo 2000. The interpretations in her 2010a article are more focused on Umayyad responses to Christianity.

185 ‘Mu‘tazilī’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; Fierro 1987, 1991; Stroumsa 2014.

186 Stroumsa 2014, 91.

187 Stroumsa 2014, 84.

188 Ibn Ḥazm 1953, 91–92; Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1956, 58; Dozy 1913, 488–490; *HEM* 11:217–218; Ávila 1980, 92, 99.

189 Fierro 1987, 167.

190 Fierro 1992, 900.

Masarra's travels in the Islamic East, he spent time in Qayrawan just as the Fatimids were coming to power. Stroumsa and Sviri also suggest Ibn Masarra's association with 'an intellectual-mystical milieu close to that which, later on, produced the Epistles of the Pure Brethren [Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ],¹⁹¹ and indeed Godefroid de Callatāy has argued since that Ibn Masarra was influenced by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ, whose writings were probably circulating much earlier than has previously been thought. He argues that these had been introduced to the Iberian Peninsula at the end of the 930s, by Maslama al-Qurṭubī, following his long travels in the Middle East, but that Ibn Masarra could have had direct access to them during his own travels in the East and North Africa.¹⁹²

These connections with Ismailism and with the Fatimids' philosophy of *bāṭinism*, or esoteric interpretation of sacred texts, made Ibn Masarra's views extremely dangerous in the eyes of the Andalusī Umayyad caliphs – though the persecution of his followers did not start until two decades after his death. As Fierro notes, the caliphs seized an opportunity to assert Malikism as the state orthodoxy by clamping down on Masarrism.¹⁹³ An edict condemning this 'sect' (*firqā*) was read in the congregational mosques of Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ in 952, and a second and third were read from the entrances of the Cordoba mosque in 956 and 957.¹⁹⁴ In 350/961, some of their books and writings were burnt by Ibn Zarb, then one of the jurists of the *shūra*, before the eastern gates.¹⁹⁵ It

is not clear if this act took place before the death of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, or if this was an indication of al-Ḥakam II's reiteration of his father's policy against Masarrism and a new statement of Maliki orthodoxy.¹⁹⁶ The main accusations made in the edicts of the 950s were that the Masarris believed that the Qurʾān was created; that they renounced and caused others to renounce the spirit of God; that they made a wrong interpretation of Prophetic tradition; they denied repentance and intercession; they insulted the previous generations of pious Muslims; they did not respond to the Muslim greeting; and isolated themselves from the common people, living as ascetics.¹⁹⁷ In contrast, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III 'represented himself as the champion of the faith against deviation and as guardian of the community against *fitna*'; the edicts also included a selection of Qurʾānic verses which portrayed ʿAbd al-Raḥmān as the scourge of God delivering his punishment, and emphasised the importance of preserving the sunna of the Prophet.¹⁹⁸ Of the fifteen verses cited in the edict of 952,¹⁹⁹ eleven can be associated with verses used in inscriptions in the Cordoba Mosque.²⁰⁰ This has led Calvo to read the epigraphic programme of al-Ḥakam's extension, in particular as concentrated in the *maqṣūra*, as the 'definition of orthodox theology',²⁰¹ and she demonstrates that the Qurʾānic verses used inside the mosque even respond to specific points of Masarrī heterodoxy.

191 Stroumsa and Sviri 2009, 214; Stroumsa 2006.

192 De Callatāy 2014, esp. 262–3.

193 Fierro 1996c, 105.

194 See Ibn Hayyan 1981, 25–39 (§§11–22); Cruz Hernández 1981; Fierro 1987, 132–140; Safran 1998, 190–192; Safran 2000, 32–37; Calvo 2000, 21.

195 Safran 2014, 148–151: Ibn Zarb had written a refutation of Ibn Masarra's ideas, and 'when a group of repenters came to him in 961, he carried their books and writings to the eastern wall of the congregational mosque of Cordoba and burned them while they, and others, looked on'. Safran mentions on p. 149 that the burning took place within the mosque's courtyard, though Calvo 2010, 160, states that it was before the eastern

gates of the mosque, where the edicts had been read, and which would have been a much more public act.

196 Fierro 1987, 139.

197 Fierro 1987, 135; Fierro 1996c, 105.

198 Safran 2000, 33; Safran 1998, 192.

199 Ibn Hayyan 1981, 31–35 (§§16–19); Safran 2000, 33, n. 55. The fifteen verses are: 2:85; 3:7, 3:10, 3:118; 4:86; 11:76; 12:87; 22:8–9; 39:18; 40:69–72; and 42:13.

200 'Associated' in the sense that, while they do not repeat the exact verses, the mosque inscriptions use verses from elsewhere in the same *sūra*, sometimes very nearby. These are 2:85; 3:7, 3:10, 3:118; 22:8–9; 39:18; and 40:69–72 (see Appendix 3A). Verses from *sūras* 3 and 39 are used on the ʿĀmirid façade (Appendix 3B).

201 Calvo 2000, 24.

First, the great emphasis placed in the inscriptions on the rewards of Paradise (Qurʾān 39:46, 40:7–9, 41:30–32: see Appendix 3A) responds to the rejection by the Masarris of the ‘eternal recompense for the believers’; they believed instead that the soul purified by following an ascetic life would receive neither reward nor penalty in the afterlife, but once it had been released from the body would join with the divinity.²⁰² Secondly, the Masarris rejected the existence of the ‘Throne of God’; from which God ‘rules the world’; since ‘God is too great for there to be attributed to Him the act of actually doing something’.²⁰³ Whether or not the mosaic-covered dome in front of the Cordoba mihrab symbolically represents the ‘celestial sphere’;²⁰⁴ God’s ‘rule’ over his Creation is also stressed in the Cordoba inscriptions, especially in 32:6. A third emphasis of the mosque’s interior inscriptions is on the ‘central miracle of the faith’;²⁰⁵ the revelation of the Qurʾān (3:4, 3:19, 22:77–78, 39:46), which the Masarris rejected, stating that it was a man-made creation: see, for example, 3:98, “‘People of the Book, why do you deny the revelations of God?’”²⁰⁶

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the *maqṣūra*’s internal epigraphic programme is the orthodox response to the contemporary debate concerning predestination versus free will. Whereas heterodox philosophy taught that man created and was responsible for his actions, according to a power that was created in him by God, orthodox Maliki believed that, though man was free in the *choice* of his acts and through them could influence his salvation or damnation, the final decision lay with God, and took place on the Day of Judgement.²⁰⁷ In the Cordoba mosque, this translated into a selection of certain Qurʾānic texts which emphasise predestination (3:191–193, 33:70–71).

Furthermore, certain verses were ‘manipulated’;²⁰⁸ in order to turn the Masarris’ argument against them, by means of ‘the “partial” citations of the two *āyas* which were considered essential to the theory of free will’:²⁰⁹ 7:43 (inscribed around the entrance to the mihrab chamber) and 2:286 (on the Bāb al-Sābāt). Calvo points out that in both instances those sections that might support the Masarris’ argument in favour of free will are *omitted*: that is, the final section of 7:43, ‘And a voice will cry out to them, saying: “This is the Paradise which you have earned with your labours”’; and the first section of 2:286, ‘God does not charge a soul with more than it can bear. It shall be requited for whatever good and whatever evil it has done’. Instead, the latter passage was replaced with the words of verse 3:8, which ‘proclaims the mercy of God as the only source of salvation and omits all allusion to the value of actions’.²¹⁰

The arguments considered here combine to read the *maqṣūra*’s inscriptions as embodying a reactive statement of the official Maliki line against the contemporary threat of religious heterodoxies; these could lead to the infiltration of Ismaili *bāṭinism* and endanger the unity of the Andalusi community and the absolute authority of the Umayyad caliph, since the Masarris’ rejection of the existence of the Throne of God undermined the position of his earthly representative. As such it can be said to embody a clear epigraphic programme. The creators of this epigraphic programme sought to reaffirm the caliph’s position as the legitimate, divinely-appointed, spiritual and political guide of the Andalusi *umma*, and to ‘issue a call for a unified caliphate’.²¹¹ The crucial importance of the meaning of these Qurʾānic quotations is underlined by their placement in the inner sanctum of al-Ḥakam’s extension, in the carved marble inscriptions of the *maqṣūra* and the mosaics of the mihrab vestibule and chamber,

202 Calvo 2000, 23–24.

203 ‘Ibn Masarra’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

204 Calvo 2000, 25–26. She returns to this interpretation in her 2008 article.

205 Blair 1998, 11.

206 Calvo 2000, 24.

207 Calvo 2000, 19–22.

208 Calvo 2000, 18.

209 Calvo 2000, 23.

210 Calvo 2000, 23.

211 Khoury 1996, 86.

which make precise references to the placement of Qur'ānic inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock and the Damascus Mosque. The fact that these inscriptions were located in places where they were not especially visible or legible is not problematic. Ettinghausen argued that the presence of Qur'ānic verses on a building could be said to be symbolic, even talismanic;²¹² but what counted was that the people building the mosque chose *particular* verses to inscribe on it, to express a statement of policy. In the case of Cordoba III, the location of these significant Qur'ānic quotations within the *maqṣūra*, meaning that they could only be accessed by the caliph and his close courtiers, further underlines the association between these inscriptions and state policy. Calvo suggests that the *qāḍī* of Cordoba, Mundhir ibn Sa'īd, whom the sources indicate assisted in the development of the works at the mosque, may have been involved in or responsible for choosing the particular verses to inscribe on al-Ḥakam's extension. He is said to have been a man who always had the *mot juste*, together with the appropriate hadith, which he employed in his sermons and official letters.²¹³ The involvement of such men in the daily running of the mosque would also have ensured that the messages contained in these inscriptions were preached to the worshipping congregation, through the appointment of imams who followed the same branch of strict Maliki Islam. No doubt al-Manṣūr would have done the same, perhaps relying on the same group of jurists with whom he worked on the purge of al-Ḥakam's library to develop an epigraphic programme for his addition to the mosque.

²¹² Ettinghausen 1974.

²¹³ Calvo 2010a, 180–1; Fierro 2010. According to *Bayān* 11:236 [translation, 320], as administrator of the Treasury, he was responsible for deciding with the *fuqahā'* and *ṣāhib al-aḥbās* how much they were going to pay for the works.

3.1 *Reading al-Manṣūr's Extension: the 'Āmirid Epigraphic Programme on the Eastern Façade (Figure 67)*

All the façade inscriptions are compiled in Appendix 3B for ease of reference.

In contrast to the inscriptions in al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*, which could only be accessed by the caliph and his inner circle, the Qur'ānic inscriptions on the *outside* of the Cordoba Mosque were highly visible and highly legible. One of the surviving gates of al-Ḥakam's eastern façade (Gate 2: Figures 61, 62) preserves an inscription whose background is painted blue while the letters themselves stand out in plain white stone, recalling the strongly contrasting colour combinations in the mosaic inscriptions around the mihrab and flanking doorways. Similarly, the letters of the archivolt inscription of 'Āmirid Gate 5 have remains of red pigment on the surface (Figure 72). As noted in section 2, red pigment was also used for painted inscriptions on the interior wall of the courtyard façade, and at the western end of the transverse arcade along the qibla wall (2.1.4.1). If all the gate inscriptions were enhanced by coloured pigment in the same way, the building's external inscriptions would have been clearly legible.

As discussed above (2.1.3.5), very little survives of the original external decoration of al-Ḥakam's mosque: the only gates to retain traces of their original Qur'ānic inscriptions are three on the western façade, and four on the caliph's original eastern façade (Figures 51–52, 61), now part of the longitudinal arcade at the transitional zone of al-Manṣūr's extension.²¹⁴ While these form self-contained and coherent statements in themselves, the external inscriptions both encapsulate and refer to the messages of the mosque's internal epigraphic programme (Appendix 3A), though they may also have had direct reference to the building's urban context and the activities that happened in front of these gates. The only

²¹⁴ Only the inscription on the 'Puerta del Chocolate' was read by Amador de los Ríos 1879, 237–238.

two surviving inscriptions on al-Ḥakam's western façade both quote from Sura 40: verse 3 on Gate 4 summarises the concepts of God's mercy and judgement, and the punishments or rewards awaiting man in the hereafter, while verse 13, on Gate 3, speaks unequivocally of the revelation of the Qur'an: 'It is He who reveals His signs to you, and sends down sustenance from the sky for you. Yet none takes heed except the repentant'. These verses refer to others inside the mosque – 40:7, 8 and 9 are inscribed around the base of the dome of the *maqṣūra's* western bay (in front of the Bāb al-Sābāt) – and thus sustain the themes of the mosque's internal epigraphic programme.

However, as Calvo points out, Sura 40 is not frequently employed in mosque inscriptions: 'called Ghāfir, "he who pardons", or al-Mū'min, "the Believer", these verses transmit the idea that all men will be submitted to Divine Justice, and insist on the value of faith as a means of salvation, and on the mercy and equity of God for those who deserve it, by following the recommendations of the Holy Book or by repenting. The verses recall the omnipotent power of God, in whom resides the final decision to save or condemn on the Day of Judgement, independent of human actions. On that day only He will judge – there are no intercessors'.²¹⁵

Calvo believes that the use of these verses on the western gates had a specific reference to the institutions that lined the eastern façade of the Umayyad *qaṣr* opposite, which were related to the administration of justice and meting out of punishments and executions. On this façade of the palace was a gate known as the Bāb al-ʿAdl, or Gate of Justice, located opposite the mosque gate now known as Puerta de San Miguel, but known in Umayyad times as the Gate of the Mosque since it was used by the amirs to enter the prayer hall until the *sābāt* was built. The amir ʿAbd Allāh sat in this gate on Fridays, after the communal prayer, to listen to the people and impart justice. At the southern end of the palace walls was located the

Bāb al-Sudda, which is where the death penalty was carried out, where the crosses and spikes for the public display of the bodies and heads of criminals, heretics and rebels. The heads of the apostates Ibn Ḥafṣūn and his two sons were displayed here after their rebellion was suppressed with the taking of Bobastro in 316/928, an event which had a great repercussion for the Andalusī state – a few months afterwards ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III assumed the title caliph. Also found on the western side of the mosque was the Dār al-Ṣadaqa, or Alms House, over whose gate was a chamber, used on at least one occasion (in 360/971) for the public derision of a malefactor afterwards led to prison.²¹⁶

Apart from the Bāb al-Wuzarāʾ (now known as the Puerta de San Esteban), built in 785–6 and the only surviving gate from Cordoba I, whose epigraphic content is entirely historical, none of the other gates on the western façade preserves its original inscription or appearance.²¹⁷

Though now very fragmentary, three of the four gates on al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade retain traces of their inscriptions (Gates 1, 2 and 4). These again highlight themes of Divine Justice and the need to follow the precepts of the revealed truth (the Qur'an), or suffer the penalties after death; the phrase 'He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion' (16:90 on Gate 2) again seems to allude to the perils of heterodoxy. Calvo also associates this verse with the exhortation to practise charity and do good, in particular the phrase 'God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin'. Again this seems to relate to actual activities at the mosque. She notes that in March 974, the chief *qāḍī* of Cordoba had a proclamation read from the gates of the mosque, reminding the population of Cordoba of the needs of the city's poor and to give *zakāt*, threatening them with the judgement of the Last Days.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ Calvo 2010a, 156–9.

²¹⁷ See Fernández-Puertas 1979–81 and 1999, and Marfil 2009.

²¹⁸ Calvo 2010a, 162.

²¹⁵ Calvo 2010a, 155–6.

Calvo also discusses the anti-Christian content of 19:35 on Gate 1, which denies the divinity of Christ: 'It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When he determines a matter, He only says to it 'Be', and it is'. This very same verse forms the centrepiece of the anti-trinitarian message of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, as interpreted by Oleg Grabar.²¹⁹ Key to Calvo's argument is the fact that three Qur'anic quotations with anti-trinitarian import are used in different locations along the qibla wall at Cordoba: 6:101 ('How should he have a son when He had no consort?'), in the mosaic inscriptions around the window grille above the Bāb al-Sābāt; 19:35 on the Bāb Bayt al-Māl; and 112 (Sūrat al-Ikhlās) in combination with 33:56 on Gate 1 of the 'Āmirid eastern façade (Figure 68). Indeed, the only other place where Calvo has found verses 19:35, 112 and 33:56 in association with each other is at the Dome of the Rock, which she implies is a deliberate reference.²²⁰ She goes on to argue that Christianity posed enough of a threat in the late-tenth century to have inspired a strand of the mosque's epigraphic programme, focusing on apostasy as another branch of heresy.²²¹ There is no evidence that Sūrat al-Ikhlās was used in any of the inscriptions of al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra*, so if this combination of verses was intended as a deliberate reference to the Dome of the Rock or to an earlier Umayyad policy to deny the divinity of Christ, then this was an association conceived by al-Manṣūr, or the *fuqahā'* with whom he developed this epigraphic programme, since the verse is employed on one of the 'Āmirid gates (Gate 1). Calvo gives no evidence of anti-Christian sentiment or policy relating specifically to the 'Āmirid period, but such statements may have added weight and legitimacy to the increasingly intense campaigning against Iberia's Christian kingdoms that al-Manṣūr had undertaken in the period preceding the mosque

construction. Such clear statements as that given by Sūrat al-Ikhlās – 'Say: He is God, the One and Only ... He begetteth not, Nor is he begotten; and there is none like unto Him' – could offer further arguments to the justification of jihad.

The specific interrelationship between the mosque's internal and external inscriptions allowed readers on the outside to understand the meaning of the internal epigraphic programme 'in a nutshell'. Again this evokes the organisation of the mosaic inscriptions at the Dome of the Rock, where the outer face of the octagon is divided into six 'miniature composition[s] encapsulating the major themes of the inscription on the inner face'.²²² Several of the inscriptions on the 'Āmirid façade – those words which al-Manṣūr chose to write on his building – are similarly intertextual, since five out of the seven 'Āmirid gates bear Qur'anic passages that can be directly related to those adorning the key ceremonial foci of al-Ḥakam's extension. While verses 3:18–19 on Gate 2 (Figure 69) could be read as another borrowing from the Dome of the Rock,²²³ it is more likely that its direct source was the inscription on Gate 4 of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade (Figure 65), or that which runs along the top of the central nave of the *maqṣūra*.

The first attempt to record the mosque's epigraphic programme was made by Amador de los Ríos in 1879, and while his renderings of the historical inscriptions have since been supplemented by Lévi-Provençal and Ocaña,²²⁴ it is only recently that the surviving Qur'anic inscriptions on the

219 Grabar 1959, 33–62; and idem. 1987, Chapter 3, 'The Symbolic Appropriation of the Land'.

220 Calvo 2010a, 167.

221 Calvo 2010a, 165–178.

222 Whelan 1998, 5–6. Five of these sections contain Qur'anic inscriptions, while the sixth contains 'Abd al-Malik's foundation inscription, later adulterated by the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn. Milwright 2016, 62, fig. 2.18, plots the Qur'anic citations on a plan of the octagonal arcade.

223 This passage comes at the end of the long mosaic inscription on the inner face of the octagon above the Rock, which contains the anti-trinitarian statement: see Whelan 1998, 5.

224 Amador de los Ríos 1879, Lévi-Provençal 1931, Ocaña 1976, Ocaña 1988–90.

eastern façade have been reread or republished.²²⁵ Furthermore, Amador de los Ríos' work was only partial, and it is often difficult to understand which inscription he is discussing: of the seven gates constructed by al-Manşūr, he published the inscriptions of only five, referring to them by the names they bore in 1879, and without mentioning whether his ordering began at the north or south end of the eastern wall. Fortunately, an Arabic transcription of the inscription is always included, and it is therefore possible to identify which of the five 'Āmirid gates he published, and to verify his readings. The Qur'anic citations on the two remaining gates (Gates 1, Figure 68; and 6, Figure 73) have now been identified (Appendix 3B).

Though the decoration around these gates has been extensively restored, the inscriptions were left untouched. They seem to have been longer than the inscriptions on the western façade, and each inscription was originally organised in four zones (Figure 82):

- 1) The main passage began with the *basmala* and followed the archivolt of the horse-shoe arch above the door; in most cases this inscription occupies only the top half of the tympanum, but on Gates 4, 6 and 7 (Figures 71, 73, 74) the inscription runs around the whole circumference of the archivolt.
- 2) The passage continued in a short horizontal frieze running across the middle of the tympanum, and frequently ended with the *taşlıyya* (*wa şallā allāh 'alā muḥammad*) – an exaltation of the Prophet Muḥammad – or other blessing, such as *ḥusn allāh* on Gate 5 (Figure 72). As Calvo discusses, these may reflect pious expressions in use in daily life at this period.²²⁶

- 3) Another horizontal frieze, above the arch, generally contained a different verse, beginning again with the *basmala* (Figures 71, 72).
- 4) Originally there would have been a fourth section, above the frieze of five blind arches (Figures 70–73), but no inscriptions survive on the eastern façade in this location.

Safran considers that the verses used on these gates 'sacralised the building and marked it territorially', and 'were probably not meant to 'missionise' so much as to encourage the Muslims ... in their faith'.²²⁷ While this is no doubt true, other levels of meaning can also be read in the 'Āmirid inscriptions on the Cordoba mosque. There are strong statements of the primacy of Sunni Islam: Gates 2 and 6 both assert the *shahāda*, the Muslim credo, and 3:19 states 'The only true faith in God's sight is Islam'. Verse 33:56 (Gate 1) highlights the importance of the Prophet Muḥammad as God's messenger ('God and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect'), and as Calvo observes, the *taşlıyya* is particularly frequent on the 'Āmirid gates (occurring on Gates 4 (twice), 5, and possibly 7). This prayer exalts the Prophet Muḥammad and was linked to the belief of Sunni Muslims in Muḥammad's mediation between God and his community; it was also recommended to recite this phrase on entering and exiting a mosque.²²⁸ Another theme here is the unity of God, which may carry an anti-Christian message: Gates 2, 3, 5 and 6 repeatedly state this theme, for example 59:22–23 (Gate 6), 'He is God, besides whom there is no other deity'. Another theme is the revelation of the Qur'ān, including 3:3 (Gate 3), 'He has revealed to you the Book with the Truth, confirming the scriptures which preceded it; for He has already revealed the Torah and the Gospel for the guidance of mankind'; and the vivid verses of 59:21–23 (Gate 6), '[Had We sent down] this Qur'ān on a mountain, verily thou wouldst

²²⁵ Since I researched this issue for my thesis, Susana Calvo has published an article (Calvo 2010a) which reconsiders these inscriptions. We have come to similar conclusions, and while I have verified my readings against hers, my identification of the unread Qur'anic passages do not rely on hers, with the exception of Gate 1 (the Puerta de Jerusalén), which, given its fragmentary nature, I was unable to identify.

²²⁶ Calvo 2010a, 180.

²²⁷ Safran 2000, 62.

²²⁸ Calvo 2010a, 169, 179. On the *taşlıyya*, see De la Puente 1999b.

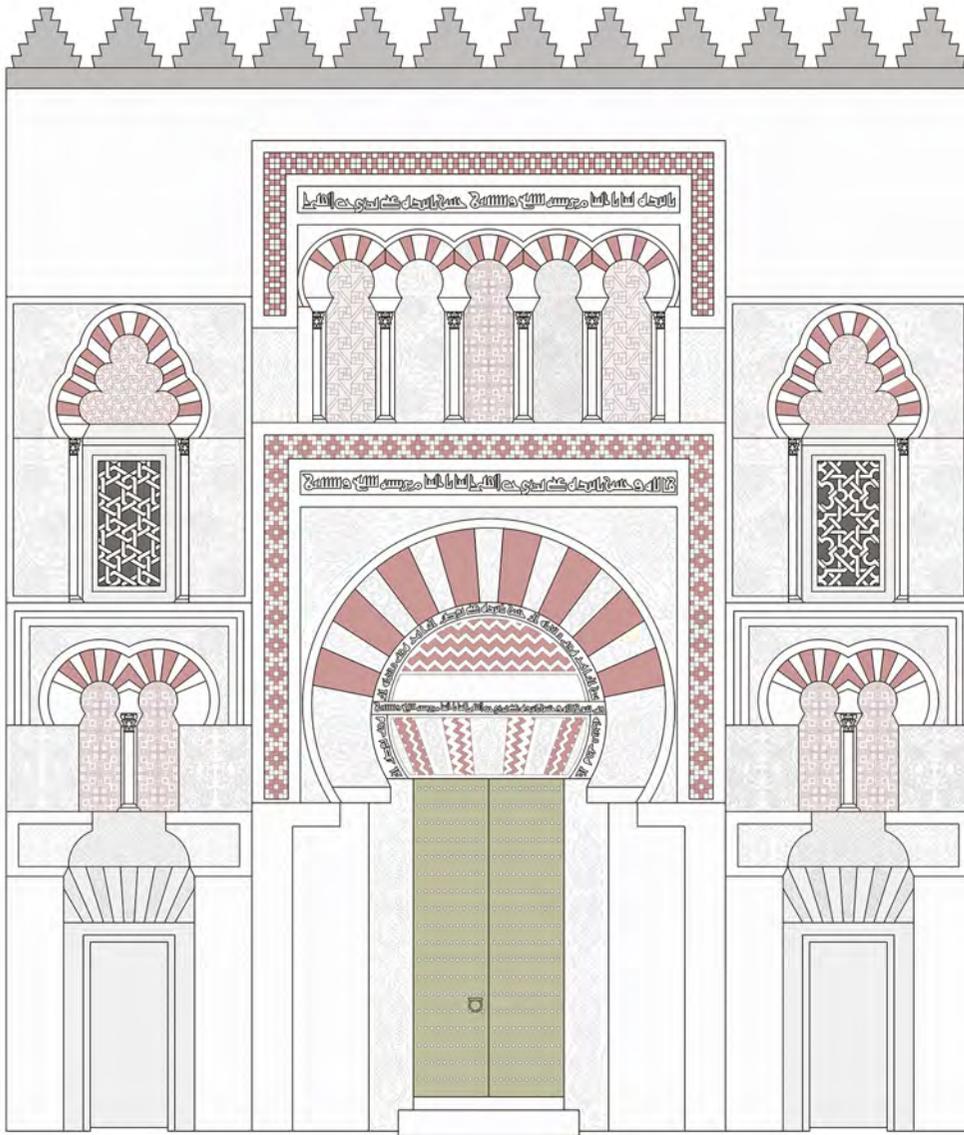


FIGURE 82 Standardised arrangement of the decoration and placement of the inscriptions on the gates of the ‘Amirid façade
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have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of God ...’

The main message insisted on here may be the punishments due to those who reject this message, for example, 3:4 (Gate 3): ‘Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of God will suffer the severest Penalty’; or 3:192 (Gate 7): ‘Our Lord! Any whom Thou dost admit to the Fire, truly Thou coverest with shame and never will wrong-doers find any

helpers!’ Similar warnings are found on Gates 2 and 5, while other verses emphasise the corollary, that is, the rewards to (Sunni) Muslims on the Day of Judgement. As well as verses on Gates 3 and 7, most significant are two long inscriptions on Gate 4 (neither of which was used in al-Ḥakam’s extension, as far as we can reconstruct): 43:68–71 (‘My devotees! No fear shall be on you that Day, nor shall ye grieve, (being those) who have believed in

Our Signs and bowed (their wills to Ours) in Islam. Enter ye the Garden, etc’); and 36:78–79 (“Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones?” Say: “He will give them life Who created them for the first time!”). The eschatological emphases here have been interpreted by Calvo as a possible reference to the practice of saying the prayer for the dead (*ṣalāt al-janā’iz*) in front of these gates as, in the Maliki rite, dead bodies were not brought inside the mosque for the funeral oration.²²⁹ The particular emphasis on the rewards of the afterlife expressed on Gate 4 might suggest that it was in front of this gate that the funeral cortège stopped for the recital of the funeral prayers.

Finally, there is the unique use of *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (112) on Gate 1, which may have the anti-Christian message that Calvo reads into it; on the other hand, as she also notes, Sura 112 is very frequently used in mosques and in epigraphy of a public character. Most significantly, however, it was used as the Umayyad motto on the first coinages, both gold and silver, issued by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III after his assumption of the caliphal title, in 316 and 317/929; this evoked the Syrian Umayyad use of this motto after the seventh-century coin reforms of ‘Abd al-Malik.²³⁰ Even after new formulae were developed for Andalusī coins, did this Sura retain an oral association with the Umayyad dynasty, which al-Manṣūr evoked through its employment on the most important gate of his eastern façade – that giving access to the qibla zone of his new prayer hall?

Thus the inscriptions on these gates *do* ‘missionise’. But perhaps the most important level on which they should be understood is their reiteration of the mosque’s internal messages. It is important to note that only one of al-Manṣūr’s gates repeats the surviving inscriptions of al-Ḥakam’s original eastern façade: Gate 2 (Figure 6g), which repeats 3:19 from Gate 4 of al-Ḥakam’s original eastern façade. The words, ‘Those to whom [the scriptures] were given disagreed among

themselves’, is no doubt a warning against the divisiveness of religious heterodoxies. So while the appearance of al-Ḥakam’s gates was recreated on the eastern façade, their inscription programme was conceived anew. Another case (Gate 1) reflects similar themes to those expressed on the parallel gate from the old eastern façade (the Puerta del Chocolate), though these are the anti-Christian messages which Calvo argues for, and perhaps the placement of both at the qibla wall might suggest a special case. Otherwise, the gates directly quote passages from the central nave of al-Ḥakam’s *maqṣūra*. Gates 2, 3 and 7 between them repeat about half of the carved inscription which runs along the top of the two arcades of the central nave of the *maqṣūra*, and the archivolt inscription of Gate 5 also evokes this area by continuing a citation from Sura 39. Gate 6 repeats 59:23, with its extremely powerful statement of revelation, from the mosaic inscription above the entrance to the mihrab chamber itself. This method of ‘quotation’, by the exterior of the interior, naturally served to reprise the anti-heterodox statements made by al-Ḥakam in his mosque construction twelve years before. As such, al-Manṣūr made a clear demonstration of political and religious alignment with the Umayyad dynasty’s stance on heterodoxy, evoking architecturally the political action he had taken in purging al-Ḥakam’s library. The employment of *Surat al-Ikhlāṣ*, with its direct association with the Umayyad dynasty, underlines this statement of alignment and continuity.

Perhaps it is more significant to consider how those passages which are *not* quotations from al-Ḥakam’s *maqṣūra*, and which may therefore represent al-Manṣūr’s own statements on the subject, expand on the sentiments of the caliph’s message, and contribute new strategies to the debate. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the mosque’s extant epigraphic programme has not been fully recorded, and future research may reveal that these passages also reprise the monument’s internal messages. As noted above, in the introductory discussion to the ‘Amirid mosque, al-Manṣūr also opened two new gates

229 Calvo 2010a, 164–5.

230 Calvo 2010a, 167 and n. 46.

in the expanded courtyard wall, and evidence of painted inscriptions has been found on the interior of the courtyard façade of his extension, but as yet we have no information about what these inscriptions said.

Two of the eastern gates contain verses that cannot so far be identified with any extant Qur'anic passages used inside the mosque. Verses 43:68–71 (Gate 4, Figure 71) enumerate the luxuries and rewards of Paradise ('Abiding there for ever, you shall find all that your souls desire and all that your eyes rejoice in'), but make the clear statement that this is only available to Muslims ('those who have believed in Our revelations and surrendered yourselves', *wa kĀnū muslimīn*, that is, become Muslims). Verse 39:53 (Gate 5, Figure 72) evokes the inscription of the mihrab vestibule (where 39:47 is used), and adds new ammunition to the debate over predestination, by emphasising God's ultimate mercy: 'Say: "Servants of God, you have sinned against your souls, do not despair of God's mercy, for God forgives all. It is He who is the Forgiving One, the Merciful"'. Of perhaps greatest interest are the unequivocal warnings, on Gates 4 and 5, which can be read together as a direct address to adherents of heterodoxies: for example, verses 36:78–79 – 'He argues back with arguments, and forgets His own Creation. He asks: "Who will give life to rotten bones?" / Say: "He who 71, 73, 74 first brought them into being will give them life again"'²³¹ – warn against the perils of philosophical reasoning, on which Mu'tazilism and Masarrism were based, which leads the believer from the straight (and narrow) path of orthodox Islam. The immediately preceding verse, not quoted inside the mosque but which would have been evoked in the minds of all Muslims familiar with the Qur'ān, is also pertinent: 'Does man not see We created him from a little germ?

²³¹ Calvo 2010a, 163, calls these verses 'chilling' (*escalofriantes*), associating them with the 'environment of intimidation' (*ambiente de intimidación*) that she believes characterised al-Manṣūr's *de facto* rule, and which she thinks is reflected in the inscriptions on the eastern gates.

Yet he is flagrantly contentious'. A final warning is found on Gate 5, which might be said to encapsulate the mosque's entire epigraphic programme: 'This is a warning to mankind. Let them take heed and know that He is but one God. Let the wise bear this in mind' (14:52).

The painted inscription on the transverse arcade running parallel to the qibla wall – which is probably an 'Āmirid intervention, as discussed above (2.1.4.1) – also contains verses (10:106–7) that are not used elsewhere in the mosque, but again they reaffirm messages about predestination which are found in al-Ḥakam's epigraphic programme ('If God do touch thee with hurt, there is none can remove it but He ...').²³² This arch is supported on the interior of Gate 2 on the western façade and its painted inscription would have been legible as soon as a worshipper crossed the threshold into the mosque. If the transverse arcade was an 'Āmirid intervention, were these painted verses directed for Hishām's attention, or at detractors who might not have been happy with 'Āmirid *de facto* rule? It is also likely that the painted inscriptions on the internal courtyard façade of al-Manṣūr's extension likewise recapitulated the same themes as expressed in al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* (Figure 67).

The Qur'anic inscriptions on the eastern façade hold the key to understanding al-Manṣūr's extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba. The extant Qur'anic passages that adorn these gates combine to make a clear statement of religious and hence political alignment with the Umayyad dynasty's stance on heterodoxy, which in the tenth century presented a real threat to the unity of the *umma* and the caliph's position at its head. The inscriptions demonstrate that al-Manṣūr had taken up the task, expressed by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III through the edicts against Masarrism and by al-Ḥakam through the mosque's internal epigraphic programme, of suppressing heresy and maintaining the role of the caliph as rightly-guided, Sunni ruler of the state. The new verses, those which are *not* found in al-Ḥakam's extension, constitute a

²³² Calvo 2010a, 161, 179; Brisch 1959.

reaffirmation of this stance. Lastly, by proclaiming, in every aspect of his mosque extension, the continuity of his regime with that of the Umayyads, al-Manṣūr emphasised that it was in his hands, rather than theirs, that the ruler's powers – especially for the protection of religion – now lay.

The Cordoba Mosque's Qur'ānic inscriptions conformed to a deliberate and coherent programme with clear and targeted meanings that highlight the precepts of Maliki Sunni Islam. Anderson and Pruitt have seen in these targeted meanings a heightening of polemic and competition with the Fatimids at the end of the tenth century.²³³ Al-Manṣūr's mosque extension coincided with the construction by al-Hākim (r. 996–1021) of his new congregational mosque in Cairo in 990, to which large-scale, exterior inscriptions were added in 1002–3 when he added two towers and a portal to the building's main façade, though they were covered over again in 1010. If the Mosque of al-Azhar originally bore exterior inscriptions, these no longer exist, and it seems that monumental 'public texts' were really introduced during al-Hākim's reign, after which this became a defining trait of Fatimid architecture and urbanism.²³⁴ That they were employed to express sectarian messages is shown by the large-scale anti-Sunni 'cursing of the Companions', inscribed throughout the city of Cairo-Fustat in colours and gold, on mosques, houses, and bazaars, sponsored by al-Hākim in 1005.²³⁵ However, as Anderson and Pruitt have interestingly realised, these Umayyad 'public texts' at the Great Mosque of Cordoba predate the first symbolic use of inscriptions by their Fatimid rivals. While the Cordoba inscriptions on al-Ḥakam's and later al-Manṣūr's façades primarily addressed local political and religious controversies, their rejection of non-Sunni heterodoxy also

implied a rejection of Fatimid claims to religious and political authority. The direct competition between these two regimes' approaches to 'public texts' became most clearly manifest through the vacillations of the Andalusīyyīn minbar and its recarved backrest (Chapter 7: 1.1). And as discussed at the end of Chapter 4, there may have been a Fatimid influence on the meaningful naming of gates and buildings at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira and in the significance of titulature adopted in the 'Āmirid period. A more detailed comparative study of the specific Qur'ānic citations employed in contemporary Umayyad and non-Umayyad (or Sunni/non-Sunni) monuments would be interesting for the correspondences and differences this might reveal: for example, Sūrat al-Nūr (24:35), favoured by the Fatimids in both text and image as a metaphor for the hidden imam, does not seem to be much used on Umayyad monuments.

In sum, the statement that al-Manṣūr carefully constructed through his extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba was that he was aiming not to usurp the rule of the Umayyad caliphs, but rather to take up their mantle as the protectors of orthodox Islam. This role was also expressed in his leadership of jihad, his censorship of suspect books in al-Ḥakam's library, and his possible monumentalisation of a space for teaching *fiqh* within the heart of the caliphal mosque (2.1.4.2 above). As 'Abd al-Raḥmān III had 'refined the definition of his caliphal authority in the context of his campaign to suppress the heresy of Ibn Masarra',²³⁶ so al-Manṣūr defined his *de facto* royal role as defender of the faith to include the Maliki sunna. He asserted this statement by consciously relating his extension symbolically and semantically to the mosque's ceremonial and Umayyad heart – al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* – by employing a variety of imitative devices. On the simplest level, his extension imitated the appearance of the earlier mosque by, for example, adopting the same alternating pattern of coloured columns, or by continuing the

²³³ Anderson and Pruitt 2017, 239–40. My thanks to both authors for sharing this essay with me when it was still unpublished.

²³⁴ Bierman 1998.

²³⁵ Anderson and Pruitt 2017, 240.

²³⁶ Safran 1998, 190.

transverse arcade at the interface of Cordoba II and III into Cordoba IV, for the sake of symmetry. His architects were often highly ingenious in the solutions they invented to make Cordoba IV look exactly like the rest of the mosque. Most visibly, and perhaps therefore most importantly, al-Manṣūr imitated the form of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade, and clearly asserted his political and religious alignment with the Umayyads and the Maliki *fuqahā'* through the deliberate selection of Qur'ānic passages which restated the messages of the mosque's internal epigraphic programme. In every respect, al-Manṣūr was claiming continuity with the Umayyads, while emphasising his control of the new political landscape.

At the same time, his architects were subtly innovating to correct problems with the older building, such as the lack of illumination, or the level of damping in the elevation of the columns and arcades. Interventions within the *maqṣūra*, such as the addition of the transverse arcade along the qibla wall, or the solutions adopted to compensate for disparities between Cordoba IV and the older mosque, make a decorative virtue out of practical necessity; but they also see the introduction of new and innovative features into Andalusī architecture, such as the early use of the pointed arch, the maturity of the multi-lobed arch, the use of public texts. The possible creation of a tribune at the heart of the mosque also speaks to the wide

range of ceremonial activities that took place in this monument.

While there was no doubt a sense in which al-Manṣūr was seeking to 'perpetuate his name and his government into the future',²³⁷ his extension was surely a statement intended for a contemporary audience. The mosque took six or seven years to build, from 987/8–994, and over this long period the population of Cordoba was bound to be curious to see what would emerge when the scaffolding came down – perhaps even concerned, since we must not forget that al-Ḥakam's extension had been highly controversial. We can speculate that this audience was relieved to discover that the new was essentially the same as the old, and that their new *ḥājib* was willing and able to fulfil his obligations as a ruler to undertake pious works for their benefit, and to defend the unity of the *umma* against heresy.

Al-Manṣūr's deliberate use of epigraphic messages within and without the mosque shows his awareness of the impact such visual messages could have. Meaningful messages were also written and encoded on objects produced at a smaller scale; we will see this in the following chapters as we now turn to the discussion of the luxury arts of the 'Āmirid period.

²³⁷ De la Puente 1997, 396.

The *Dār al-Šinā'a*: 'Āmirid Patronage of the Luxury Arts

It was said that the cause of his triumph was service to the *sayyida* Šubḥ *al-baskunsiyya*, mother of 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Hishām, and that she was the main reason by which the government and authority passed to him in a short time. He gained this woman's trust by the quality of his service, by his success in gaining her satisfaction, and by his generosity in the offer of gifts and presents, until he captured her soul and dominated her heart, [which in turn] dominated that of her lord, [al-Ḥakam al-Mustaṣir]. Ibn Abī 'Āmir strove to do good for her, to make ever more frequent his attentions to her, and he created [new means] to do so, by bringing her things which had no equal [and no-one had ever seen before]. [He did this] until he conceived for her a palace of silver, which he did when he had in his hands the control of the mint. He worked on [the palace] for a time and spent on it an immense quantity of money, to create a novelty [the like of which] nothing more marvellous had ever been seen. They transported it from the house of Ibn Abī 'Āmir so that the people could see it and they spoke about it for a long time [afterwards]. Ibn Abī 'Āmir occupied the highest place in her heart: [she] strove to help him, she gave him her support and spoke for him, until [the point] where the people gossiped about her passion for him. One day al-Ḥakam said to some of his confidants: 'Who is he who [has used] this youth to bring my women to his side, until their hearts are seized? Who is he, who even though they have the

pleasures of the world at their disposal, they do no more than describe his gifts and are not satisfied with anything unless *he* has given it to them? Either [I have] a mage full of wisdom or I have a diligent servant. I am nervous of what might come from his hands ...'

IBN 'IDHĀRĪ, *Bayān* 11:268–9 [translation 416]¹



The ability to afford beautiful products executed in expensive, precious and preferably exotic materials has been a signifier of status or aspiration in all cultures,² and as such patronage of the luxury arts has always been an important facet of rulership. This is epitomised by the bestowal of luxury objects, especially textiles and garments woven with the ruler's name and titles and intended to be worn by the recipient as a mark of loyalty (*khil'a*); as well as by the assembly of precious collections in royal treasuries (as is best-documented for the Fatimid period, thanks to the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*),³ and the formation of imitative collections by members of the court elite as symbols of their social position, close to the ruler. In the *adab* literature which developed at the increasingly

1 This English translation is based on the Spanish translation in Ballestín 2004a, 63–4. See also al-Maqqarī, 179 (*Analectes*, 11:61). On other gifts and favours presented to the women of the caliph's harem, *Bayān* 11:268 [translation 417]; al-Maqqarī, 179 (*Analectes*, 11:62).

2 See Clark 1986.

3 On the Fatimid Treasuries, see especially Oleg Grabar 1969; Romberg 1985; Sanders 1994, 23–32; al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī 1996.

‘ritualised’ Islamic courts,⁴ much space was devoted to ‘describing, naming, and enumerating ... substances and articles, objects and victuals’ which members of the court circle considered appropriate to their status;⁵ and it is telling that the word for ‘luxury objects’ (*mustazrafa*) shares a root with the concept of courtly ‘elegance’ (*zarāfa*) so prized by that circle.⁶

The passage, quoted above, describing how al-Manşūr inveigled his way into Şubḥ’s affections and secured her support for his rise to power highlights the unprecedented manufacture of a miniature building made of silver, so large that it called people’s attention as it was transported through the streets of Cordoba. No further detail is provided of the palace’s appearance, nor what Şubḥ did with this amazing gift once she had received it, though it was so astonishing that it caused the people of Cordoba and the women of the caliphal harem to talk about it for a long time afterwards. The anecdote goes on to discuss the shadow of fraud that fell over Ibn Abī ʿĀmir because of the huge sums that he had ostentatiously spent on this magnificent creation: his position at the time (around 967) as *şāhib al-sikka* led to the accusation that he had embezzled from the mint to fund or to find sufficient quantities of precious metal to have the palace made.⁷ Ibn Abī ʿĀmir was obliged to borrow money from his friend and relative, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr, in order to demonstrate that no resources were missing from the mint (Chapter 1). As a consequence of this incident, the young Ibn Abī ʿĀmir came directly to al-Ḥakam’s attention – surely the intention all along. Al-Ḥakam dismissed Ibn Abī ʿĀmir’s

accusers as liars, ‘and his admiration for [him] grew and he maintained and confirmed him in his position. Ibn Abī ʿĀmir eventually returned the money to Ibn Ḥudayr, he grew close to al-Ḥakam and came to be one of those among whom al-Ḥakam could not do without in the affairs of government’.⁸

The framing of this anecdote reflects the teliological tendency in the historiography of al-Manşūr’s rise to power, where anecdotes and details of his early career are imbued by later historians with a significance implying his destiny to become *ḥājib*. The gift of the silver palace was, according to Ibn ʿIdhārī, a defining moment in al-Manşūr’s career, marking a turning point at which his cultivation of Şubḥ brought him to the caliph’s attention, after which his astuteness, efficiency and competence led to him only rising higher within the caliphal administration. While Echevarría is no doubt right to say that the anecdote offers a ‘picturesque metaphor’ of the riches at al-Manşūr’s disposal during his governorship of the mint,⁹ it nevertheless contains further interesting implications. First, it implies a connection – physical and material – between the mint and precious metal workshops; secondly, though the silver palace was ‘a novelty the like of which nothing more marvellous had ever been seen’ (a clear *topos*), its manufacture was not beyond the abilities of the Cordoban precious metalworkers; thirdly, it implies that it was possible to access those workshops to order a private commission. Perhaps al-Manşūr’s already significant role in the state administration, as *şāhib al-sikka*, allowed him this privileged access, especially if the intended recipient of the commission was a member of the royal household. Finally, this anecdote speaks to the way in which al-Manşūr was highly strategic about gift-giving and the use of objects, implying that from an early stage in his career he was commissioning objects from the luxury arts

4 Von Grunebaum 1955, 281.

5 Robinson 1995, 425, talking specifically of the *Kitāb al-Muwashshāʿ* (before 936), on which see eadem 2007, 19 (n. 39), 26.

6 Robinson 1995, 424.

7 Ballestín 2004a, 65, comments that the word used in the text is *mawqūf*, indicating (in his words) ‘dinero inmovilizado’, suggesting that the metal used came from reserves of stored precious metal that could not be minted into coin.

8 *Bayān* 11:268–9, translated and discussed by Ballestín 2004a, 63–9.

9 Echevarría 2011, 50–51.



FIGURE 83
Reliquary of Saint Anastasios the Persian, in the shape of a miniature church, Byzantine, dated 969–970, silver, silver-gilt and niello, dims 39 × 19.6 × 20 cm; Cathedral Treasury, Aachen

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infrastructure that were calculated to solidify personal relationships and loyalty. If the anecdote can be dated around 356/967, when Ibn Abī ‘Āmir was appointed governor of the mint for the first time, Şubḥ was already someone of importance at court: the birth of her first son, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, around 965 meant she was *umm walad*, mother of the heir to the throne. A canny politician, Ibn Abī ‘Āmir may already have been looking to align himself with the interests of the caliphal succession as a way of advancing his career at the heart of the court.

Though no architectural sculpture in silver survives from al-Andalus, an example in silver, silver-gilt and niello made in the Byzantine world at an exactly-contemporary moment does survive. This is an *artophorion* (container for the Eucharist), held since the twelfth century in the treasury of the cathedral at Aachen where it was repurposed

as a reliquary for the head of Saint Anastasios the Persian (Figure 83). It is made in the shape of a small but elaborate Byzantine church, with a central dome rising above an arcaded drum, a small apse pierced by long windows, and large portals decorated with applied crosses. A dedicatory inscription framing the apse indicates that it was commissioned by Eustathios, who served as Byzantine military commander of Antioch in 969/70.¹⁰ This precious survival of a miniature building crafted from silver may now be unique, but it illustrates the potential of the luxury metalworking ateliers in al-Andalus to have produced something similar for al-Manşūr’s gift to Şubḥ. As we know from the casket made for Hishām (Figures 1–2), sophisticated objects in precious metals were being made in the Cordoban ateliers

10 Bagnoli et al 2011, 118, cat. 55.

at this time; and they were not just producing containers – sculptures were produced in bronze in the form of animals for the caliphal palaces (Figure 10). Perhaps a Byzantine example similar to the *artophorion* had been received in Cordoba during one of the exchanges with Constantinople, and inspired the silver palace for Şubḥ. The anecdote about al-Manşūr's ingratiation may thus preserve testimony of a type of object that was produced in Cordoba but which has not survived.

Alongside their grand architectural projects, the second element in the 'Āmirids' use of cultural and artistic patronage to articulate the legitimacy of their rule was their sponsorship of the luxury arts industry. The remaining chapters of this book will thus be dedicated to the discussion of objects. This chapter will explore the mechanisms by which objects were commissioned, arguing that the 'Āmirids adopted direct control of the caliphal Dār al-Şinā'a, perpetuating the organisational structures that had developed during the reigns of the first two caliphs, though with the artistic commissions now 'in the hands of' – *'ala yaday* – Şaqāliba who belonged to, and thus were personally loyal to, the 'Āmirids. This allowed the 'Āmirid patrons to dictate how their objects were decorated, and to create a deliberate programme of 'Āmirid self-expression, so that the messages we read in them are not accidental. Chapter 7 will identify for the first time a corpus of 'Āmirid objects, by a close examination of the surviving objects that are associated with the 'Āmirids through epigraphy, or through close stylistic connections with the inscribed objects. Many of these are well-known in Andalusi art history, because of their spectacular proportions and decoration – the Pamplona casket (Figures 120–127) is a case in point – but they have usually been discussed in broad terms as products of Umayyad al-Andalus, and have rarely been properly located within a discussion of the specific context in which they were created.¹¹ Lastly, in Chapter 8, we will discuss the meanings

of 'Āmirid art by examining the messages embedded in their iconography and inscriptions, with particular reference to the poetic imagery composed for these same patrons. This will elucidate the ways in which the 'Āmirid dynasty understood and visualised their role. While my main focus in these chapters will be objects, I take the term 'luxury arts' to encompass both the architectural decoration commissioned as adornment for palaces and mosques (the specific examples of which were discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5), and the precious objects commissioned to furnish them. As we will see, there was a close infrastructural relationship between the production of both, which shared materials, skills and craftsmen.

The objects that survive from al-Andalus – and in particular the formulae used in their inscriptions – allow us to reconstruct quite a clear picture of the structure of the luxury arts industry, and to see that it was tightly regulated within workshops operating at the heart of the court. Whether these functioned solely as a royal monopoly or might have been more widely accessible to members of the court elite is a question that will be considered below. What is clear is that, more so than with other medieval courts in the Mediterranean – possibly in the entire medieval world, both Christian and Muslim – we have evidence for the production of objects within workshops. Where doubt exists about the existence of workshops in other ivory carving centres, such as Constantinople or southern Italy under the Normans,¹² we can be confident that Andalusi ivory carving was the product of an organised team operating according to a strict hierarchy. That these ivory objects were produced by the same craftsmen who worked on architectural decoration, responding to the availability of the raw material – which might have been more exceptional than we have come to think – will also be elaborated below. The point that this discussion hopes to make is that understanding this

11 Exceptions to this are Robinson 2007 on the Pamplona casket and Makariou 2001 on the objects made for 'Abd al-Malik more broadly.

12 A question that still besets many of the essays in the volume on the Salerno ivories, see Dell'Acqua et al 2016; on Byzantium, Cutler 1994, 66–78, 'The Question of Workshops'.

workshop structure allows us to better understand the processes of patronage. This aspect of Andalusī luxury arts production has (surprisingly) never been fully considered, and it has therefore never been securely established that a patron was able to directly control an object's message. While the historical evidence for this remains largely absent, the names and signatures on surviving objects and architectural adornments, and especially the deployment of *fiṭyān* in the service of the patron, allows us to reconstruct, to an extent, how these objects were commissioned and to suggest how they might have responded to the direct wishes of the patron.

1 The Origins of the Dār al-Šinā'a

The Dār al-Šinā'a was one part of a full-scale industry, which was an important facet in the development of the caliphal state in al-Andalus and which, perhaps most importantly, provided a vehicle for the rulers' self-expression. The foundation of the Dār al-Šinā'a is credited to the Umayyad amir 'Abd al-Raḥmān II, at the same time as he established the Dār al-Ṭirāz and the Dār al-Sikka.¹³ The products of these state workshops are widely recognised as royal prerogatives, but it is also important to include the production of luxury objects beyond textiles in this picture, given their importance in the distribution of *khil'a* by the ruler to members of his court and allies, and in diplomatic gift exchange (Chapter 2). As we know from the sources, patronage of the luxury arts industry played a fundamental role in the foundation of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's caliphate. He is said to have spent equal quantities of the state revenue on funding his army and his architectural patronage,¹⁴ and caliphal expenditure on building projects was thus 'the most important aspect of appropriation of territory and power by the

Umayyad caliphs, next to the military'.¹⁵ Surviving objects datable to the ninth century might be early products of this institution, and textual evidence exists for highly sophisticated scientific instruments being produced, probably in brass, in the mid-ninth-century by Ibn Firmās, an intellectual at 'Abd al-Raḥmān II's court.¹⁶

We know that Dār al-Šinā'a was located alongside the Cordoban *qaṣr*, at the south-west of the city. It must have been close to a gate at the north of the palatine complex which bore the name Bāb al-Šinā'a. It was also close to the Bāb Ishbīliya (the Seville Gate), also known as the Bāb al-'Aṭṭārīn since beyond this gate was located the quarter of the perfumiers/pharmacists, next to which was that of the parchment makers.¹⁷ Presumably the latter were physically located close to those who produced books, including calligraphers, illuminators and leather binders. This concentration of workshops and artisanal skills near to the palace is telling of the close relationship of the luxury arts to the heart of the state, from an early period. They were also close to the Great Souk – which, following a fire in 936, was reconstructed under the direct patronage of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III¹⁸ – suggesting that the same workshops served the court as well as a wider market, an idea that will be elaborated further below. The mint was in this location as well, likely to have been in its own building, until

15 Ecker 1992, 4.

16 On whom see Terés 1960, and Anderson 2020, on the earliest scientific instruments made in al-Andalus. The earliest extant examples all date from the Taifa period, but textual sources tell us that Ibn Firmās made an armillary sphere for 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822–852), and a waterclock for Muḥammad I (r. 852–886).

17 Ación Almansa and Vallejo Triano 1998, 118–9, esp. n. 67: 'No cabe duda que el conjunto de los talleres estatales que se conocen como Dār al-Šinā'a se emplazó en la parte occidental, en la proximidad de la Bāb al-'Aṭṭārīn. La anécdota transmitida por al-Maqqarī, relativa al traslado del alfaquí Abū Ibrāhīm, desde la mezquita de Abū 'Uthmān al noroeste del Alcázar, a presencia del califa al-Ḥakam II, indica que la Bāb al-Šinā'a era la puerta más próxima al palacio desde dicha mezquita', citing al-Maqqarī, 172–3.

18 Ación Almansa and Vallejo Triano 1998, 119.

13 HEM I:349.

14 Ibn Khaldūn (*apud* al-Maqqarī 1968, 524–5, 569).

it was moved to Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ in 947.¹⁹ This would mean the precious metals being stored and processed here were physically close to the luxury arts ateliers, in order to produce mounts and other fixtures for objects, and perhaps the mint workers also processed these materials into precious metalwork objects, as implied by the anecdote of the silver palace quoted above. It is also interesting that in the ninth century there was already a connection between craft production and perfumes and cosmetics, which remains the case in the tenth century, as we will see.

The exception to this centralisation of the state workshops in the area to the west of the palace was the Dār al-Ṭirāz, which at some point in the early tenth century was moved to the north of city, beyond the walls, near to the cemetery of Bāb al-Yahūd and the Mozarabic church of San Zoilo. The Dār al-Ṭirāz was already well-established in this area by 961, since this suburb is called *vicus tiraceorum* several times in the *Calendar of Cordoba*, written in that year.²⁰ This move – presumably initiated by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, perhaps in the 940s when the Dār al-Sikka, Dār al-Şināʿa and other ateliers moved to Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ – displaced the previous model of administrative centrality, but the Dār al-Ṭirāz remained in this location thereafter. It is not known why the textile factory was moved, though perhaps it was for practical reasons, to be closer to the raw materials, in particular the tanneries, which being an industrial production requiring lots of space and generating unpleasant odours are usually located beyond the city walls.²¹

Ceramics were also normally produced beyond the city walls, since again they required space – for the storage and processing of raw materials, the making, drying, storage of half-finished or finished objects, decorating, kilns – and the fuel burnt off during the firing was smokey and full of impurities, so located away from residential quarters.²² Excavations in recent years have uncovered more than 140 kilns in Cordoba's periurban zones, more than have been found in any other Andalusī city.²³ These are concentrated in two broad zones: the first is to the north of Cordoba's eastern suburb, al-Sharqiyya, in an area now known as Las Ollerías, reflecting its historical association with ceramics. Pottery production seems to have taken place here since Roman times, and continued to the end of the Islamic period. This zone seems to have been where domestic pottery was primarily produced. Arabic sources mention a quarter known as al-Fakharīn located in al-Sharqiyya, very close to the city walls. The guild of potters was located here, which also indicates a level of centralised and standardised production.²⁴ As Salinas points out, the siting of the pottery quarter here makes sense in terms of the geomorphology of the city, as it was located on the second fluvial terrace of the Guadalquivir, and was a region rich in clay. There was an ample water supply from the river's tributaries – in particular, the Fuensanta stream passes through this zone – and was close to the foothills of the Sierra Morena which supplied wood to fuel the kilns. It was extramuros but close to the city walls and to one of the city's main arterial roads. In the caliphal period, during the massive urban expansion to the west of the city caused by the

19 Ación Almansa and Vallejo Triano 1998, 118, n. 67: 'La ceca permaneció en ese lugar hasta su traslado a Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, puesto que en los comienzos del s.X el geógrafo Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadānī confirmaba su situación "en el barrio de Bāb al-ʿAṭṭārīn"', citing Lévi-Provençal 1932, 76, n. 2.

20 Ación Almansa and Vallejo Triano 1998, 119, and citing Pellat 1961, 73, 103, 163. See also Arjona Castro and Marfil Ruiz 2004.

21 As they still are today in the city of Fez (Morocco), for example. For a discussion of traditional processes

of tanning and leather-working in late Ottoman Damascus, see Milwright 2018, esp. 251–4.

22 Ibn ʿAbdūn, in his *ḥisba* treatise written in twelfth-century Seville, recommends this: see García Gómez and Lévi-Provençal 1992, 113–4.

23 Salinas Pleguezuelo 2012, 695. The information given here is based on her thesis, especially Chapter 7, "Los hornos y la actividad alfarera", pp. 579–698.

24 Salinas Pleguezuelo 2012, 583, citing Aziz Salem 1984–5, 227.

foundation of Madīnat al-Zahrā', a new zone for pottery production was created to the west of the madina of Cordoba, also located on the second fluvial terrace. The kilns that have been excavated here show that this zone primarily produced building materials, such as tiles, for the new construction, and very large storage jars, to store construction materials or to service the agricultural and fishing activities in this part of the city. This zone appears to have been largely abandoned during the Fitna and did not continue in use into the later Islamic period.

The putative site of the Dār al-Ṭirāz was excavated in 1991 as a salvage operation during the construction of the high-speed train station and railway lines, and this area and any further information it might offer is now effectively buried under the train tracks.²⁵ The building that was uncovered during these excavations was a very large, monumental edifice constructed around 11 courtyards, according to construction methods which date it to the third quarter of the tenth century. Its configuration with numerous courtyards and halls but no basilical structures implies that its function was not public or official. Initially identified as a luxurious private residence, no decorative elements were found, although the structure had been heavily robbed out. Given the topographical information from the sources that clearly indicates the Dār al-Ṭirāz was located in this zone, Arjona Castro and Marfil have identified this structure as the Dār al-Ṭirāz. It might have previously been a *munya*, repurposed by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III to house caliphal textile production when he reorganised and relocated the other ateliers. Arjona Castro and Marfil suggest that it was later expanded by al-Ḥakam II, and the completion of this expansion or refurbishment might have been the reason for his famous inspection visit in 361/972.²⁶ In this year, al-Rāzī's Annals tell us that 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Iḥlīlī was appointed *amīn*

(superintendent) of the Dār al-Ṭirāz, and Muḥammad ibn al-Walīd was elected by his colleagues to the post of *kātib al-ṭirāz*; he was apparently 'one of the most outstanding and practical of the *kuttāb*, and one of the most capable and experienced of the men in that office'. The caliph was received at the factory 'by the administrative directors and by the directors of the workshops, who paid him the necessary tribute. [Al-Ḥakam] asked them for details of their work and favoured them with his instructions'.²⁷

It is clear from this anecdote that the Dār al-Ṭirāz was regulated by a structured hierarchy of administrators, headed by a superintendent (*amīn*), a *kātib al-ṭirāz*, other *kuttāb* below him, and other directors and overseers of individual workshops within the factory – perhaps each one producing textiles according to different techniques or designs. All of this operated under the direct control of the caliph, who possibly paid to have the building enlarged or refurbished, but certainly took enough interest in its operation to pay this special visit. This speaks to the importance of *ṭirāz* as a caliphal product. We can also extrapolate from this that the Dār al-Ṣinā'a, and no doubt other ateliers, needed a physical location from which to operate, as well as a structured administrative hierarchy, probably formulated along the same lines: an *amīn*, chief *kātib*, other *kuttāb*, heads of workshops and master craftsmen. These must be the roles indicated by the different names – of *ḥiyān* and craftsmen – inscribed on some of the products of these industries. According to the few historical texts that mention Andalusī *ṭirāz*, it would appear that the Cordoban Dār al-Ṭirāz functioned along similar lines to the Fatimid industry, in which some workshops apparently worked exclusively for a court clientele (known as *ṭirāz al-khāṣṣa*) while others worked more openly for the market (*ṭirāz al-ʿamma*).²⁸ In the account of a gift sent to the Zanāta chieftain, Muḥammad

25 Arjona and Marfil 2004, 142.

26 Arjona and Marfil 2004, 141.

27 *Anales*, §§77–78.

28 Sokoly 1997; Contadini 1998, 39–58; Sokoly 2017.

ibn Khazar, soon after ‘Abd al-Raḥmān declared his caliphate (discussed in Section 2, below), the accompanying letter is at pains to stress that the clothing being sent was made ‘fi ṭirāz-hu al-khāṣṣ’, ‘in his – the caliph’s – private ṭirāz’. Compared to the huge numbers of ṭirāz textiles that have survived in Egypt’s dry climatic conditions, only two Andalusī textiles survive which are inscribed with names of the caliph: one possibly made for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art;²⁹ and the so-called ‘Veil of Hishām’ in the name of Hishām II (Figure 9, Appendix 4.2, discussed below).

It is therefore possible that, as he reformed the coinage and other offices of the state bureaucracy, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān also reorganised the internal structure of the Dār al-Şināʿa and Dār al-Ṭirāz, so that they functioned more efficiently under the strain of the increased output expected from them by the caliphs. All these ateliers were moved to Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, during the period when ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was aggrandising it to be a more potent expression of his power as caliph. Al-Maqqarī records that in 335/946, the Dār al-Şināʿa was relocated; the mint was moved in 947, as indicated by the surviving coin issue. Both were well established there by 949, when – interestingly – they were included on a tour of the palace-city by a delegation of Byzantine envoys: ‘they visited the Dār al-Şināʿa and the Dār al-ʿUdda (the house of military

equipment), on the outskirts of al-Zahrāʾ, and the Dār al-Sikka (the mint)’.³⁰ However, the first extant dated objects which identify Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ as their place of production come from twenty years later, in 355/966 (the ivories made for al-Ḥakam’s sister, Wallāda).³¹ Other services that apparently remained in Cordoba were the Dār al-Zawāmil, the stables for the beasts of burden (sing. *zāmila*) and the Barīd, post office. In 971, these were moved to the west of the city, in the expansion zone that had sprung up between the old city of Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ.³² The *ḥājib* Jaʿfar al-Muṣḥafī was charged with masterminding this move, and this could be why his title is given as *ṣāhib al-khayl wa-l-burud* on the marble pipe-cover in the David Collection (Figures 104–107).

The Dār al-ʿUdda mentioned during the visit of the Byzantine envoys might be the same as the Khizānat al-Silāḥ at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ.³³ This government arsenal also manufactured weapons in enormous quantities: 3000 tents, 13,000 shields, 12,000 bows a year, and 20,000 arrows a month. As we saw in Chapter 4, the sources tell us that there were weapons stores (*asliḥa*) at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira;³⁴ of course, al-Manṣūr and his enormous army needed to be appropriately apparelled for their regular campaigns, and weapons also played a major part in *khilʿa*.³⁵ Could the production of weapons have taken place here too?

Another Khizānah mentioned in the historical sources seems to have been similar to the Fatimid treasury, in that it was simultaneously a storage facility that was also intended to display precious objects. This treasury is mentioned in the *Kitāb*

29 Now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (1977:188), this textile is woven in the name of the caliph ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and dated 330/941–942. It also says that it was made under the supervision of ‘Durrī, ‘abdu-hu’: see *Santiago-al-Andalus*, 369–370; Mackie 2015, 172–3 (5.3, 5.4). It is length of linen over a metre long (and probably originally closer to 2 metres long); its inscription was embroidered with (originally crimson) silk and is largely now lost. The wording has been reconstructed from needle holes and the few remaining stitches. It is best seen in black and white photographs, as is almost impossible to read anything at all on the textile in its current state. I am grateful to Louise Mackie for allowing me to study this textile during a research visit to Cleveland in 2008.

30 Vallejo 2010, 184, citing Castejón (1961–2), 137.

31 Silva Santa-Cruz 1999; Bariani 2005.

32 *Anales*, §35; Ibn Ḥayyān 1965, 66; Ación Almansa and Vallejo Triano 1998, 134.

33 Nicolle 2001, 11.

34 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 458]; *Bayān* 111:61, 63 [translation, 64, 66], which mention ‘arms and munitions’ as a subdivision of the treasury. On the weapons stores at al-Zahrāʾ, see *Anales*, §9.

35 Ballestín 2006.

al-Mafākhir al-Barbar in the anecdote relating to Ḥasan ibn Qānūn's marvellous piece of ambergris, which al-Ḥakam would stop at nothing to acquire:

“A fragment of ambergris of unusual form and extraordinary dimensions ... obtained from a certain place along his coasts. Ḥasan had ordered it to be worked until it had the form of a leather cushion, and he used it in the period of his splendour. Word of this came to al-Ḥakam, who requested that Ḥasan send it to him for his treasury (*khizānati-hi*), on the condition that he would be recompensed in justice for the fragment of amber.”³⁶

Ḥasan commissioned an extraordinary object to be crafted from this precious material, and showed it off ‘in the period of his splendour’. Stories of this amazing piece of ambergris provoked al-Ḥakam's jealousy, and he became obsessed with acquiring it. What was the point of going to such lengths if the amazing piece of ambergris was going to disappear into a store where it would remain invisible? This anecdote surely implies a treasury that the caliph could take visitors around to boast proudly of his art collection, as collectors do today. It is worth keeping this in mind when we consider the visibility of such luxury objects as the Cordoban ivories. This Khizānah even had its curator, *al-khāzin*, a role played by al-Ḥakam's favourite Durri al-Saghīr in the 960s (see below). The lengths to which al-Ḥakam would go to obtain important works of art is seen in other cases, not just his desire to have Byzantine glass mosaics for his *maqṣūra* at the Cordoba mosque (Chapter 5): he paid high prices to obtain a copy of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica*, which then initiated a whole translation enterprise, as well as copies of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* and the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, all of which no doubt were then housed in his famous library (which the texts call *al-khizānat al-‘ilmīyya*, or Treasury of Knowledge).³⁷ As discussed in

Chapter 1, this Library functioned as a scriptorium for the copying and production of manuscripts, as well as providing a repository of books which could be consulted by Cordoba's elite scholars. Could we imagine that the Khizānah functioned, or was at least accessible, in a similar way? It is perhaps significant that the inscription on the famous mantle woven in Palermo in 528/1133–4 for the Norman king Roger II (r. 1130–54) states that it was woven in the Khizānah, which appears in that case to be equivalent to the caliphal institution of the Ṭirāz.³⁸ Could this imply that as well as being an open access storehouse for precious possessions, the fabrication of luxury objects also took place here? Perhaps Khizānah was an equivalent term to Dār al-Ṣinā'a.

While we can speculate that the library and Khizānah were located within the palace precincts itself, where were the workshops located after their transfer to Madīnat al-Zahrā'? Al-Maqqarī's text, cited above, about the visit of the Byzantine ambassadors to the workshops states that the Dār al-Ṣinā'a and Dār al-'Udda were *bi aknāf*, ‘on the outskirts of’, al-Zahrā'. The topography of Madīnat al-Zahrā' replicated that of the old city of Cordoba; gates were placed in the same relationship to each other as in Cordoba, and were even given the same names.³⁹ This would suggest that the workshops would be located in the far south-west of the site, replicating their old placement near the Souk and Bāb Ishbiliya/al-'Atṭārīn in Cordoba. The equivalent zone at Madīnat al-Zahrā' remains unexcavated but aerial photography has identified ‘six large structures, identical, contiguous and aligned north-south, which

the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* from Abū'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, who sent him a copy of this magna literary encyclopaedia even before it saw the light in his native Iraq'.

38 Andalaro 2006, vol. 1, 44–49, cat. 1.1 ‘Manto di Ruggero II’; vol. 2, 171–181, ‘Manto di Ruggero II e le vesti regie’, by Rotraud Bauer; Mackie 2015, 162–5.

39 Lévi-Provençal 1957 [1996], 236–238 (gates at the Madina of Cordoba); Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 432 (gates at Madīnat al-Zahrā'); 592–593 (gates in the Alcázar at Cordoba); Safran 2000, 68.

36 Ballestín 2008, 146–7.

37 Puerta Vilchez 2013a, 76 (English version p. 63), relates that al-Ḥakam ‘sent 10,000 dinars of pure gold to buy

constitute an extraordinary group of constructions of a state character'.⁴⁰ These are extremely large buildings with a large open space in front of them. Vallejo has proffered as possible interpretations of these structures that they could be the barracks for the city's guard, or the royal workshops. Vallejo admits that this identification is hypothetical until geophysical survey can shed clearer light on the function of this zone.⁴¹ If these are the buildings housing the workshops, are they too monumental? Ivory carving, or the working of precious metals, would not require such extensive space for equipment, storage or working, but the ateliers for architectural decoration certainly would – to store the stone and marble and other large-scale materials required for making columns, capitals and bases, and then to store the finished pieces until such time as they could be installed in their intended buildings. Ibn Ghālib states that 'the houses of the *fityān* ... and the functionaries were outside the palace, on the western side' of Madīnat al-Zahrā'.⁴² As we will discuss below, the *fityān* were the cohort who regulated the luxury arts industry, as well as other branches of the state infrastructure, and as such, if these buildings can be identified as the workshops, they themselves would be physically located nearby.

Unfortunately, in the case of al-Manşūr's palace-city, we have no physical evidence from which to extrapolate the location of the 'Āmirid Dār al-Şinā'a, but one precious piece of information informs us that a branch of the industry indeed existed there. Among the earliest dated of the extant 'Āmirid objects is the marble basin made for al-Manşūr in 377/987–8 (Figures 113–118, Appendix 4.7), which tells us through its inscription that it was made *bi-qaşr al-zāhira*. This makes the basin the only securely identifiable survival of the 'Āmirid palace-city. It was made under the direction of Kh-, probably Khalaf or Khayrah, the

fatā al-kabīr al-'āmirī, indicating the physical presence of that *fatā* at the 'Āmirid palace-city. The extant 'Āmirid objects date from the mid 980s onwards, coinciding with the construction of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, the adoption of a *laqab*, and the culmination of al-Manşūr's rise to power. The fact that the marble basin was made at the palace-city underlines the significance of the relationship between al-Manşūr's projection of power and his utilisation of the luxury arts, as we will see below.

1.1 *Structure of the Industry*

It is possible to reconstruct to some extent the organisation of the Dār al-Şinā'a, and to identify some of its employees. The caliph's direct patronage of the luxury arts industry is implied by the inscriptions on surviving objects, especially carved ivories and marbles, which give the name of the caliph or a member of his family as the commissioner or recipient of that object. Of the seventeen ivories with an historical inscription, nine are datable to the period of the first two caliphs, of which eight were made for members of the highest level of the ruling family; two of them even state that they were made *bi-madīnat al-zahrā'*.⁴³ This implies a close association between the ivory-carving industry and the person of the caliph – as Makariou puts it, 'in caliphal Spain, the art of ivory-carving was essentially an art of power, just like the *ṭirāz*'.⁴⁴ In fact, the formal relationship between the iconography of ivories and textiles argues for a close executive relationship between the Dār al-Şinā'a and the Dār al-Ṭirāz – compare, for example, the scenes of horsemen inside lobed medallions on the al-Mughīra and Ziyād ibn Aflah pyxides (Figures 3, 12, 171) and textiles such as the Oña embroidery (Figures 13, 137) or the Suaire de Saint Lazare (Figures 84, 136). We know from

40 Vallejo 2010, 133.

41 Antonio Vallejo, personal communication, 5 June 2014.

42 Vallejo 2010, 184.

43 The Fitero and Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan caskets, both made in 966, possibly for Wallāda, a daughter of 'Abd al-Raḥmān 111: see Silva Santa-Cruz 1999 and Bariani 2005.

44 Makariou 1999, 133.



FIGURE 84
 Suaire de Saint Lazare, late tenth century,
 embroidered silk and gold thread; general
 view of the largest fragment
 © MUSÉE ROLIN, AUTUN



FIGURE 85
 Marble basin with heads of lion and
 deer from al-Rummāniyya, 960s; Museo
 Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba,
 inv. CE006418, H 28.5 W 97 D 71 cm
 © MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

inscriptions and textual sources that Şaqāliba were sometimes running two ateliers at the same time: around 350/961–2, Jaʿfar al-Şiqḷabī was acting as *şāhib al-khayl* (Head of the Cavalry) *wa al-tirāz*,⁴⁵ and in 361/972–3, Fāʿiq was made *şāhib al-burud* (Head of the Postal Service) *wa al-tirāz*.⁴⁶ We will discuss below the possibility that the craftsmen themselves moved between different media.

The patronage structure of the luxury arts industry is most easily reconstructed at the stage at which an object was commissioned.⁴⁷ Inscriptions on objects not only provide information but also mark them as royal products of the Dār al-Şināʿa, as does the way that the inscriptions are carved in relief. The standard formula commonly used in al-Andalus to express the commission was *mimma amara bi-ʿamali-hi*, ‘what he [patron already specified] ordered to be made’; when the object was commissioned as a gift for someone else, this phrase is followed by the preposition *li-* and the recipient’s name. The Girona casket inscription provides a clear illustration of this: it begins by invoking blessings on the caliph al-Ḥakam, and continues with the standard formula, as above, followed by, *li-Abī al-Walīd Hishām walī ʿahd al-muslimīn* (Figures 1–2, Appendix 4.1). This implies that this object was commissioned as a gift for the caliph’s son, and even though the object is not dated, it has been convincingly argued that it was created to celebrate Hishām’s official designation as *walī al-ʿahd* in 976.⁴⁸ The commissioning formula may also be accompanied by the name of a court official (*fatā*) through whom the commission was carried out (designated in the inscriptions

by the phrase *ʿalā yaday*), and these names are often qualified by information indicating the personal relationship of that official to his patron: for example, the suffixes ‘ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’,⁴⁹ ‘ibn Hishām’,⁵⁰ ‘ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī’,⁵¹ or just ‘al-ʿĀmirī’.⁵² All of these phrases indicate that these *fityān* were slaves or freedmen of the patron. These names may also be qualified by the short phrases *ʿabdu-hu*, ‘his servant’, which should perhaps be translated in the more general sense of ‘at his [the patron’s] service’; or *mawlā-hu*, ‘his client, freedman’; or, more unusually on the Pamplona casket, *mamlūku-hu*, ‘his slave’.⁵³ Though the name is partially lost on al-Manşūr’s marble basin, the designation given is *al-fatā al-kabīr al-ʿāmirī*, i.e. the *ʿĀmirid* fatā, presumably to make a distinction from the *caliphal* fatā. This is perhaps logical when one considers that there were now two palace households, at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ and al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, but also indicates that the Dār al-Şināʿa at al-Zāhira replicated the organisational structure of that at al-Zahrāʾ, possibly on a smaller scale, unless the whole infrastructure had in fact been

45 Ocaña 1976, 219–220.

46 This is surely the same person as the Fāʿiq al-Nizāmī mentioned at *Bayān* 11:277–279 [translation, 431–434], who together with Jawdhar led the campaign to displace Hishām from the caliphal succession.

47 Blair 2005.

48 Souto 2005, 255: ‘Though undated the work must be located between 5 February and 1 October 976, the period between the naming of Hishām as heir and the death of his father, the caliph al-Ḥakam 11’.

49 Cf. the inscription commemorating the construction of a minaret and gallery at a mosque in Cordoba, by Sayyida Mushtaq, the mother of al-Mughira: see Lévi-Provençal 1931, 24–5 (#18); Martínez Núñez 2006, §1; Anderson 2012, 656–661. This commission was carried out by Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Şiqḷabī, on whom see below.

50 There is one instance on a column base in Cordoba IV of a signature Mubārak ibn Hishām (though Mubārak on its own occurs frequently). Ocaña 1986, 66, understood this man to be a *mawla* of Hishām 11, which would provide the only evidence of this caliph’s personal involvement in the luxury arts industry. However, we cannot say for sure that this Hishām is the caliph. See Souto 2010, 2.56 (for Mubārak ibn Hishām), 2.55 (for Mubārak).

51 As on the Pamplona casket and Braga pyxis, where this *kunya* completes the name of the *fatā al-kabīr*, Zuhayr. See Appendix 4.11 and 12 for the inscriptions on these two objects.

52 As on the al-Manşūr basin (Appendix 4.7).

53 Blair 2005, 85 says that Zuhayr’s designation as *mamlūk* identifies him as a ‘freed slave’.

transferred to al-Zāhira and brought under direct ʿĀmirid control.

In several cases, the named *fatā* can be identified with an individual known from the historical record, or from the signatures on other objects. These were men of high social standing, who held important offices in the state bureaucracy, and were often very wealthy. Though no inscription explicitly describes them as *aṣḥāb dār al-ṣināʿa*, it must be assumed that this is what the mention of their names on the commissions implies. This is confirmed by the Girona casket (Figures 1–2), where the Jawdhar named in the inscription can be identified with the ‘superintendent of the gold and silver-smiths’ (*ṣāḥib al-ṣāgha*) who plotted in 976 to displace Hishām from the succession (Chapter 1).⁵⁴ At the same time, Jawdhar also held the post of ‘Grand Falconer’ (*ṣāḥib al-bayāzira*), which implies his high standing in al-Ḥakam’s entourage, the ‘bayzara’ (sport of falconry) being an important caliphal pastime.⁵⁵

The social and political importance of the men in charge of the luxury arts industry is illustrated by the career of Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣiqlābī. His name occurs in inscriptions between the 950s and 970s, and Ocaña used this epigraphic record to trace his career, corroborating this information where possible from the historical sources. In inscriptions from the Hall of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III dated 345/956–7, Jaʿfar is styled simply *fatā-hu*; by 348/959–60 he seems to have been manumitted, since his name is suffixed *fatā-hu wa mawlā-hu*.⁵⁶ Within a couple of years

he had received an important promotion, since a series of inscriptions from the year 350/961–2 name him as *ṣāḥib al-khayl wa al-ṭirāz fatā amīr al-muʿminīn ... wa mawlā-hu*.⁵⁷ This evidence is corroborated by al-Maqqarī, who links the promotion to al-Ḥakam’s accession, and also gives important information about Jaʿfar’s wealth.⁵⁸ By the mid 960s he had been promoted again, to *ḥājib*, and given the *laqab* ‘Sayf al-Dawla’.⁵⁹ It is under this title that he occurs on the remaining inscriptions, which come mainly from al-Ḥakam’s extension to the Cordoba mosque, a project which he supervised.⁶⁰ We will return to Jaʿfar below, in the context of his own luxury arts patronage while *ḥājib*, as a possible precedent to al-Manṣūr.

A similar career path is followed by two *fityān* charged with the production of some important ivories, though there is less external information about their careers. Durri al-Saghir, whose name appears on the pair of pyxides made *circa* 964 for al-Ḥakam (Figure 86) and his concubine Ṣubḥ, is known from the contemporary historical accounts to have been a favourite at al-Ḥakam’s court, and to have accumulated great riches in his service: in 973, Durri made a gift to the caliph of the Munyat al-Rummāniyya, which he had constructed for himself, and which became a favoured caliphal retreat from nearby Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ.⁶¹ While no official title is given in the inscriptions, we encounter him in al-Rāzī’s Annals (§9) as

54 *Bayān* 11:277–279 [translation, 431–434].

55 ‘Bayzara’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

56 Ocaña 1976, 219, and Ocaña 1940, 441–2. These inscriptions and associated offices are updated and tabulated in Martínez Enamorado 2006, 66–7. As indicated above, ‘mawla’ did not necessarily imply Jaʿfar’s manumission, and may have had a general sense of ‘client’: however, as a *ṣiqlāb*, Jaʿfar would certainly have started his career as a slave, and it would not have been unusual if ʿAbd al-Raḥmān had manumitted him before his death: cf. *Anales*, §208, which tells us that as soon as al-Ḥakam fell ill, in Rabīʿ 11 364/January 975, he freed over 100 of his slaves.

57 Ocaña 1976, 219–220.

58 Al-Maqqarī, *Analectes*, 1:247–248; cf. Ocaña 1976, 220–221.

59 *Bayān* 11:249 [translation, 385–6], confirmed by six inscriptions from the year 353/964–5, cf. Ocaña 1976, 221.

60 Ocaña 1976, 222: Jaʿfar is cited as ‘ḥājib’ in the inscriptions commemorating the placement of the columns which support the mihrab arch (dated 354/965–6), and those which commemorate the end of the construction of Cordoba III: cf. Lévi-Provençal 1931, 9–21 (#10–#14). Likewise, he is simply ‘ḥājib’ on an inscription (dated 358/969–70) now in the Capilla de Villaviciosa, and the inscription on al-Ḥakam’s fountain basin (dated 360/971–2).

61 See *Anales*, §104, and Ocaña 1984a, 376–377. On Durri’s career, see Anderson 2012.

‘al-khāzin’ (treasurer or curator – equivalent to being in charge of the Dār al-Šināʿa?), and ‘khalifa’ of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ.⁶² By 976, he was serving as *qāḍī* of Baeza, but he fell victim to al-Muṣḥafī’s and Ibn Abī ʿĀmir’s attempts to curtail the wealth and prestige of the most powerful Ṣaḡāliba. An incident in which Durri insulted Ibn Abī ʿĀmir by pulling his beard – at the very gate of his residence, in front of members of his personal guard – indicates the social faultlines that were beginning to divide state and society: on the one hand, the increasing reliance on Berber support by al-Muṣḥafī and Ibn Abī ʿĀmir, and on the other the more ‘traditional’ reliance of the Andalusī elite on the slave faction of the Ṣaḡāliba.⁶³

The second *fatā* who was involved in the production of ivories was Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī, named in the inscription of the Pamplona casket as the *fatā al-kabīr* who directed this commission, as well as al-Manṣūr’s manumitted slave (*mamlūkīhi*). This *tour de force* of ivory carving, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 (2.1), appears to have been such an important work – that needed to be completed as soon as possible to commemorate ʿAbd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr’s victory over Sancho García of León, for which he received the new title ‘Sayf al-Dawla’ – that a whole team of carvers worked on it, led by Faraj who perhaps also led the team that carved the unprecedented double-capital, and no doubt others, to adorn the palaces of al-Madīnat

al-Zāhira (Figures 37–38, Chapter 4). But over Faraj was Zuhayr, the *fatā* who at that time held a position of responsibility in the (ʿĀmirid) Dār al-Šināʿa. It is probable that Zuhayr was also named as the *fatā al-kabīr* in the inscription on the Braga pyxis, carved shortly afterwards, where the name of the director of the commission is missing because of a loss to the ivory (Figures 11, 15, Appendix 4.12). It is probable that this Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī was the same man who was governor of Jaén, Baeza and Calatrava, and who later became a Taifa ruler, like many ʿĀmirid officials, in this case of Almería (Conclusion).⁶⁴

It can thus be argued that wherever a *fatā* is designated as the director of works by the phrase *ʿala yaday*, this equates to the official role of *ṣāhib* within the luxury arts manufactory, the Dār al-Šināʿa. These *aṣḥāb* were important men in society and in the state bureaucracy, and exercised a ‘function of control’ over the skilled workers who engaged in the actual making.⁶⁵ They may have been the men who worked with the patron to conceive and develop a design for an object. It is likely that different ateliers, working in different media, functioned under the umbrella of the Dār al-Šināʿa, which is why the same names are found on architectural decoration, ivories, marbles, even ceramics and metalwork. While textiles were produced in a separately-organised industry, as we have seen, men of the status of Durri al-Saḡhir, Jaʿfar al-Šiqlābī or Fāʿiq held roles across different branches of this industry, linking in one person the luxury arts with the Dār al-Ṭirāz. This suggests the means by which iconographic relationships between textiles and luxury objects might have come about. It has often been observed that the medallion-based designs of the figurative ivories were influenced by the design of textiles such as the Suaire de Saint Lazare (Figures 84, 136), whose processions of hunters or warriors inside lobed medallions are stylistically very close to the

62 In the *Anales*, ‘khalifa’ appears to be a salaried office within the caliphal administration, equivalent in status to ‘fatā al-kabīr’. In general, it seems to designate an ordinary freed slave, as opposed to a ‘mawlā’ who was a slave freed by the sovereign. See HEM 11:126; Wasserstein 1985, 158, n. 8. Also *Anales*, §94, for the information on Durri’s disgrace in Rajab 362/April 973 which required him to forfeit his salary as *khalifa*. He only regained the caliph’s favour four months later, through the intercession of the young Hishām. Despite this debt to the *walī al-ahd*, Durri nevertheless later became embroiled in the plot to install al-Mughīra on the throne: cf. *Bayān* 11: 280–81 [translation, 436–7].

63 *Bayān* 11: 280–1 [translation, 436–7], cited in Anderson 2003, 169.

64 Naváscues y de Palacio 1964a, 241–242; Wasserstein 1993a, 129–145.

65 Martínez Nuñez 1995, 144.



FIGURE 86 Pyxis made for al-Ḥakam II, c 964, ivory and silver-and-niello mounts; Victoria and Albert Museum, 217–1865

© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

mounted falconers that recur on the carved ivories. Thinking about the Āmirid marble basins, for example (Chapter 7: 1.2, 2.3.1, 4.2.1), the fact of a centralised crafts industry operating under direct royal patronage could facilitate design choices between textiles and carved marbles. If the Āmirid marble basins copied textile models, this would go some way to explaining both the anomalous depiction of ‘frontal-splayed’ eagles in al-Andalus, and why they are stylistically so similar to contemporary textiles, especially those produced in Byzantium (Figure 87).

The names of the skilled workers at the next level down within the Dār al-Ṣinā‘a are also represented epigraphically, in the form of the large number of signatures inscribed on luxury arts of all media, usually preceded by the word *‘amala*, ‘made [by]’. Many of the names were common among slaves and freedmen, being auspicious or aesthetic abstract nouns such as ‘Shining’ (Durrī), ‘Consolation’ or ‘Joy’ (Faraj), ‘Victory’ (Fath and Naṣr), ‘Elegant’ (Rashīq), ‘Happiness’ (Sa‘āda), or ‘Full Moon’ (Badr).⁶⁶ We find many of these names carved onto architectural elements in the Āmirid extension to the Cordoba Mosque, as we saw in

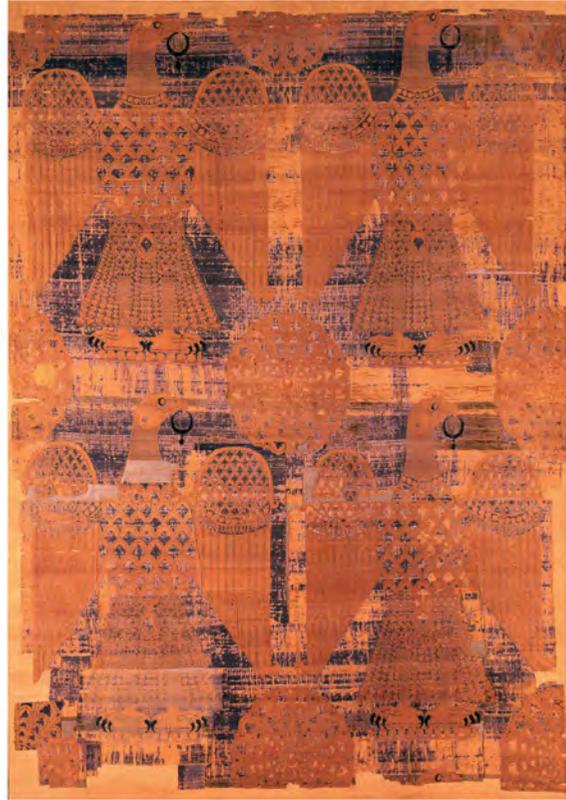


FIGURE 87 Heraldic eagles on the Suaire de Saint Germain, Byzantine, about 1000, woven silk

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Chapter 5. The recurrence of the same name in different artistic contexts may be pure coincidence, and need not necessarily indicate the involvement of the same craftsman. Juan Souto was rightly wary of stating that the same name on different objects indicated their makers were one and the same, since such names were common among the slave class in al-Andalus, which numbered in the thousands – though a much more restricted pool would have been employed in the Dār al-Ṣinā‘a, especially with the level of skill that would merit signing their name.⁶⁷ Since men at this

67 In his last article on this subject, Souto noted that the mutual identity of different artisans of the same name was ‘una de las varias preguntas sin respuesta que nos hacemos constantemente’ (Souto 2010a, 214). Sadly, as a result of his untimely death, we will never know the conclusion he might eventually have reached.

66 Souto 2001, 283; Souto 2010b, 39–45.

level of society are not mentioned in the historical sources, it is difficult without further evidence to say for certain that these were the same craftsmen, however the circumstantial evidence, of the same name occurring in contemporary and related contexts, is highly suggestive. As we will discuss below, it is likely that the same men worked across different media and different projects. It is significant that the seven hundred signatures documented on architectonic elements in the ʿĀmirid mosque extension comprise only twenty-five names, of which thirteen occur as signatures in contexts outside the mosque, including on objects (Chapter 5). This would seem to indicate that this relatively small number of craftsmen were working together within one branch of the Dār al-Şināʿa, on projects that ranged from ivory carving to the production of columns and capitals for the mosque.

The Pamplona casket is unusual in bearing five signatures, incised in inconspicuous places throughout its decoration (Figure 126). This indicates that five craftsmen worked simultaneously on its production, though the style of its iconographical programme is surprisingly unified for a shared project. This might imply a designer, perhaps the *fatā*, Zuhayr, or Faraj, whose role as master craftsman is indicated by an invisible inscription, located on the underside of the topmost plaque of the lid; this extremely important signature was only discovered when the casket was dismantled for cleaning and conservation in the 1960s.⁶⁸ It reads *ʿamal Faraj maʿa talāmiḍihi*, ‘Made by Faraj with his apprentices’ (Figure 126A), and indicates that a craftsman whose name occurs in two contexts associated with al-Manşūr’s mosque extension was, a decade later, a master craftsman in the luxury objects atelier.⁶⁹ Perhaps because of this

role, Faraj is known from other epigraphic evidence to have worked in teams: as discussed in Chapter 4, his name appears alongside Bāshir and Mubārak on the unprecedented double-capital probably from al-Madīnat al-Zāhira (Figures 37–38); and on a (single) capital, reused in the Alcázar at Seville, alongside Mubārak again, and Khayr who, significantly, also signs the Pamplona casket.⁷⁰

Faraj’s signature also appears in the carving on the casket itself, incised on the right lion-slayer on the right side of the lid (Figure 126B). The other names given are Mişbāḥ (‘Light’), incised beneath the lion-borne platform in the right medallion on the front, beneath the bearded figure; Khayr (‘Goodness’), incised in the centre of the shield carried by the lion-fighting man on the back central medallion; Rashīq (‘Graceful’), incised on the hindquarters of the right deer in the left medallion on the left side; and Saʿāda, incised on the hindquarters of the left deer in the right medallion on the right side.⁷¹ Clearly a whole team was needed to carve such a large and elaborate creation as the Pamplona casket, and perhaps to finish it quickly. As Sheila Blair points out, the location of the signatures is significant, and helps us to infer the division of labour across the workshop. The lid is signed (visibly and invisibly) by the master craftsman Faraj, then his four apprentices each sign one of the four remaining plaques: Mişbāḥ the front, Khayr the back, Rashīq the left side, Saʿāda the right side. The positioning of Mişbāḥ’s name – literally ‘under ʿAbd al-Malik’s foot’ – creates a visual pun of the craftsman’s lowliness *vis-à-vis* the patron; it also implies that these ivory carvers were by this date controlled not by the caliph but by the ʿĀmirid *ḥājib*.⁷² This connection to the

68 Navásquez y de Palacio 1964a and 1964b. It is interesting to speculate how many other ivories might have hidden inscriptions in this location or on the undersides of plaques hidden by a wooden core or textile lining.

69 Faraj occurs in signatures in Cordoba IV: cf. Rodríguez and Souto 2000a, and Souto 2001, 287–288, and on a capital probably from al-Manşūr’s ablutions pavilion, Souto 2004, table 2. It should be remembered that the

Dhīkr Bilād 1:40 [11:46] dates the completion of the ablutions pavilion to 390/999–1000, which is close in date to the manufacture of the Pamplona casket (395/1004–5).

70 Souto 2010a, 2.25 and 7.112, citing Martínez Núñez et al. 2007, n. 582.

71 Blair 2005, 84. Souto 2010a, 2.41 (Khayr) and 2.70 (Saʿāda).

72 Blair 2005, 84–5.

patron is underlined by the presence of the word *‘āmīr* incised on the hindquarters of both horses in the left medallion on the back of the casket (Figure 126E). They have in the past also been read as signatures, but Blair suggests that instead they are brands, ‘identifying the horses as belonging to the family herd owned by the [casket’s] patron, ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr’.⁷³ Like the wording of the inscription, and the visual imagery that we will discuss further in Chapters 7 and 8, everything connects the carving of this casket with the ‘Āmirids as patrons.

Three of Faraj’s ‘apprentices’ are also known from other contexts,⁷⁴ of whom the third, Khayr or Khayra(h?), can be found among the signatures in Cordoba IV, and *may* appear on al-Manṣūr’s marble basin. Only the first letter of the name (*kh-*) survives on the basin, and it may be more likely to have originally read Khalaf: this individual occurs throughout Cordoba IV, most frequently as Khalaf al-‘Āmirī, but is also known to have been *qā’id* of Toledo in 387/997–8, when he oversaw the construction of the bridge over the Tagus in al-Manṣūr’s name (Chapter 4).⁷⁵ Since the person named on al-Manṣūr’s basin is both the director of the commission and *fatā al-kabīr al-‘āmīrī*, indicating a man of high status, Khalaf seems more likely than Khayra(h), whose signature on three columns in the ‘Āmirid extension to the

Cordoba Mosque and on capitals now in Seville and Marrakesh identifies him, rather, as a skilled workman.⁷⁶

Furthermore, the phrase *al-fatā al-kabīr al-‘āmīrī* also proclaims a direct connection between the *ḥājib* and the overseer of the marble basin. This direct relationship is likewise proclaimed in the designation of Zuhayr as an ‘Āmirid freedman (‘ibn muḥammad al-‘āmīrī’). His name and status, positioned prominently in the Pamplona casket’s main inscription, designated Zuhayr as *ṣāhib dār al-ṣinā’a*, a post he still occupied when the Braga pyxis was created a short while later. While Faraj was certainly a talented master craftsman, in the case of the Pamplona casket’s manufacture, he reported to Zuhayr. Men like Zuhayr and Khayr/Khalaf were no doubt the executors of ‘Āmirid will regarding the designs and inscriptions on the objects made under their patronage. This cohort of elite slaves formed the backbone of the Andalusi court administration, and were personally loyal to their masters.⁷⁷ This direct and perhaps physically close relationship – if the model of Ja’far’s residence near to the caliph’s at Madīnat al-Zahrā’ is anything to go by – meant that the *ḥujjāb* themselves could keep a close eye on the planning and execution of the decorative schemes on objects and buildings being made for them. The *fityān* provided the mechanism by which the ‘Āmirid regents themselves could control the luxury arts industry and invest its products with certain messages conveying the construction and external projection of their image of power.

Could the Khalaf al-‘Āmirī who may have been the overseer of al-Manṣūr’s marble basin and worked within the Cordoba mosque extension, and who was *qā’id* of Toledo by the late 990s, be the same person who was carving (and signing)

73 *‘Āmir* appears on the coins minted throughout al-Manṣūr’s *ḥijāba*, which perhaps functions as a kind of brand. Nevertheless, *‘āmīr* on its own does also appear as a signature in the Cordoba Mosque (eg nos. 305 and 307): Souto 2010a, 7.107. See Figure 4.

74 Sa’āda’s name is inscribed on three capitals from Cordoba IV (Souto 2001, 295), a capital found at al-Ruṣāfa (Arjona Castro 2000, fig. 4, and 2001, 384), and could be one of the men mentioned in the foundation inscription of the Bāb al-Mardūm mosque in Toledo (999–1000), which reads “ala yaday Mūsā ibn ‘Alī al-banna’ wa Sa’āda’ (Souto 1998, 312). On the other instances of Rashīq, who because of the earlier chronology is probably not the same man as worked on the Pamplona casket, cf. Souto 2001, 294–295.

75 Rodríguez and Souto 2000a, and 2000b, esp. 202–205. On the bridge inscription, he is named as Khalaf ibn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī.

76 Souto 2007, 114–5, 126–7 (inscription no. 10) and n. 44: for the capital now in the Qaṣba Mosque in Marrakesh, see Souto 2010a, 7.110; on the capital in Seville, see above (n. 70).

77 Anderson 2012.

ivories in the 960s?⁷⁸ Would a *fatā* designate himself as Khalaf al-ʿĀmirī to distinguish him from another well-known Khalaf, or because he was now operating under ʿĀmirid as opposed to caliphal patronage? Is it possible for someone who was a skilled worker carving ivories in the 960s to have worked his way up through the ranks to become *fatā al-kabīr*? And, having distinguished himself in that role, to be appointed *qāʿid*? We may never know the answer to these questions but it does raise the issue of the lifespan of craftsmen in the Dār al-Şīnāʿa. Would the Khalaf of the 960s still even be alive in the late 990s?

Oliver Watson has reflected on this issue in his study of the Doha casket (Figures 145–146).⁷⁹ Observing that only 30 complete or near complete objects survive from a hundred-year period – taking the first textual reference to ivories (in the year 934) as the starting point, and the last dated Cuenca piece (from 1049) as the end point – he calculates that this equates to ‘a survival rate of some two to three pieces per decade’, though the spread across the decades is not even. In his Fig. 87, he charts the distribution of the surviving ivories datable from the 960s to the 1040s, against the working life of a trained craftsman, which he proposes was roughly three decades. He includes overlaps to account for the need to train apprentices by those already skilled.

This purely statistical exercise suggests that a craftsman practising in the 960s could still be working in the 980s. It does not factor in Khalaf’s age when he became skilled enough to sign his name on ivories, or the life expectancy at that level of society. If Khalaf had been apprenticed at age 15 (around 960), by 966 when he signed the Fitero casket he would have been in his early 20s; by 990, when he ‘retired’ – possibly having worked his way up to the position of *fatā al-kabīr* – he would have been about 50. Could he then have enjoyed another seven to eight years in a more

honorific role, as *qāʿid* of Toledo, where he oversaw the bridge construction, perhaps as one of his last acts? It is perhaps unlikely, but not inconceivable. Such a principle of longevity in the craftsmen’s careers allows for the distinct possibility that craftsmen who had worked in the caliphal Dār al-Şīnāʿa later operated in the ʿĀmirid industry. This would explain the stylistic relationships, for example, between the tall deer with elaborate antlers or the mustachioed lions that are such a distinctive feature of the ʿĀmirid marble basins (Figure 157), and the lions and deer that appear on the surviving fragments of architectural decoration from the Munyat al-Rummāniyya (Figure 85). The craftsman who carved the basins found at al-Rummāniyya, or the elaborate capital decorated with lions and birds of which only one volute survives (Figure 29), could conceivably have been employed on the ʿĀmirid marble basins some twenty to thirty years later, if he had been at the start of his career or still an apprentice around 970.

This discussion leads to thoughts on hands – the distinctive approach to carving that creates a ‘tell’ which allows us to tentatively attribute different objects to the same maker. This might be the recurrence of a particular motif or the way of rendering fur on animals’ bodies. Other examples of this will be highlighted in the discussion of particular objects in Chapter 7, however, to establish the principle, it is worth looking at the two caliphal ivories we know were carved by the same craftsman, the Fitero casket and the pyxis in the Hispanic Society.⁸⁰ Both ivories feature a distinctive floral motif with four petals with tiny drill holes around its centre and incised lines along the petals,⁸¹ and the innovative use of uncarved areas of ivory to create a contrasting texture to the decoration. We could go further and start to define other characteristics of Khalaf’s carving style, such

78 Souto 2001, 290–291, thought not, because of the time difference between these commissions.

79 Watson, 2005, 171–2.

80 Ferrandis 1935, cat. 8, plates x–xi (Fitero); cat. 9, plates xii–xiii (Hispanic Society). This comparison is explored in Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 34.

81 Seen at the lower centre of the back of the Fitero casket, and to bottom right of the lockplate on the Hispanic Society pyxis.

as the comparatively large amount of empty background he leaves around the vegetal designs on these two objects. ‘Highlights’ of uncarved ivory are seen to a more limited extent on the larger of two caskets in the V&A datable *circa* 961 (A.580-1910), whose bolder, blockier carving style is close to the Fitero casket, and might suggest this earlier casket was also made by Khalaf. It is quite different from the more delicate ‘miniature’ style seen on the smaller V&A casket (301-1866), which in turn exhibits a carving style very close to that of the cylindrical cosmetics box in Burgos. This is most evident in the inscriptions of these two ivories, but they also share a motif in the long thin leaf with two circles where it joins the stem.

These stylistic connections start to indicate where two or more objects might have been carved by the same craftsman, and again imply information about how the ivory workshops operated: in the case of the *circa* 961 group, at least two different craftsmen – Khalaf and another whose name is unknown – were working at the same time to produce objects for a daughter of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, perhaps as part of a bridal trousseau.⁸²

These stylistic connections also operated across media. There are many examples that could be cited. The decoration of the earliest ivories made for a daughter of the first caliph evokes the vegetal motifs of the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III; while a marble panel from Madīnat al-Zahrā’ features identical palmettes to those which adorn the Girona casket, signed by Badr and Ṭarīf (Figure 2). Similar palmettes are also seen in the wooden ceiling beams from al-Ḥakam’s *maqṣūra* at the Cordoba mosque,⁸³ where the marble carving around the mihrab is also signed by Badr. The extremely elegant and well-executed inscription on the Pamplona casket is unusual when compared to other inscriptions in the ivory group: as Watson noted, ‘its broad, beaded letters,

monumental scale, and sure calligraphy proclaims that it bears an important message. It is in an authoritative style hardly matched by any other Spanish ivory.’⁸⁴ However, its distinctive beaded letters relate to the ‘pearl beading’ on carving at Madīnat al-Zahrā’, in particular on panels that come from the royal baths constructed at the heart of the palace zone in the 950s (Figure 88). The braided guilloche borders enclosing the medallion decoration of the Pamplona casket is also seen, for example, in the carved plaster designs added to the double-capitals in the possibly ‘Āmirid tribune in the Cordoba Mosque;⁸⁵ while the same distinctive curlicue capitals are seen on the fragments of a marble basin now in the Alhambra Museum (Figure 134) and on the Braga pyxis (Figure 15). We can also note the recurrence of the heraldic eagle on ‘Āmirid objects. Other instances of such interconnections will be highlighted in the discussions of particular objects in the next chapter.

The pearl beading in the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and on the Pamplona casket was carved fifty years apart, so there is no question of the same craftsmen being involved in both. It is a technique that must have continued in the Dār al-Šinā’a, perhaps among the particularly skilled carvers (perhaps suggesting that on, the Pamplona casket, the master craftsman Faraj – who signed the lid – also carved the more tricky inscription). However, this shared approach across these different materials likely indicates the presence of a central overarching design authority, at a higher level of state control. This may indeed have been the case, especially where the inscriptions were concerned, which were probably conceived in the state Chancery. The phrasing, formulae and also physical appearance of the inscriptions on the objects – which are carved in relief in the same manner as

82 On this group of three objects made as a ‘set’, see Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015.

83 Nieto Cumplido 2005, 72.

84 Watson 2005, 168.

85 It must be noted, however, that Antonio Vallejo believes the plaster in the abacus and equinus zone of these capitals to be a much later addition (personal communication 6 September 2020).



FIGURE 88
Pearl beading on a marble carving from the rooms
adjacent to the Hall of ‘Abd al-Rahmān III at
Madīnat al-Zahrā’, 956–61

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official inscriptions – underline the ‘state’ level of the workshops that produced them. This notion also leads to the consideration of an issue that demands much fuller discussion than it has been granted hitherto: the likelihood that craftsmen worked across different, perhaps multiple, media.

1.2 *Craftsmen Working across Media*

Implicit in the foregoing discussion of signatures – especially where the same names are seen on the Pamplona casket and on architectonic elements from the ‘Āmirid extension to the Cordoba Mosque – is the idea that the same craftsmen worked on carving ivory caskets *and* these various elements in stone and marble. This idea has not received much support in ivory studies of recent years, or in medieval art history more generally, and appears to reflect a post-Renaissance perception of the *specialisation* of artists and

craftsmen.⁸⁶ The likelihood that medieval craftsmen did not specialise, but worked wherever they could apply their artistic skill, is currently the subject of some reconsideration. Recent studies have reminded us how Abbot Desiderius rebuilt the church of Montecassino (in southern Italy) before he became Pope Victor III in 1086, and because of the lack of craftsmen, he had the young monks trained in the full range of arts: gold, silver, bronze, iron, glass, ivory, wood, plaster and stone (*ex auro vel argento, aere, ferro, vitro, ebore, ligno, gipso, vel*

86 As Sarah Guérin notes in the first chapter of her doctoral dissertation on Gothic ivory carving (Guérin 2009), ‘There has been a reticence to accept that ivory carvers and stone carvers could have been the same individuals, even though one of the guilds states this explicitly and the other implicitly ... This reticence is based primarily on the similarity of the tools used by modern ivory carvers to those used by wood carvers’.

lapide).⁸⁷ Admittedly, it is not specified that the monks worked in all, or more than one, of these materials. For a later period, Sarah Guérin has pointed out that ivory carvers in Gothic Paris operated in guilds according to the types of images they produced, and were not specialised by material. Seven different guilds worked in ivory: the guild of painters and carvers of images were authorised to work in ‘all manner of wood, stone, bone, ivory and all types of paint good and true’; carvers of images and crucifixes specialised in bone, ivory and wood, though ‘all other materials can be used as long as the carver is familiar with the trade’.⁸⁸ Guérin concludes, ‘In the various carving guilds, therefore, the same artisans worked in wood, stone, ivory, bone and any other suitable material. There were no “ivory specialists” in thirteenth-century Paris, but rather the discerning patron sought a highly skilled carver capable of working in a number of different media’. This documentary evidence has recently been reinforced by archaeological discoveries, which as Guérin observes, ‘encourage scholars to relax such formerly conceived categories as *enmancheur* versus *coutelier*, and to celebrate the dexterity and diversity of the artisans’.⁸⁹ Though these formal categories relate to the products carved in Gothic Paris, they might easily be substituted with the words ‘ivory’ versus ‘architectural decoration’, and this reconsideration of non-specialisation in craft production has implications for the specific context of tenth-century Cordoba.

As mentioned above, in discussing the tiny percentage of ivory objects that have survived, at a rate he calculates as ‘two to three pieces per decade’, Watson observes, ‘This is surely nowhere near the required output needed to sustain an industry of

such high quality and provide for the practice and training of craftsmen’.⁹⁰ Such practice and training presupposes a constant and consistent supply of ivory material, which may not in fact have been the case, as we will discuss below (‘Materials’). At the end of his caption to Fig. 87, charting the potential working life of craftsmen, Watson comments, ‘It is important to note the very long periods for which nothing survives but during which time skills must have been preserved and objects produced’. In his note 38, he asks, ‘What other work might they have undertaken? I doubt that they were engaged in masonry or stucco work, as the fine motor skills needed for small-scale carving are totally different from those needed in working stone or on a large architectural scale’. Watson suggests woodwork as one possibility. The problem we immediately face when discussing this further in the Andalusí context is that very little carved wood survives from the caliphā period, unlike in Egypt where the conditions are dry and there are few forests, meaning that wood was a more valuable commodity in the first place, encouraging its reuse and preservation.⁹¹ The Cordoba Mosque was roofed with flat wooden beams, carved with abstract vegetal designs and painted, in a similar fashion to Umayyad monuments in Bilād al-Shām.⁹² But the carving was done in one plane only, is flat on the surface, and forms a comparatively simple pattern based on a framework of interlaced lozenges containing a palmette, alternating with split palmettes in the interstices. The ceiling beams which roof al-Ḥakam II’s *maqṣūra* display a rather more complex pattern, with some motifs that relate quite closely to the ivories – for example, the leaf bud with two circles where it joins the stem, or the distinctive palmette form seen on the Girona casket.

87 Walker 2015, 266.

88 Guérin 2015, 42. She cites Boileau 1837, Titre LXII.I: ‘Et puet ouvrer de toutes manieres de fust, de pierre, de os, de yvoire, et de toutes manieres de peintures bones et leaus’; and Titre LXI.I: ‘On face d’os, d’yvoire, de fust et de toute autre maniere d’estoffe, quele que ele soit, estre le puet franchement, pour tant que il sache le mestier’.

89 Guérin 2015, 44.

90 Watson 2005, 171.

91 For the importance of wood as an artistic material in the Islamic world, see ‘Islamic Art §VII. Woodwork’, *Grove Art Online* (consulted 24 January 2020). The author notes that, in Egypt, ‘wood was so scarce and expensive that it had to be imported’, mainly from Syria and the Sudan.

92 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 538–551.

But here again, the carving is flat and in one plane. In all these cases, the decoration was applied in paint on top of a layer of plaster, so there is no real comparison between the production of these ceiling beams and the sculptural carving of the ivories.

Another possible parallel, unfortunately now lost, is the world-famous minbar commissioned by al-Ḥakam II to adorn his extension to the Cordoba Mosque. According to al-Idrīsī's eyewitness account, written around the middle of the twelfth century, this minbar was 'unequaled for craftsmanship in the populated world'.⁹³ The frequent comparisons made in its own day between the minbar now in the Kutubiyya mosque and the lost Cordoba minbar lead us to imagine its original appearance as resembling the minbar now in Marrakesh. The Kutubiyya minbar was even made in Cordoba, in 1137, so conceivably represents an updated copy of the Cordoba minbar. The finely-carved panels of this impressive piece of mosque furniture, carved from woods of various sorts with borders and details inlaid in bone and ivory, feature decoration that is stylistically unified across the different materials, and whose carving style is technically very close to that of the ivory caskets. On this basis Bloom argued that perhaps the best ivory carvers did not leave Cordoba after the Fitna,⁹⁴ implying that they turned to working in wood after ivory material became less available. If we can indeed judge by the carving style of an object dating from 200 years after the Cordoba minbar, this demonstrates that the same craftsmen could work equally well in both wood and ivory.

The Cordoba minbar was made from ebony (though Bloom comments that this is more likely to have been African blackwood, a wood native to West Africa that was used on the Kutubiyya minbar), box and aloeswood. Ibn 'Idhārī's description probably draws on the account of the near-contemporary Ibn Ḥayyān; he writes that it

was 'inlaid' (*mudkhāl*) with red and yellow sandalwood, ebony, ivory, and Indian aloeswood, and cost al-Ḥakam 35,705 dinars.⁹⁵ After completing his new mihrab in 355/965, al-Ḥakam ordered the pre-existing minbar to be moved there – presumably a ninth-century minbar dating from 'Abd al-Raḥmān II's mosque extension, just as al-Ḥakam had the columns and capitals from the old mihrab to be relocated to the new. Al-Ḥakam then commissioned the new minbar, which was finished in five years according to Ibn 'Idhārī, seven according to al-Idrīsī.⁹⁶ Its 'carpentry and inlay' were carried out by six craftsmen, 'apart from those apprentices serving them'. This gives us another insight into the workshop structure required to produce such a large and impressive royal commission: assuming a minimum of one apprentice per master craftsman, at least twelve craftsmen were employed on al-Ḥakam's minbar, working simultaneously. By way of comparison, there would originally have been more than a thousand panels on the Kutubiyya minbar.⁹⁷

The materials employed for the Cordoba minbar were extremely expensive, as appropriate for a royal object. Sandalwood and aloeswood are among the principal aromatic substances imported at high cost from great distances away, and highly sought after in caliphal Cordoba's sophisticated culture.⁹⁸ It is also interesting to consider the implications of carved ivory panels on the minbar. All the Andalusī ivories we know of – both extant objects and through textual references – have a secular function, but given the

93 Bloom 1998, 21–22 and n.33, citing al-Idrīsī 1866, 260; also Hernández Jiménez 1959, 381–99; Fierro 2007.

94 Bloom 1998, 23; Bloom 2005, 212.

95 Bloom 1998, 21–22 and n. 33, citing Ibn 'Idhārī 1948–51, vol. 2, 238, 250.

96 Cited by Carboni in Bloom 1998, 50.

97 Bloom 1998, 7. He also notes (p. 21) that it took a modern Moroccan craftsman a week to carve a replica of one of the wooden hexagons. Extrapolating from this, he calculates that the carved panels alone represent a minimum of 1000 man-weeks of work, or four craftsmen working continuously for five years. This is only part of the decorative programme, so it would be reasonable to believe that the minbar represented the work of at least a dozen workers over some five years.

98 Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 40–45.

abundance of ivory available at the exact time the minbar was being made, it seems logical to suppose that some ivory panels were carved to decorate it.⁹⁹ This raises a tangential question of what other ivories might have been produced for religious purposes. Maribel Fierro has noted that, ‘in an effort to overcome his deficient legitimacy’, Hishām II devoted himself to collecting relics associated with pre-Islamic prophets. She asks, ‘Could some of the ivory caskets preserved from this period in al-Andalus have been used as containers for these relics?’¹⁰⁰ It is highly unlikely that any of the extant ivories served this purpose, being so blatantly secular in their iconography and epigraphy, but it is certainly plausible that other ivory caskets, which have not survived, were made for this purpose.

Ivory and wood have an integral relationship to each other in the construction of furniture, where the wood provides the framework into which carved ivory panels are inset. Though this technique is predominantly used for the ivory objects that survive from Fatimid and Mamluk Egypt, only one potential example of this is so far known from al-Andalus: this is the rectangular panel now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Figure 32).¹⁰¹ Unusually, this panel has no space left in the carving for mounts, which suggests that rather than being one of the walls of a casket, it was instead inlaid into a larger piece of furniture. The decoration would originally have continued at the right and left sides of the panel, where today is only preserved half of the original pair of birds or animals. Perhaps it originally formed part of a frieze on a door or cupboard. If so, it would be a unique example of this kind of inlaid furniture from al-Andalus at this period – but if ivory was inlaid into the Cordoba minbar, why not into other large pieces of furniture, for secular contexts? Another

aspect that might suggest that this panel was part of the furnishing in a palace interior is the fact that this is the only example among the Andalusí ivories where tiny pieces of glass have been found set into the beaded bands which surround the decoration.¹⁰² If the object into which this panel was inset were to move, as doors were opened or closed for example, or if light were to move in the room in which it stood, these tiny pieces of glass would catch the light and enhance the apparent movement of the dancers.

Wood was also integrally related to the production of luxury objects, since it was used as a core for the Girona casket and several of the large ivory caskets. There can be no doubt that wood was available to be carved, since it was also needed for architectural construction. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that ivory carvers were also working with other materials besides wood.

Significantly, it has gone unnoticed until recently that the hardness of ivory is equivalent to that of limestone on the Mohs scale.¹⁰³ In fact, at 2.5–3 it sits between gypsum (2.0) and calcite/limestone (3.0), and close to marble (recrystallised limestone, at 2.5–5), with gold (2.2) and silver (2.4) on a similar scale. As Jeheskel Shoshani explains, ‘Being a biological product, a tusk ... is relatively soft, equal in hardness to calcite mineral (number 3 on the Moh’s field scale of hardness used by mineralogists). Hardness and therefore carvability of ivory differs according to origin, habitat, and sexual dimorphism [of the elephant]. [Thus] the ivory from western and central Africa

99 As Watson 2005, n. 38, observes, the minbar was started in 966, ‘just as we begin to have the greatest number of dated extant [ivory] caskets’.

100 Fierro 2007, 162 and n. 53.

101 Metropolitan Museum of Art (13.141): Ferrandis 1935, cat. 6; *Al-Andalus* cat. 6, p. 203.

102 The eyes of some of the figures on the Met’s panel and some drill holes of the framing band are inlaid with a clear stone, perhaps quartz; and traces of green pigments can be seen clearly on many of the leaves, with red on some of the buds and blue on the flower at the left-hand edge of the frame. My thanks to Sheila Canby Curator Emerita of the Met’s Department of Islamic Art for sharing the conservation report on this object.

103 I owe this observation to Sarah M. Guérin, whom I sincerely thank for sharing with me the introduction to her doctoral dissertation (Guérin 2009), where this issue is discussed. I eagerly await the publication of her observations on this issue.

(where the forest subspecies, *Loxodonta africana cyclotis*, is more prevalent) is said to be the best ivory because it is harder than all other ivories'.¹⁰⁴

The ivory being carved in al-Andalus, which was sourced from West Africa as discussed below, was at the harder end of the scale of ivory hardness, and as hard to carve as limestone and some marble. This implies that a carver skilled in one material could equally turn his skill to the carving of the other. When we consider that limestones of various kinds were the primary material used for the support elements and decoration throughout Madīnat al-Zahrā' (see below), this opens up the distinct likelihood that craftsmen in the Andalusi Dār al-Şinā'a worked across these three materials.¹⁰⁵ This would explain the stylistic connections across media which imply the same 'hands' at work, as mentioned above.

As a twentieth-century manual of ivory-carving explains, the craft generates little waste, and so can effectively be conducted anywhere.¹⁰⁶ The main requisites would be storage space for the tusks – which, though potentially huge at 2 to 3 m long, may never have been numerous at any one time – and for the finished objects, which, if made for specific commissions as they probably were, may not have spent much time in the workshop after they were finished; and one or more turning tables to power the bow drill, though this may also have been done by a craftsman sitting on the ground and powering it with his feet, as still happens today in Middle Eastern wood-turning workshops. At the height of the industry – at the time

of the production of the Pamplona casket, say – space would be needed for around six craftsmen working simultaneously, and their equipment. Consequently, the Andalusi ivory workshop did not need to occupy much space, and this carving could well have taken place in the same or a neighbouring space as the workshops producing architectural decoration, since they probably employed the same makers. The stone carvers, or the most skilled among them, may have been redeployed to ivory work as and when the raw material became available. Similarly, Lawrence Nees made the suggestion that the Carolingian ivory carving industry came into being because of the sudden availability of the two elephant tusks following the death of the war elephant, Abū'l-'Abbās, which had been a gift to Charlemagne from the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd: artisans familiar with other media applied themselves to this new material.¹⁰⁷ A scenario of dependence on availability could explain how, as early as the 930s, when, according to the sources, the ivory industry begins, apparently founded *ex nihilo* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III (see below), there were craftsmen available to carve it, as they would previously have worked on caliphal architectural projects. And why, by the first extant objects of the 960s, the craft had been so utterly mastered.

There is, admittedly, a difference in scale to account for: that is, ivory is worked 'in miniature' while marble and limestone are worked on a more monumental level. However, not all surviving architectonic elements from tenth-century al-Andalus are on the same scale, and there is great variety in the sizes of marble capitals. By way of an example, a small marble volute from a capital, now in the V&A (Figure 89), is carved on a miniature scale that has close affinities, technically as well as stylistically, with the ivories. Not all stone carving is at the macro level, but it is also important to recognise that carving is carving. An Andalusi workman who 'did carving' may have had to use slightly different tools and materials, but he would adapt,

¹⁰⁴ Shoshani 1992, 72. He goes on to say: 'It is also elastic, and therefore more suitable for carving than those from eastern and southern Africa (where the bush or savannah subspecies, *Loxodonta africana africana*, is more prevalent) and those from Asia (where the Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, prevails). Some carvers also claim that a cow's ivory is superior to that of a bull as it has a closer grain'.

¹⁰⁵ Vallejo 2013, 113–4: 'These workshops not only manufactured the so-called sumptuary objects used in the court ... but also produced the different elements of the architectural decoration'.

¹⁰⁶ See Ritchie 1969 and 1972.

¹⁰⁷ Nees 2006.



FIGURE 89 'Miniature' carving in marble on a volute from Madīnat al-Zahrā', 950–970; Victoria and Albert Museum, A.104-1919
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

or he would not advance within the Dār al-Šinā'a. Let us not forget that the crafts and craftsmen we are discussing were not responding to the whims of the open market, but functioning within a rigidly organised industry directed towards serving the ruler's needs and desires.

This argument implies the *mutuality* of the different crafts produced under caliphal patronage in tenth-century Cordoba. Under the umbrella organisation of the Dār al-Šinā'a there may have been physically separate ateliers – though likely in close proximity to one another – for carved marble and limestone (encompassing both architectural decoration and objects, such as fountain basins), ivory, wood and metalwork (gold and silver, at least), while textiles and ceramics were produced in specific locations in an industrial quarter to the north of the old city of Cordoba; perhaps foundries for bronze production were located there too.

Though each separate atelier may have had its own *šāhib*, some of whom controlled two or more ateliers, at the lower level the artisans moved between them, transferring their technical skills across media, responding to demand and the availability of raw materials. Such a transfer of craftsmen facilitates the sharing of styles and decorative devices across media, through the possibility that the same 'hands' were employed on different types of object. It also implies a lack of craft specialisation within the Cordoban Dār al-Šinā'a. It is also intriguing to observe that, as far as we can tell from the extant pieces, the dates of important objects do not tend to overlap with those of large-scale architectural projects (because they both employed the same master craftsmen?), perhaps indicating that the artisans only worked on objects in the slower periods between royal construction projects. This needs a fuller comparative study and the picture might change as more inscribed architectural elements and objects are published. An interesting exception to this rule seems to be al-Manšūr's basin, to which we will return below.

The recurrence of the same names in signatures on luxury objects and architectural decoration is thus largely due to the same craftsmen working on both. The Girona casket, for example, is signed under the lockplate by two men (*'amal Badr wa Ṭarīf 'ubaydayhi*, Figure 2, Appendix 4.1) whose names also occur in the Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III,¹⁰⁸ and as observed above, there is close artistic similarity between the two contexts, as well as the ceiling beams in al-Ḥakam's *maqšūra*. Given the relative closeness of silver to marble and limestone on the Mohs scale, as well as the carving relationship between wood and ivory (which implies a

108 Blair 2005, 83, n. 51, who corrects the reading given in the *Al-Andalus* catalogue; Martínez Nuñez 1995, 141; Labarta 2015. Badr's name occurs in both the Cordoba Mosque and Hall of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, while Ṭarīf occurs in the Hall only. On Ṭarīf, see Souto 2005 and Souto 2010a, 2.83. Note that Labarta 2015, 15–16, believes the name to read Zārīf. On Badr, Souto 2010a, 2.15.



FIGURE 90 Incised design along the top of a section of wall decoration from Madinat al-Zahrā', indicating how the carving was planned, 950–970, limestone; Victoria and Albert Museum, A.118-1919
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

carving relationship between wood and marble), we might postulate that Badr and ʿAraf worked in precious metals and woodworking as well as marble. It is perhaps an accident of survival that we have no ivory caskets featuring their signatures.

But craftsmen might have been shared between other media as well. We have seen that the craftsmen Bāshir and Mubārak put their names to the innovative double-capital probably from al-Madinat al-Zāhira, alongside that of the master craftsman Faraj (Figures 37–38). Bāshir and Mubārak are also names that appear 'in the manner of signatures' on some of the Andalusī green-and-brown ceramics.¹⁰⁹ Other green-and-brown

ceramics are signed by Rashīq and Naṣr,¹¹⁰ and Manuel Acién suggested the same Rashīq might be the craftsman who signed bronze oil lamps found at Liétor.¹¹¹ The relationship between these crafts might seem obscure, but the ability to model clay would have helped in the manufacture of metal objects using the lost wax technique. Of course the signatures on the ceramics may indicate the author of the painted design rather than the potter, though the principle of the lack of specialisation still holds. Certainly a facility with drawing would make it easier to transfer (or conceive) designs on whatever medium was about to be

109 Souto 2007, 2.8, 112–3, citing Cano Piedra 1996, fig. 64: SA/456 (Bāshir), SA/361, 367, 402 (Mubārak). Cano Piedra attributes these to an earlier period than the ʿĀmirid, but the chronology of Andalusī

green-and-brown ceramics is still under-studied, and these signatures may well be an argument for assigning these bowls to a later date.

110 Martínez Nuñez 1995, 143; Souto 2001, 293–294.

111 Acién Almansa 2001, 507.

carved. That designs were drawn on the surface first is indicated by a fragment of wall decoration from Madīnat al-Zahrā', now in the V&A collection, where the top of the block preserves the etched outline of a floral scroll which was not, for whatever reason, actually executed (Figure 90).

1.3 Materials

The last but in fact the most important aspect of the luxury arts industry was the supply of raw materials. The sourcing and gathering of these in sufficient quantities was also controlled by the Umayyad state according to well-organised and centralised structures, as we can see most explicitly in the *Calendar of Cordoba*, written c. 961 for the new caliph al-Ḥakam II, by his *kātib* 'Arīb ibn Sa'd (d. 980) and the bishop of Elvira, Recemundo. This stipulates the specific times of the year at which raw materials destined for the state industries – including the army, the Dār al-Ṣinā'a and especially the Dār al-Ṭirāz – should be planted and harvested. The local officers of the state bureaucracy were charged with gathering them by letters sent out from the chancery in Cordoba: in February, 'they sent out a missive with instructions for the recruitment of men for that year's summer campaign; in March, the orders consisted of purchasing horses for the government; in May, they should collect cochinnille, silk and bentonite (Fuller's earth) for the caliphal textile workshop (*ṭirāz*); in June they estimated the extent of the year's harvest and assigned guardians for the granaries that would receive the tithes (*ushūr*); in this same month they should also send the antlers of deer for the fabrication of bows; in August they requested them to send silk and blue dyes for the caliphal textile workshop; and in September they were requested to send madder'.¹¹² The process for securing other necessary materials for building projects and the luxury arts industry was surely no less carefully structured and regulated, though the state probably had less control over the sources of

these materials. In important objective of Andalusi foreign policy in the late tenth century was surely to secure the requisite natural resources that this now highly complex state needed to operate.

1.3.1 Stone and Marble

Though we do not have such explicit written evidence for the gathering of larger scale material such as stone and marble, anecdotal evidence exists for the sourcing of marble spolia from sites around the Mediterranean, especially North Africa, to supply sufficient numbers of columns, capitals and bases to begin construction at Madīnat al-Zahrā'. The initiative for this is credited to 'Abd al-Raḥmān III himself, and the harvesting of heavy items of spolia on such a large scale could only have been undertaken at the level of the ruler's fiat. Recent excavations at Utica in Tunisia, for example, are suggesting the systematic despoliation of the classical ruins in the early Islamic period to provide building materials for the new urban centres.¹¹³ Another source of raw materials was extraction. The use of marble in the Visigothic period to carve elements such as basins and bas-reliefs may indicate a continuous but low-level working of Iberia's abundant Roman quarry sites between the third and seventh centuries, though perhaps a more likely source for the material are Roman objects or inscriptions that were recarved.¹¹⁴ However, the scale of the caliphal architectural projects in the mid-tenth century meant that it was no longer sufficient to resort to spolia for the supply of architectonic elements; instead, marble needed to be freshly quarried. As Antonio Vallejo's work has shown, marble was introduced to Madīnat al-Zahrā' in its second phase of construction, in the 950s, implying that

¹¹² Pellat 1961, 48–9, 62–3, 90–1, 102–5, 132–3, 144–5; discussed Manzano 2006, 444–5.

¹¹³ 'Quarrying the Roman City: an Islamic village at Utica (Tunisia)', paper presented by Elizabeth Fentress and Corisande Fenwick, at the 5th annual Islamic Archaeology Day at the UCL Institute of Archaeology on 2 February 2019. They also noted that, at Carthage, no capitals, columns or bases have been found in situ, indicating wholesale spoliation at an early date.

¹¹⁴ Vallejo 2010, 116.

it took some time for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to mobilise the resources sufficiently.¹¹⁵

In general, the stone quarries were located close to Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ: sources of the limestones used for construction, architectonic supports and paving were located within kilometres of the site.¹¹⁶ Other limestones, particularly sought-after for their aesthetic effect – such as the reddish ‘false breccia’ used for columns, and the limestones used for capitals, bases and wall decoration – were extracted from the Sierra Subbética, some 50 km from Cordoba.¹¹⁷ Marbles, such as the coloured marbles used for columns in the Cordoba Mosque, either came from Roman or Late Antique spolia (see below), or were extracted from the region of Almadén de la Plata (Seville) or Estremoz (Portugal).¹¹⁸ The ability to maintain the harmonious pattern of alternating varicoloured marble columns in al-Ḥakam’s mosque extension demonstrates the caliph’s tight control over the marble industry. There was also an element of conspicuous display: the maintenance of consistent designs and colours throughout a monument, and the unified decorative programme of the Hall of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, was a clear statement of the caliph’s power over the state infrastructure, and this was proudly signalled in the inscriptions that adorned nearly every purpose-carved marble element.

By the time of al-Manṣūr’s *ḥijāba*, the infrastructure for quarrying marble on a massive scale was obviously well-enough established to supply the huge numbers of newly-carved columns and capitals that furnish his mosque extension, which required more than twice the number of elements than al-Ḥakam’s extension, and to maintain the pattern of alternating coloured marble in the

columns (Chapter 5). I will focus my discussion here on the stones employed in the production of objects for the ‘Āmirids, in particular the water basins. Some of these stones relate to those used to create architectural adornment for al-Manṣūr’s palaces, discussed in Chapter 4.

The most likely source of huge trough-shaped blocks of marble from which the impressive ‘Āmirid fountain basins were made are Late Antique sarcophagi, which were imported into Hispania from Rome in the late third and fourth centuries AD (Figures 91, 92, 97). By the tenth century, these were clearly still available, as more than twenty figural sarcophagi have been recovered from Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, some of them reused as fountain basins in the centre of courtyards.¹¹⁹ Of course not all Roman sarcophagi were originally elaborately decorated – there is an uncarved sarcophagus among the ruins at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, for example (Figure 91);¹²⁰ and Ambrosio de Morales described another located within the principal cloister at the Monastery of San Jerónimo, on the slopes above Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, with which the two bronze fountain heads in the form of deer were associated (Figure 10).¹²¹ The backs of Roman

115 Vallejo 2010, 489. Marble, purple limestone and, to a lesser extent, alabaster, were introduced in the 950s especially for paving; Vallejo also notes the sumptuous decorative programme in marble that was introduced to the baths attached to the ‘Vivienda de la Alberca’ at this time.

116 Vallejo 2007, 4–5; Vallejo 2010, 103–111.

117 Vallejo 2010, 112–114.

118 Vallejo 2010, 115–117.

119 Vallejo 2010, 236–; Vallejo 2013, 119. This is in addition to various Roman portrait busts and other elements. He argues that it indicates cultural superiority of Islam over these civilisations. On the other hand, Calvo 2012 and 2014 has argued on the basis of the locations where these sarcophagi were found that these spaces were at the heart of the palace’s intellectual life.

120 For examples of plain-walled sarcophagi recovered at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, see Vallejo 2010, 238–40, pl. 189. He says that the basin described by Morales at San Jerónimo (see next note) ‘anticipates the ‘Āmirid basins’.

121 Vallejo 2010, 240; Morales 2012, 234 (fol. 116v): ‘Hanse hallado tambien en Cordova la vieja muchas antiguallas, de diversas maneras en diversas tiempos. Destas son la rica pila de marmol blanco de {quasi} dos varas en largo y mas de una en alto y otra en ancho, que sirve agora de Fuente en el {ins} monasterio de san Geronimo, en el claustro principal. Hallaronse dentro desta pila un ciervo y una cierva de laton {poco} ricamente labrados, poco menores que un cabrito. El ciervo echa el agua en la pila, y la cierva esta en el



FIGURE 91
Uncarved Roman sarcophagus excavated
at Madinat al-Zahrá
© CONJUNTO ARQUEOLÓGICO
MADINAT AL-ZAHRA



FIGURE 92
Roman sarcophagus with decoration of
arches, fourth-fifth century AD, found at
Avenida de la Cruz de Juárez, Cordoba;
Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico,
Cordoba, inv. CE021992
© ROSE WALKER / PHOTO:
JOHNATTENPHOTOGRAPHY



FIGURE 93
Marble panel with decoration of three
arches, said to be from the Alcázar at
Cordoba, 950s–60s; Museo Arqueológico
Nacional, Madrid, inv. 50369
© MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO NACIONAL,
MADRID / FOTO: ÁNGEL MARTÍNEZ
LEVAS



FIGURE 94
Funerary stele of Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf: side
with Roman inscription, third–fourth
century AD
© ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, RABAT

sarcophagi were often uncarved, where they were placed against a wall.

The ʿĀmirids may have made use of uncarved sarcophagi for their basins – taking the reuse one step further, and recarving the sarcophagi with their own designs. Such reuse would clearly go some way to explaining the size and shape of the ʿĀmirid basins. Other ʿĀmirid objects, such as the enormous marble window grilles (measuring 1 metre wide by nearly 2 metres high) that were newly carved for the mosque extension, could also have been carved from the sides of sarcophagi (Figure 54).

sumptuosissimo monesterio de n(uest)ra Señora de Guadalupe, en la fuente, que esta delante el refitorio'.

That Roman marble objects were reused by the ʿĀmirids is shown by the foundation inscription in Lisbon discussed in Chapter 4, carved at the base of a reused Roman tombstone (Figure 19, Appendix 4.6). That they were also converted into basins is shown by an object that tells an intriguing story of multiple reuse. A funerary stele now in the Archaeological Museum in Rabat commemorates Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf, the Marinid sultan of Morocco who died in 1307 (Figure 95).¹²² His stele

122 Boele 2005, 63; Rosser-Owen 2014, 193–7; *Maroc Médiéval*, 509, cat. 308. I am grateful to Péter Nagy for sharing his theory that the tombstone was likely commissioned by Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf's successor, Abū Thābit (r. 1307–1308), when he had his predecessor's corpse transported from al-Manşūra (Algeria), where he died laying siege to the ʿAbd al-Wādids, and reburied in

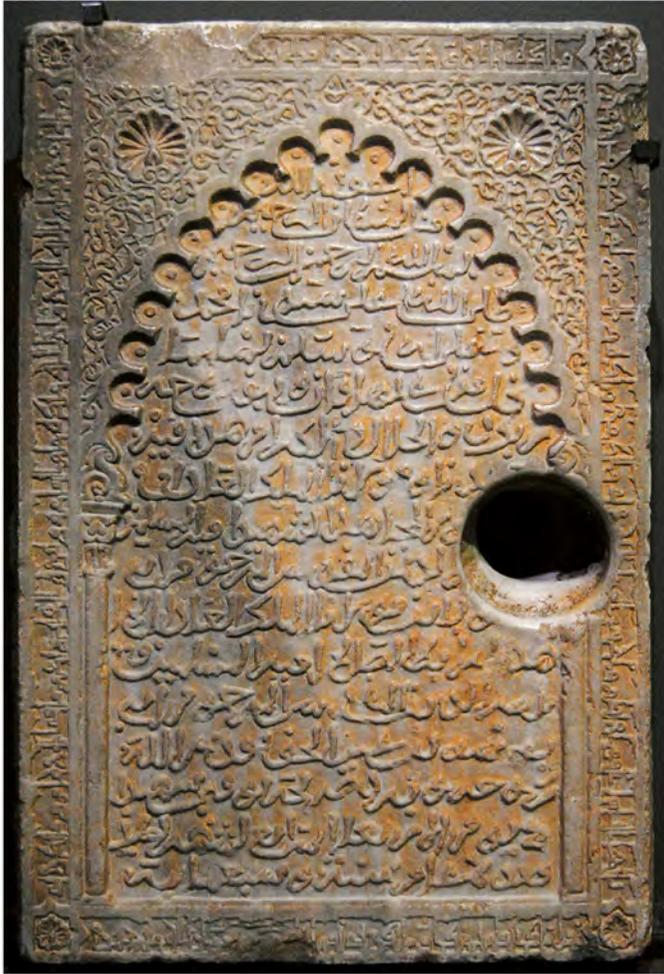


FIGURE 95
Funerary stele of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf: side with
Marinid tombstone, 1307; Archaeological
Museum, Rabat
© PÉTER TAMÁS NAGY

is carved on a thick slab of marble whose other face preserves part of a Latin inscription in the name of Aulus Caecina Tacitus, likely to have been the governor of Baetica – the fertile Roman province in the south of Hispania, of which Corduba was the capital – and probably dating from the third or fourth century AD (Figure 94). However, the narrow sides of the stele also bear traces of carving: though one side is badly damaged, the other shows that this slab was clearly once part of a fountain basin, stylistically related to the group of 'Āmirid basins, as discussed further in Chapter 7

Shāla. Amid the turmoil of a civil war caused by his contested claim to the Marinid succession, Abū Thābit might have used whatever piece of marble he could get hold of (personal communication, 09/07/20).

(Figure 96). The stylistic significance of these surviving traces of carving on the sides of the stele has not been sufficiently noted, and where it has been mentioned it has been called (oddly) 'Byzantine'. The object can thus be reconstructed as an official Roman inscription, carved on a large thick block of good-quality white marble, which was reused in the tenth century to create another fountain basin for 'Āmirid palatial gardens. This basin was later brought to Morocco, perhaps at the same time as 'Abd al-Malik's basin (Chapter 7: 2.3.1), though in this case its eventual destination may have been Rabat rather than Marrakesh. In the fourteenth century, a beautiful piece of marble, which perhaps retained a nostalgic association with al-Andalus or, by extension, with the Umayyads, was chosen to create a fittingly royal memorial for



FIGURE 96 Funerary stele of Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf: side with basin decoration, late tenth century; Archaeological Museum, Rabat
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

one of the Marinid sultans, and installed in their necropolis at Shāla.

The form and function of the 'Āmirid basins may have been inspired by the sarcophagi redeployed as fountain basins in the royal zones of Madīnat al-Zahrā' or still visible in other parts of Cordoba, and this relationship might also explain some aspects of the *style* of the 'Āmirid basins. It may, for example, have suggested an origin for the arrangement of the decoration within an arcade, as seen on the back of al-Manşūr's basin. On sarcophagi it is not uncommon to see figures, such as philosophers or characters from the New

Testament, discoursing under arches whose architectural elements are very clearly defined, just as they are on al-Manşūr's basin. A particularly monumental example from the fourth to fifth centuries, with carving almost in the round, was excavated in Cordoba and is now in the Archaeological Museum there (Figure 92). The triple arch motif was already in use under the Umayyads, as evidenced by the thick marble panel that probably comes from the Alcázar at Cordoba (Figure 93).¹²³ But other

123 Souto 2005. Montejo Córdoba 2006, 252–254, warns that the location of its find in the nineteenth century is

features of the basins as well as artistic motifs that seem to enter Andalusī art at this time – such as the griffin and the heraldic eagle – could reference the decoration of surviving Roman or Late Antique carvings. Many of the sarcophagi feature on their short ends a monumental griffin, depicted with ears, sitting in profile (Figure 97); and, of course, the heraldic eagle was the pre-eminent Roman Imperial symbol, available as models on such objects as the late second-century marble altar dedicated to Venus Victrix from Mérida and now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Figure 98).

Could the form of the Roman and Late Antique objects that provided the models, if not actually the raw material, for the ‘Āmirid basins also have inspired their decoration, with designs of arches as well as apotropaic animals on the short ends? Might the carvers of the Dār al-Šinā’a have looked to pre-Islamic models for inspiration for certain motifs, especially those with which they were unfamiliar? As will be discussed in Chapter 8, it was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III who decided to introduce eagles to his military banners, and al-Ḥakam who may have had them first carved onto objects (Figure 86). If the Andalusī craftsmen had no other precedents for how to carve a sufficiently regal-looking heraldic eagle, they would reasonably have looked to the available Roman and Late Antique models. In the same way, as discussed in Chapter 4, the worms or water-snakes on ‘Āmirid capitals might imply a misreading of fleurons on Roman capitals from Mérida that had been reused in the Cordoba Mosque (Figure 25), or the looped body of the griffin on one of the capitals probably from al-Madīnat al-Zāhira (Figure 26) may have been inspired by the representation of sea-monsters in Roman carvings.¹²⁴

1.3.2 Ivory

Ivory was another luxury material for which a reliable supply was needed once its use to make

spectacular objects had been established in the Andalusī luxury arts industry. There is no evidence for ivory-carving in al-Andalus before the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, and it seems that the industry was created *ex nihilo* under the direct auspices of this ruler. Though no extant objects date before the 960s, the industry was clearly established by 934 – only five years after the declaration of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s caliphate – when ivory and silver perfume containers were listed among the extensive and luxurious diplomatic gift that the caliph sent to his main ally among the Berber lords of the Maghrib, Mūsā ibn Abī’l-‘Afiyya.¹²⁵

“... nine [containers] ranging from pyxides to caskets, all of which were filled with different kinds of perfume; among them a round silver pyxis containing incense mixed with ambergris; a pyxis of white ivory, containing sticks of frankincense seasoned with ambergris; another ivory pyxis, also with silver hinges, that had an Iraqi vase inside filled with an excellent *ghāliya*;¹²⁶ a third pyxis of ivory with silver hinges and a flat lid, containing royal frankincense; a glass casket with a silver lid and silver chain, containing pungent musk powder; a fourth ivory pyxis with silver hinges, too, containing the powder used by kings against sweat in the summer; a gilded Iraqi flask with rosewater of the Iraqi caliphs ...”¹²⁷

Though only four ivory containers are mentioned here, the gift included another ivory object: ‘a brocaded silk (*dibaj*) sheath containing a sultan’s

not sufficiently well-recorded for scholars to attribute this panel to the Alcázar.

124 As depicted, for example, on the sarcophagus of the child Pomponia Agrippina, in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 1999/99/183.

125 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 264–265 (§§238–239). This translation from the Arabic by Stuart Sears is published in Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 40.

126 *Ghāliya* was a luxury perfume made from musk and ambergris mixed with *ben* oil: see King 2008, esp. 181.

127 This may imply that Baghdad was the immediate source for this particular rosewater. While Iraq was clearly a major exporter of rosewater, it was not an important production centre; the best roses for distillation were considered to be either the red roses of Damascus or those from Fars in southern Iran, and in the tenth century the caliphs of Baghdad received 30,000 flasks of rosewater from Fars annually. See van Gelder 2006, and discussion in Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 41.



FIGURE 97 Griffin on the side of a Roman sarcophagus, 230–270 AD; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 1999/99/185
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

large ivory comb to comb the beard'.¹²⁸ This precious historical passage thus indicates that the ivory industry was clearly established by this date, and that its products were already good enough to send out as diplomatic gifts worthy of a newly-minted caliph.

As discussed in Chapter 1, raw ivory was one of the commodities of trans-Saharan trade and was sourced via the Umayyads' Berber clients, who commanded the entrepôts where these materials were gathered and traded with the nomadic tribes who trafficked the trade routes along the western flank of Africa. The supply – and, I would argue, the meaning – of ivory is intimately connected with the supply of gold. Both came from the sub-Saharan region (along with black slaves, salt and other commodities) and it is interesting to consider the two materials in parallel, to see what this suggests about the abundance or regularity of ivory availability in al-Andalus. Though the extant Andalusī ivories were made over a broad period of a hundred years, from the mid-tenth to the mid-eleventh century, their dates of production coincide with three major phases of patronage: the Umayyad caliphate, with *all* the extant objects



FIGURE 98 Roman eagle, on an altar dedicated to Venus Victrix, Mérida, late second century AD; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 20220
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

attributable to the 960s; the ʿĀmirid period, with the extant objects dating from the 990s and 1000s; and the industry founded by the Taifa kings of Toledo, in an effort to legitimise their rule by reviving this splendid facet of the caliphal court. The extant Taifa objects date between 1026/7 and 1049/50, and it is likely that they were made with stocks of raw ivory appropriated from the caliphal Khizānah during the Fitna years, rather than by sourcing new reserves for themselves. While it is inadvisable to base firm arguments on the absence of evidence, these clusters in production – in particular between 960–70 and 990–1010 – may also reflect the patchy availability of the raw material.

As we have seen (Chapter 1), Umayyad desire for gold was stimulated by competition with their caliphal rivals, the Fatimids. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III struck his first dinars in 929, as soon as he declared

128 Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 40.

his caliphate, probably using gold from other coins (Aghlabid, Midrārid and possibly Fatimid) that were already circulating in al-Andalus. The growing interventionism of the Umayyads in the Maghrib – heralded by the conquest of Ceuta in 931 – marked a major policy objective, which was to source sufficient gold to mint dinars, such a potent symbol of being a caliph. Under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, control of the trans-Saharan trade routes was far from total, as indicated by the fact that dinars were not minted annually, and there was great fluctuation in quality, especially in the last decade of his reign when there appears to have been a gold shortage and almost no dinars are minted.¹²⁹ This apparent gold shortage continues into al-Ḥakam’s reign, so that there is a gap in gold emissions between 958 and 967 – curiously, this is exactly the period when the first extant ivory objects were produced, so either mapping ivory supply against gold supply is not totally reliable, or the craftsmen of the Dār al-Ṣinā’a were able to make use of a stockpile of ivory that had allowed them to produce the perfume containers for Mūsā ibn Abī l-‘Afiyya’s gift thirty years before. As the caliphate matured and the Umayyads’ control in North Africa was consolidated – thanks largely to al-Manṣūr’s policies and carefully maintained relationships with his Berber clients – the gold supply becomes more regular and the high quality of the dinars is very stable with only minor variations. From 967, there is an annual series of gold emissions until the end of al-Ḥakam’s reign. During Hishām’s caliphate, there is a growth in dinar emissions, but a gap in minting from 368/978 to 377/987, and the year 382/992 when no gold coins are minted. There are particularly high outputs of dinars between 390/999 and 394/1003, a period in which several ‘Āmirid ivory objects are also produced. There is then a gradual decline in gold emissions between 395/1004 and 399/1008, after al-Manṣūr’s death.

Mapping the dates of the extant ivories against the gold coin emissions does not provide a perfect

match. The Pamplona casket and the Braga pyxis (Chapter 7: 2.1, 2.2) were produced in the period when gold coin emissions were declining. This is perhaps because the ivory had entered al-Andalus at an earlier period, and had been stockpiled. The point to keep in mind is that there may not have been a constant and consistent supply of ivory during the second half of the tenth century, in the same way that interruptions in the gold supply are reflected as gaps in coin emissions. This inconsistent supply may reflect the way that elephants were hunted and ivory was sourced. This is an area that still requires further research, as more information emerges from African archaeology, but the picture that is emerging does suggest the deliberate hunting of large mammals for their ivory as well as the probable harvesting of tusks from already-dead elephants. Ivory obtained in this way by farming communities in southern Africa was brought to trade entrepôts south of the Sahara and gathered there until traders carried it north into the territories dominated by the Umayyads’ Berber allies.¹³⁰

Ivory’s possible exceptionality of course makes it a more expensive material. Though we do not have written evidence about the value of ivory in al-Andalus at this period, its apparent near-monopoly as a material employed at the heart of the Umayyad court is telling in this regard. Sheila Blair reflects on the expense of ivory, by drawing a comparison with Hishām II’s casket, executed in wood and silver-gilt (Figure 1). She argues that this imitates an ivory casket, since the mounts are cast integrally to the surface decoration thus replicating the mounts that give external support to the ivories, which are not necessary on metalwork.¹³¹ Intriguingly, the form and dimensions of the Girona casket are very similar to those of the Pamplona casket.

Ivory may also have arrived at irregular intervals in the form of tribute or diplomatic gifts from the Umayyads’ Berber allies. As we saw in Chapter 2, the

130 See, for example, Coutu et al 2016; Dueppen and Gokee 2014; Guérin 2017.

131 Blair 2005, 89.

information apparently transmitted by al-Maqqarī, that Zīrī ibn ʿAṭīyya gave ‘8,000 pounds weight of elephant tusks’ to al-Manşūr in his diplomatic gift of 994, can no longer be relied upon. Nevertheless, this type of tribute or gift is not unlikely as a mode of transmitting raw ivory to the Umayyad overlords in al-Andalus. Given the great victory Zīrī had just won over the Fatimids, extending his own power from the Atlantic coast into the mountains of modern-day Algeria, if ivory had been available he would surely have sent it to al-Manşūr. Only a few years after Zīrī’s embassy, in 389/999, the ivory pyxis for al-Manşūr’s younger son, Sanchuelo, was created, the first of the extant ʿĀmirid ivories (Chapter 7: 3.1). Following the dates of the extant objects – and admittedly this relies on the accident of survival – this object implies the revival of the ivory industry after a thirty-year gap, since no dated ivories survive between this and Ziyād ibn Aflaḥ’s pyxis, made in 969 (Figure 12). After Sanchuelo’s pyxis there follow in close succession the Doha box (4.1.1), the Pamplona casket (2.1), the Braga pyxis (2.2), probably the uninscribed casket now in the V&A (Figures 150–155) and the small box in the Bargello (4.1.2) – the reasons for assigning these ‘anonymous’ objects to the ʿĀmirid period are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

This flourishing in the 990s no doubt reflects the stimulus that the industry received if not specifically from Zīrī ibn ʿAṭīyya’s gift, then from the Umayyad allies’ conquests in North Africa, which put the trans-Saharan trade routes under direct Umayyad control. Is it even possible that al-Manşūr specifically sought raw ivory in order to reinvigorate the craft of ivory carving, which had developed such a close caliphal association through ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s sponsorship in the 930s and al-Ḥakam’s in the 960s?

Given the enormous size of African elephants and the great lengths to which their tusks can grow – up to 2 or, exceptionally, 3 metres¹³² – we

may reasonably posit that several objects could be carved from a single tusk. No precious material would have been wasted, and the blocks excavated from the centres of pyxides and caskets were probably used for smaller items such as chess pieces, so that a single tusk could produce a whole ensemble of objects. Given the relatively small size of the objects made during the 960s, it is conceivable that the entire group of extant objects made during al-Ḥakam’s reign might have been carved from a single pair of enormous tusks.¹³³ If the ivory supply mirrored the gold supply in becoming more abundant and reliable during the late tenth century, this makes it probable that many more ivories were produced by the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Şināʿa than have survived. Of course it is also possible that the raw ivory was not all consumed within Cordoba. After the Fitna, some of this left-over ivory may have been taken to Cuenca, where the Banū Dhūʿl-Nūn established an ivory-carving workshop (Figure 174).¹³⁴ The production techniques employed for the objects made there – thin openwork plaques attached to a wooden core to produce caskets, or tiny pyxides such as that in the David Collection – indicate that ivory as a raw material was much scarcer, and the craftsmen were trying to make the most out of the material available to them. This is likely to be because they no longer had direct access to the trans-Saharan trading network. As discussed in this book’s Conclusion, carved objects in ivory also began to be made in the Christian Iberian kingdoms in the late tenth century, though Glaire Anderson has recently argued that one of the key milestones in the supposed development of that industry – the

132 Two massive tusks in the Natural History Museum in London, on display in their Mammals gallery, are believed to be the heaviest ever recorded. They are said to have come from a bull elephant (*Loxodonta africana*)

killed near Mount Kilimanjaro in East Africa, by an Arab hunter who had been trailing it for several weeks. They were sold in Zanzibar off the Tanzanian coast in 1898. The heavier of the two (on the left), 3.11 metres long and weighing 94 kg, was later purchased by the Museum for £350. The other tusk, 3.18 metres long and weighing 89 kg, was sold to the Museum in 1933 for an unspecified amount. Information taken from the gallery label.

133 As Sarah Guérin has argued was the case for the ensemble of the ‘Salerno ivories’, see Guérin 2016.

134 Shalem 1995; Makariou 1999.

processional cross from the Monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla – was in fact made in Cordoba in the early 960s.¹³⁵

The ivory supply in al-Andalus might have been irregular, but the material was clearly abundant enough to allow a production technique in which objects were carved from solid blocks of ivory. Andalusian ivory carvers of the caliphal and ‘Āmirid periods, at least, show no sign of needing to adapt their construction methods to maximise the amount of available material. As Anthony Cutler has pointed out in reference to the Hispanic Society pyxis, the craftsmen even seemed to luxuriate in the material.¹³⁶ In analysing their carving techniques, Cutler highlights the way these ivories show a ‘display of skill for its own sake’: for example, the fact that the background walls, behind the carving, are usually only millimetres thin, resulting in translucency when viewed against the light. The caskets were not meant to be viewed this way, this feature has nothing to do with their function – it is purely incidental, a ‘demonstration of artistic virtuosity’.¹³⁷ This virtuosity is also seen in the carving of their decoration, in a rich sculptural style that Cutler calls ‘hypertrophic abundance’. Such construction methods imply a plentiful supply of raw material.

Even the largest surviving object – the Pamplona casket (Chapter 7: 2.1), whose walls are nearly 40 cm long – is structured from individual, thick ivory plaques, pinned together at a 45 degree angle, without a wooden core. Additional support to the interiors of such caskets would have been provided by their external mounts in precious metals but also by textile linings, providing a material and visual connection between the textiles manufactured in the Dār al-Ṭirāz, and the ivory caskets made for the caliph’s family or powerful political allies. As we saw above, there was likely also a personnel connection across these industries, facilitating the transfer of decorative modes between media. The association of most of the inscribed

ivories with members of the caliphal family, and the close iconographical relationship between the ivories and surviving examples of Andalusian textiles, indicates that ivory-carving in al-Andalus was perceived as an ‘art of power’.¹³⁸ For this reason, these objects played an important role in diplomacy and gift exchange, as we can uniquely reconstruct for the Braga pyxis (Chapter 2).

The creation of these spectacular objects was part of the regents’ construction and external projection of their image of power, carefully modelled on that created by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān some fifty years earlier. As ‘Abd al-Raḥmān had done, the ‘Āmirids took raw materials from their Berber clients, and ‘converted’ them into finely-worked precious objects which they then ‘returned’ in the guise of diplomatic gifts, sending a message of political superiority through their ability to excel at the creation of beautiful artworks. The gifting of objects carved from this precious material – together with expensive perfumed contents, likewise sourced from wide-ranging international networks – to clients or allies in North Africa, Christian Iberia, Byzantium, even Ottonian Germany (Chapter 2), showed the world that Cordoba could attract the best craftsmen to work in a material that was sourced via trans-Saharan trade – trade that the Umayyads controlled at the specific expense of the Fatimids and their North African clients. Some objects seem to have been deliberately designed to flaunt this association, by displaying as much of the ivory material as possible. The cosmetics box in Burgos, for example, when viewed closed, presents an entirely plain surface of pure white ivory; remarkably straight-sided for its stunning length of 46.5 cm, the Burgos box boasts of the huge size of the elephant tusk from which it was created (Figure 99).

The creation of these spectacular ivory objects and their presentation as gifts was intricately connected to the projection of the caliphal message, that Umayyad hegemony extended over the western Maghrib and its peoples, and thereby controlled access to the West African trade routes and

135 Anderson 2014.

136 Cutler 2005.

137 Cutler 2005, 44–45.

138 Makariou 1999, 133.

the curious and precious goods that these routes supplied. Control of this trade symbolised victory over the Fatimids. The reality of this message only held more true as the Umayyads' hold on North Africa strengthened during the reigns of al-Ḥakam and Hishām, in both cases due to the clever politics played by al-Manşūr (Chapter 2).

1.3.3 Perfumes and Perfume Containers

As the list of gifts from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān to Ibn Abī'l-ʿAfiyya makes clear, the ivories were containers for luxurious perfumed contents, which may actually have been the more expensive and sought-after gift, with the ivory casket its precious 'wrapping paper'.¹³⁹ Perfumes and cosmetics were an important element in the sophisticated culture of Umayyad al-Andalus, and the raw materials to make them were themselves sourced from great distances away. Musk and camphor, for example, both mentioned in the poetic inscription on the Hispanic Society pyxis, were imported from South and East Asia. Camphor is a white granular substance distilled together with camphor oil from the sap of the tree *Cinnamomum camphora*, a large evergreen native to East Asia, from India to Japan;¹⁴⁰ while musk derives from the gland secretion of the male musk deer, and hails from Tibet and China.¹⁴¹ This speaks eloquently to al-Andalus's position within far-flung networks of international trade – the Iberian Peninsula was by no means isolated on the periphery. The other important substance for perfume production was ambergris, the secretion of the gall-bladder of the sperm whale, which washes ashore along the eastern and western coasts of Africa.¹⁴² This is another

commodity that might have been sourced by the Umayyads from their connections with North Africa. Ḥasan ibn Qānūn's marvellous piece of ambergris, which al-Ḥakam desired to possess at all costs, was mentioned above.¹⁴³ This odd anecdote, related in the *Kitāb al-Mafākhir al-Barbar*, speaks of a 'piece of ambergris of an unusual form and enormous dimensions, obtained on one of the Maghribi coasts'.

Given the discussion at the start of this chapter about the location of the luxury arts industry *vis-à-vis* the other caliphal manufactories, and in particular its original proximity in old Cordoba to the Rabaḍ al-ʿAṭṭārīn – the perfumiers' quarter – it is likely that the perfume makers of Madīnat al-Zahrā' (and possibly of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, if some of them moved there) were physically close to the workshops of the craftsmen who made the receptacles to hold their perfumes. There was even a pharmacy at Madīnat al-Zahrā', established by one Aḥmad ibn Yūnis in a room at the caliphal palace, by order of al-Ḥakam II.¹⁴⁴ According to contemporary recipes – including that written by the most famous Andalusī pharmacologist of the caliphal period, Abū'l-Qāsim al-Zahrāwī (936–1013), known in the west as Abulcasis, but whose *kunya* derives from Madīnat al-Zahrā', where he was born and lived – liquids such as *ghāliya*, rose-water, and other essential oils should be contained in clean bottles made from gold, silver or glass.¹⁴⁵ Of course at Madīnat al-Zahrā', these workshops were also physically close to the mint (until it moved back to Cordoba), and – as noted above, in reference to the silver palace which al-Manşūr commissioned for Şubḥ – precious metals are likely to have been worked in or alongside the mint, where the materials were probably stored under lock and key. The glass receptacles may well have been made locally, though examples of mould-blown and cut glass imported from the

139 A phrase I owe to Robert Hillenbrand. For a fuller discussion and contextualisation of luxury perfumes and luxury crafts, in specific reference to ivory, see Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 40–45.

140 'Kāfūr', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition; Grami 2013.

141 'Misk', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition; King 2008; King 2011.

142 'Anbar', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition; Vallvé 1980, 219; Devisse 1988, 421–2; Sanagustin 1998, 189–202, n. 21.

143 Ballestín 2008, 146–7.

144 Hamarneh 1962, 62, n. 38.

145 For al-Zahrāwī's description see Hamarneh 1965, 313.

Islamic East have also been found at Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrā'.¹⁴⁶

As the gift to Ibn Abī'l-'Afiyya indicates, receptacles for liquid – or even solid – perfumes, whether they were made from gold, silver or glass, were placed inside the ivory containers. This fact calls to mind the few perfume bottles that have survived from tenth-century Cordoba, including two (one silver, one bronze) with spherical bellies and narrow tapering necks, and a hemispherical lid-cum-stopper which is attached by a chain to the body of the vessel (Figure 100). These two objects have abstract repoussé decoration, which evokes carved details on the extant ivories or their metal mounts, and it is intriguing that their dimensions seem to match the interior dimensions of the cylindrical ivories, indicating that they could have fitted snugly inside.¹⁴⁷ We have to assume that objects such as the Braga pyxis originally contained perfume gifts contained in bottles, but obviously there is no way of knowing which material these bottles were made from. Such precious contents might have inspired the repurposing of the Braga pyxis by its Christian owner, as a container for the vessels of the Eucharist.¹⁴⁸ Might it be going too far to speculate that, once the perfumed contents had been finished, the precious metal was melted down and reused to make the chalice and paten now stored inside? (Figure 11)

Not only would the metalwork ateliers have made perfume containers like these, but they also made mounts to adorn the ivories and other objects emerging from the nearby Dār al-Ṣinā'a. While the silver and niello mounts on several of the ivory pieces made during al-Ḥakam's caliphate appear to be the original mounts, none of the 'Āmirid ivories retains its original mounts: Sanchuelo's pyxis lid and 'Abd al-Malik's casket have lost all trace of their mounts, while the Braga pyxis has no space allowed in the ivory for mounts, so originally did not have anything more, perhaps, than textile

mounts attaching the lid to the body.¹⁴⁹ The mounts on the caskets in the Bargello (Figures 148–149), V&A (Figures 150–155) and Doha collections (Figures 145–146) have been added much later. We do not know, therefore, what the original 'Āmirid mounts would have looked like, but they probably followed the silver-and-niello arrangement seen on surviving mounts from the 960s.

The same decorative technique is used on a number of silver or silver-gilt containers that may have been made in al-Andalus, among them the small heart-shaped case that now holds relics of San Pelayo, in the treasury of San Isidoro de León.¹⁵⁰ This tiny box does not have much space for decoration, but the form of the split palmettes that decorate its front and back closely resembles the mounts on a small ivory casket made for one of al-Ḥakam's sisters around 961, now in the V&A (301–1866). San Pelayo's relics were translated to León in 967, which might allow us to date these heart-shaped boxes to the 960s as well. It seems likely they were also made in the caliphal metal workshop. Were the relics and accompanying luxury containers part of a royal gift, from al-Ḥakam to the young Ramiro III (r. 966–84), who had just come to the throne of León, to express a wish for good relations?

1.3.4 Other Object Types

There are no surviving metal objects that can be directly associated with the 'Āmirids, but historical evidence and the survival of artefacts datable to this period attest to the continuation of metalworking practices of different kinds. The two repoussé perfume bottles mentioned above – one silver, one bronze (Figure 100) – were found in two

146 Cressier 2000.

147 Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015, 42–43.

148 Prado-Vilar 1997, 34.

149 Rosser-Owen 2012, 303. This means that its current mounts must have been added later, perhaps by Don Mendo when he commissioned the chalice and paten, or at a later date in the object's life in the Braga Cathedral Treasury.

150 On this small group of metal objects, including these observations on the San Pelayo reliquary, see Rosser-Owen 2015a, esp. 53–55; Martin and Rosser-Owen forthcoming.



FIGURE 99 Ivory cosmetics box in Burgos, reverse; Museo de Bellas Artes, Burgos
© ARCHIVO OROÑOZ

hoards datable to the ʿĀmirid period, according to coins present in the hoards that were minted between 393/1003 and 399/1009. According to Azuar Ruiz, this indicates the existence of a workshop producing objects in precious metals at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries – though of course the bottles could have been survivals from a slightly earlier period.¹⁵¹ Because of the use of the repoussé technique, Azuar Ruiz associates with them a cylindrical lidded casket made in tinned brass, from the church of Santa María de Lladó, near Girona, and now in that city's cathedral

¹⁵¹ Azuar Ruiz 2018, 281.



FIGURE 100 Perfume bottle, repoussé bronze, found in the hoard from Olivos Borrachos, Cordoba, buried c. 1010; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Cordoba, inv. CE003772
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

treasury.¹⁵² This casket is decorated on its body with lobed roundels containing floral motifs, and on its lid with interlinked roundels containing animals: a peacock, lion, harpy, gazelle, lion and hare. Around the lid and the upper frieze of the body is an inscription in Kufic epigraphy, in the style of the late tenth/early eleventh-century: this appears to read the same string of blessings, mirroring each other on lid and body. Two bronze or brass pitchers were found in excavations in the crypt of San Vicente in Valencia, together with a cache of green-and-brown ceramics and a dinar dated 398/1007–8.¹⁵³ The continuity of bronze casting into the Taifa period – when it seems that the magnificent sculpture known as the Pisa Griffin was made¹⁵⁴ – indicates that it must have received patronage through the ʿĀmirid period, not least to make the great gates for the Great Mosque of Cordoba and for al-Manṣūr's new palaces, and

¹⁵² Museu d'Art, Girona, inv. MD25, published in Giralt 1998, 207. My thanks to Therese Martin for sharing with me her photographs of this object.

¹⁵³ Azuar Ruiz 2018, 282.

¹⁵⁴ Contadini 2018.

objects such as the fountain heads that adorned the basins in 'Āmirid palace gardens. Finally, a word may be said about jewellery at this period: this consists of bracelets or the links from bracelets and necklaces, pendants, rings including those with cabuchons, earrings, and loose beads, made from gold, silver, but especially silver gilt. These have principally been recovered from hoards and, as Labarta points out, most of the datable hoards – ie those that contain coins, although these have typically been perforated for attachment to clothing and thus might already have been old when the hoard was buried – date from the time of the Fitna. The Loja hoard, from Granada and now in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, is datable 1010, as is the hoard from Ermita Nueva, in Alcalá la Real; that from Cortijo de la Mora, Lucena, is datable 1013; the Lorca hoard, from Murcia and now in the V&A, contains ten dirhams minted during the reigns of al-Ḥakam II and Hishām II.¹⁵⁵ A systematic study of the objects found in these hoards is necessary to improve our understanding of the techniques and aesthetics of Andalusī jewellery and how these might compare with better-documented finds from the Islamic East.

One type of metalwork that al-Manṣūr required in great quantity was arms and armour, and as we saw in Chapter 4, the sources tell us that there were important weapons stores (*asliḥa*) at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. Ibn al-Khaṭīb informs us that, in the campaign against Barcelona in 985, the 'Āmirid soldiers wore armour of Indian steel (*qarāmid al-Hind*).¹⁵⁶ This was made in al-Andalus – there was an important steel factory in Seville, whose products were exported around the world. At this period, two arms factories operated in Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrā': each year, they provided 13,000 shields, 12,000 Arab and Turkish bows, and each month they supplied 20,000 arrows.¹⁵⁷ In the 'Āmirid period, the Cordoba factory was directed

by Abū'l 'Abbās al-Baghdādī – Vallejo observes that an 'eastern craftsman' in this role might have inspired the introduction of oriental techniques and object types into Andalusī metalwork.¹⁵⁸ The factory at Madīnat al-Zahrā' was directed by the Slav, Ṭalḥa. Their products were stored in the Khizānat al-Silāḥ, the state arsenal, from where they were signed out when needed for military parades or campaigns.¹⁵⁹ The bronze disc in Figure 18 and that excavated at Cercadilla bear physical testament to this organised system of signing arms and armour in and out of the 'Āmirid arsenal. They also indicate the huge amount of money that must have been spent on making these suits of armour: the tag in Figure 18 was attached to the 141st mail coat 'decorated in the Slav style', which means that al-Manṣūr had paid for at least another 140 such coats, potentially made from or decorated in precious metals. Maybe it was Ṭalḥa, the Slav, who made this particular type of armour, hence its designation. Arms and the apparel for horses, which would have been made in these state arms factories, were also important components in *khil'a* presentations to the Umayyads' Berber allies; as the descriptions of these show, these were frequently made of precious metals, often silver-gilt or nielloed silver, and highly decorated.¹⁶⁰

Finally, the sources tell us of the huge number of lamps that illuminated the Great Mosque of Cordoba during al-Manṣūr's period. The mosque contained 280 lamps, mostly of bronze, not counting those which illuminated the external gates – this is equivalent to a lamp hanging in every other bay of the mosque. Four of these lamps were made from silver, each of which consumed more than 200 kg of oil a night.¹⁶¹ These hung in the mosque's central nave, the largest of them hanging in the great dome in front of the *maqṣūra*, in

155 Labarta 2019b.

156 Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1956, 74; Vallvé 1980, 213.

157 Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1956, 101–2; Vallvé 1980, 214; Labarta 2016, 266.

158 Vallejo 2018, 263.

159 Labarta 2016.

160 Ballestín 2006.

161 Vallvé 1980, 211. Ibn Ghālib says that there were only three silver lamps.

order to illuminate the sacred Qurʾāns.¹⁶² This could mean the mosaic-incrusted dome in front of the mihrab, next to the Bayt al-Māl where the Qurʾāns were stored, or the dome now known as the ‘lucernario’, just to the west of the possibly-ʿĀmirid tribune (Figures 47, 49). This lamp was hung with 1020 lights, which were covered with gold (presumably silver-gilt), and it had a circumference of fifty palms. The description calls to mind the early thirteenth-century ‘Grand Lustre’, which hangs in the main dome of the axial nave of the al-Qarawiyyīn mosque in Fez, made to replace an earlier, deteriorated lamp, and possibly preserving the form of older Andalusī lamps.¹⁶³ All these lights blazed throughout the month of Ramadan and especially on Laylat al-Qadr, the 27th night, when 35 hundredweights of oil were burned, together with three hundredweights of wax and a quantity of ambergris and other perfumes. Finally, Vallejo speculates that the bells brought to Cordoba after the campaign against Santiago de Compostela, which were turned into lamps for the mosque (Chapter 1), might have necessitated the introduction of a new type of metalworking tradition.¹⁶⁴

We can assume that those metalworking techniques that required more industrial processes and made more noise and mess were located further afield, perhaps close to the potters’ quarter or the Dār al-Ṭirāz. Their production cannot be localised with certainty, because no archaeological evidence of metal workshops or foundries has yet been excavated in or around Cordoba.¹⁶⁵

Likewise, though no examples of ceramic objects can be associated directly with al-Manṣūr and his court, we can assume that the production of tin-glazed ceramics decorated in green and manganese continued and presumably developed under the ʿĀmirids, because it flourished so widely across al-Andalus during the eleventh century. The *terminus ante quem* for the invention of this distinctively Andalusī ceramic technique is provided by the tiles used in the coving of the mosaic-incrusted ante-mihrab dome in the Great Mosque of Cordoba, completed around 965. The huge number of so-called ‘green and brown’ ceramics that have been recovered in excavations at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, in the western suburbs of the medieval city of Cordoba, and in the excavations of the street that runs beneath the ʿĀmirid mosque extension,¹⁶⁶ indicates that the production of this ware was well established by the tenth century. Apart from the early association with the court, through their employment in the mihrab dome, the fact that this type is found so abundantly probably implies it was not an elite ware, or used by the caliph himself. It is more likely that the upper levels of the court hierarchy used more expensive and exotic imported ceramics: Abbasid and Fatimid lustrewares have been excavated at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, and there are also examples of Chinese imports found in possibly tenth-century contexts.¹⁶⁷ These are the types of wares the caliph and his courtiers are likely to have used, perhaps later imitated in this by his *ḥājib*. It may be that the exotic imports from China and Iraq – which travelled via Fatimid Egypt despite political rivalries – inspired the caliph or his potters to develop their own fine tablewares in imitation, just as Iraqi potters in the eighth century had been stimulated by the arrival of Chinese whitewares in the Middle East to invent tin-glaze technology.¹⁶⁸ It speaks to a heightened atmosphere of artistic innovation and

162 Vallvé 1980, 216, citing Ibn Ghālib, Ibn ʿIdhārī and al-Maqqarī.

163 *Maroc Médiéval*, cat. 190: the ‘Grand Lustre’ is datable 1202–13. As I have argued in Rosser-Owen 2014, the Maghribī dynasties who ruled al-Andalus consciously evoked the forms and objects of the Umayyad past to legitimise their role as successors to this territory.

164 Vallejo 2018, 259. This also evokes Moroccan examples that may continue this tradition, for example, the bell converted into a lamp in 1333–7, which now hangs in al-Qarawiyyīn in Fez: *Maroc Médiéval*, cat. 276.

165 Vallejo 2018, 263.

166 Pedro Marfil, personal communication, November 2009.

167 Heidenreich 2001; Heidenreich 2007.

168 On this well-known phenomenon, see for example Hallett 2012.

experimentation because of a strong and wealthy patronage power.

Another type of artistic production for which very little physical evidence survives is books. However, we know from the historical sources – not least those that highlight al-Ḥakam's erudition and famous library – and the discussion in Chapter 3, of books and learning under the 'Āmirids, that this was an art that would have been sponsored by the court. It has been suggested that the intense atmosphere of book collecting and copying in late-tenth-century Cordoba led to the codification, if not the invention, of the distinctive Maghribi script, though the only surviving manuscript that can be associated with al-Ḥakam's library – a copy of the *Mukhtaṣar Abī Muṣ'ab*, dated 359/970, now in the library of the al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque in Fez – is not written in Maghribi script.¹⁶⁹ Bongianino argues that this scribal development was due instead to the activity of the many *private* libraries and book collectors in caliphal Cordoba: 'the largest and most famous of these private institutions was no doubt the library of the affluent scholar Ibn Fuṭays (d. 402/1012), where six scribes were employed constantly to increase their master's collection of books, hired at a fixed salary rather than at piece rates, lest they be tempted to rush their handwriting'.¹⁷⁰ Julián Ribera calculated that more than 60,000 manuscripts were being copied in the city's private libraries every year.¹⁷¹

It is surely significant that of the eleven extant Andalusī manuscripts copied in Maghribi scripts, *all* of them date from the 'Āmirid period, with the exception of a ninth-century manuscript that was owned by the *faqīh* 'Abbās ibn al-Aṣbāgh ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Hamdānī (306/918–386/996), who died during the 'Āmirid period, and an anomalous tenth-century manuscript with an ownership note in Hebrew script.¹⁷² Again, these manuscripts

have survived through accident, so it would be unwise to base any firm conclusions upon them, but this fact would seem to support an impression of a heightened – certainly, at least, continued – scribal and intellectual activity through the period of the 'Āmirid *ḥijāba*, despite al-Manṣūr's purge of the caliphal library. Al-Manṣūr even indulged in scribal activity himself: as mentioned in Chapter 5, one aspect of al-Manṣūr's ostentatious piety, that has been memorialised by historians over the centuries, is the fact that he himself copied a volume of the Qur'ān, which he always carried with him on campaign. Ana Echevarría has speculated further that al-Manṣūr or other members of this family could have commissioned beautifully ornamented Qur'ān manuscripts to present to the mosques he patronised – at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira and his Cordoba Mosque extension – but again there is no evidence for this.¹⁷³ However, we know that al-Manṣūr had his own librarian, and hence his own physical library and collection of books. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad (or Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān) ibn Ma'mar al-Lughawī (d. 423/1032) is mentioned in biographical dictionaries as a 'grammarian, an expert in letters and the sciences of language'. He was employed by al-Manṣūr and his son (presumably 'Abd al-Malik) to be their 'official chronicler and in charge of their library', and was the author of a lost dynastic history of the 'Āmirids, *al-Ta'rikh fī l-dawla al-'āmiriyya*. After the Fitna, he found protection under one of the 'Āmirid *fityān* who became a Taifa ruler, Mujāhid al-'Āmirī, and lived at his court in the Balearic islands, where he 'presided over judgments' until his death.¹⁷⁴

173 Echevarría 2011, 192.

174 Echevarría 2011, 16–17; María Luisa Ávila, *Prosopografía de los Ulemas de al Andalus*: http://www.eea.csic.es/pua/personaje/consulta_personaje.php?id=9354 (consulted 19/06/20); also Ávila's "La sociedad hispanomusulmana al final del califato", no. 665. With deep thanks to Umberto Bongianino for tracking down the information from the biographical dictionaries, and even sending me the Arabic text of Ibn al-Abbār's *al-Takmila li-Kitāb al-Ṣīla*, where Muḥammad al-Lughawī's career is described at no. 417.

169 Bongianino 2017, 29–30. It is written in 'composite variant of eastern Abbasid bookhands'.

170 Bongianino 2017, 37, citing Ribera y Tarragó 1928, 195.

171 Bongianino 2017, 37, citing Ribera y Tarragó 1928, 204.

172 Listed and discussed in Bongianino 2017, 41–50.

Vallvé notes that Andalusī rulers took abundant supplies of parchment with them on their military expeditions, ‘in order to concede mercies and privileges to the governors and lords of the provinces and to confirm accords signed with the Christian counts and kings’. He cites an anecdote about Sanchuelo at the outbreak of the Fitna, returning rapidly to Cordoba and exhausting his supply of parchments on the road, ‘in a last effort to attract to himself the Berber chiefs of his troops by means of royal concessions’.¹⁷⁵

The types of materials and techniques discussed in this last section formed the background to the material world in which the ʿĀmirids lived, and it is important to keep in mind that objects in these media existed and were used by the *ḥujjāb*. However, since no surviving examples can be directly associated with ʿĀmirid patronage, they will not feature prominently in the discussions to come.

2 *Iştināʿ*: The Strategic Use of Objects

The commissioning of precious objects was closely implicated in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III’s attempts to set al-Andalus as the stage of a truly international state. The two explicit textual descriptions of his luxury arts patronage are both recorded in the context of diplomatic exchange. We saw in Chapter 2 how ʿAbd al-Raḥmān commissioned from the Dār al-Şināʿa twelve gold and jewel-incrusted fountain heads to adorn the green marble basin he had received as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor. While no extant objects can be securely associated with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (apart from the fragmentary *ṭirāz* in the Cleveland Museum), the scant historical texts that mention objects capture something of that caliph’s deployment of the products of this luxury arts workshop.

A gift sent to the Zanāta chieftain, Muḥammad ibn Khazar, soon after ʿAbd al-Raḥmān declared his caliphate, contains crucial information about

the way in which *ṭirāz* textiles – that prerogative of being a caliph – were already being deployed as gifts.¹⁷⁶ The text records ‘excellent garments and sublime suits, luxury jewels and strange (foreign?) wonders, distinguishing [the recipient] with the special gift of clothing which [the caliph] ordered, from *his own ṭirāz*, to be embroidered with the name “Muḥammad ibn Khazar”, a great distinction, which had never before been conceded by a king to one of his partisans, and about which al-Nāşir himself boasted in the letter that accompanied the gift. This letter stresses that the clothing was made ‘fi *ṭirāz*-hu al-khāşş’, ‘in *his private ṭirāz*’, and refers to ‘ten pieces of various types, to be used for clothing, of pure ‘*ubaydī* silk, embroidered with your name (*muṭarraza bi-ismi-ka*), the like of which were never made in the Abbasid factories nor in others’. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān seems to be gloating of his ownership of a *ṭirāz* workshop, which was already superior to those of his political rivals, in its unprecedented production of textiles specifically commissioned for a particular recipient, so that they had his name embroidered onto them. Alongside other textiles, the gift also included ‘a short sword in the Frankish style, adorned with silver, gilt and relief decoration’, and the text dwells on the description of its luxuriously decorated and bejewelled sheath and cords, and on the belts and spurs which accompanied it, likewise adorned with gold, precious stones and pearls.

The magnificent gift sent by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in 934 to Mūsā ibn Abī'l-ʿAfiyya, mentioned above, did not just include ivories and perfume containers; these are embedded within a long list that included ‘*ṭirāzī khāşşī*’ from Iraq and other textiles, including turbans; a ‘large silver caliphal perfume chest, with gilded engraving in its plating and a white base, and whose interior was lined with purple fabric’, presumably a Byzantine imperial silk received in an earlier embassy and repurposed here to show the importance of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s international relations; banners with figurative

¹⁷⁵ Vallvé 1980, 237.

¹⁷⁶ Ibn Ḥayyān 1979, 177–179; 1981, 203–5.

emblems of an eagle, a lion and a white horse, as well as one decorated with epigraphy; and arms and armour, including two swords, ‘four braided pieces of rope for striking water buffaloes’, ‘six fully mechanised gilded drums’, and ‘twenty thousand Persian arrows’.¹⁷⁷

The context of this magnificent gift to Mūsā was a reward for a victory over the Fatimids. The banners (to which we will return in Chapter 8) were intended to be displayed as a visual symbol of Mūsā’s Umayyad allegiance. The gift as a whole, and the significant presence of these early ivories within it, can be associated with the political projection of the Umayyad caliphate into the Maghrib. Both these gifts to Berber leaders should be understood within the concept of the Umayyads’ deliberate policy of *khil’a*, the strategy executed by al-Manṣūr on their behalf to attract support in the Maghrib (Chapter 2). In this role – negotiating a delicate balancing act of hierarchies and sensitivities – al-Manṣūr learned early on in his career important lessons about the value of strategic relationships and the power of gift-giving. Ibn Bassām uses the term *istīnā’* to describe relationships built through gifts and special favours, which rely on the gratitude that the beneficiary feels towards his benefactor; he attributes al-Muṣḥafī’s eventual downfall to his failure at building such relationships, in contrast with al-Manṣūr’s skill at doing so.¹⁷⁸ Ibn Abī ‘Āmir dedicated himself to a policy that was the opposite of al-Muṣḥafī’s, ‘calming jealousies by giving gifts and satisfying needs, seeking out the company of men while al-Muṣḥafī held himself aloof, increasing their assets while al-Muṣḥafī diminished them’.

177 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 264–265 (§§238–239), following the translation by Stuart Sears prepared for Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015.

178 Discussed in Ballestín 2004a, 122–126. According to his definition (n. 77), *istīnā’*, from *ṣ/n/’*, is a term which means ‘to fabricate, create, construct, i.e. to “win the people contest” by means of gifts, goods, seeking partisans who will associate with someone because of their gratitude at the gifts received’.

Al-Manṣūr was not the first *ḥājib* to make use of artistic patronage for political ends, and it is instructive to consider the patronage of the two men who had occupied this office before him (no artistic patronage has yet been attributed to either of the men who held the office of *ḥājib* under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, on whom see the Introduction). In accessing the processes for commissioning art and architecture, al-Manṣūr was not ‘usurping’ another caliphal prerogative, but following a precedent for the use of the luxury arts industry by high level members of the state administration. As Martínez Enamorado put it, ‘the case of Ja’far al-Ṣiqlābī serves to light the way for al-Manṣūr’.¹⁷⁹ However, al-Manṣūr’s use of the industry manifests a massive increase in scale and intent, and a deliberate exploitation of the visual arts to express messages of power.

2.1 *Precedents for Patronage: The Two Ja’fars*

The two *ḥājibs* who served under al-Ḥakam II were confusingly both named Ja’far: al-Ṣiqlābī (in office c. 353/964–5 to 360/971–2) and al-Muṣḥafī (in office ?360/971–2 to 368/979). As Martínez Enamorado notes, even the medieval historians confused them.¹⁸⁰ Both these men were extremely important in the state administration, as indicated by the passage in al-Rāzī’s Annals describing the location of Ja’far al-Ṣiqlābī’s residence close to that of the caliph at the heart of Madīnat al-Zahrā’:

“At the beginning of Muḥarram of this year (361/972–3), the caliph al-Ḥakam ordered that his *khalīfa* and the first among his favourites, the *fatā al-kabīr* Fā’iq, *ṣāhib al-burud wa’l-tīrāz*, transfer himself from the house which he occupied in the east wing of the Qaṣr al-Zahrā’ to that which had belonged to the *ḥājib* Ja’far ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣiqlābī, [who] had died the previous year (360/971–2). This house was much more

179 Martínez Enamorado 2006, 20.

180 Martínez Enamorado 2006, 17. Even Lévi-Provençal confused these two Ja’fars, a confusion which seems to have originated with the historian Ibn Khaldūn (n. 28).

important and was situated in the west wing. [The caliph] decided to honour [Fāʿiq] in this way, because of the high esteem in which he held him, and as proof of his distinction and preference.”¹⁸¹

Manuel Ocaña carefully studied the surviving epigraphy which names Jaʿfar, as a means of charting the development of his career.¹⁸² It is remarkable that so many inscriptions survive that allowed him to do so, compared to other state officials. The list includes the many architectural commissions that Jaʿfar carried out on the caliph’s behalf (*‘ala yadayhi*), and indicates how active Jaʿfar was in the service of the state, as well as the intensity of building projects under the first two caliphs. Indeed, it implies how much more the caliphs came to rely on state officials, especially their *ḥājib*, to carry out such commissions (as well as other tasks). As discussed above (‘Structure of the industry’), Jaʿfar’s name is linked with all the major architectural projects of al-Ḥakam’s caliphate, in particular the Cordoba mosque extension: his name and titles appear five times in the marble and mosaic work around the mihrab, along with the caliph’s own name. He also came to be *ṣāḥib al-ṭirāz* (from 347/957), thus heading up the two branches of the arts industry that were most important in the political projection of the Umayyad caliphs. In so doing, he amassed great wealth, and is said to have left a considerable fortune on his death. This was managed as a *waqf* (*al-nāẓar biʿl-ahbās*) by the Cordoban *faqīh* Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh al-Ruʿayni, known by the name Ibn al-Mashshāt (d. c. 1009), though Martínez Enamorado does not say whether it is known what pious works were funded with this money.¹⁸³

Al-Şiqlābī’s official residence in the west wing at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ has been excavated, reconstructed and well-studied by the site’s excavators, in particular Antonio Vallejo.¹⁸⁴ New inscriptions have come to light since Ocaña’s study, including two on architectural supports that are probably associated with private residences. Indeed, it is likely that during al-Şiqlābī’s lifetime, some of his immense fortune would have been spent on building and embellishing a private, suburban villa in addition to his ‘official’ residence at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ. One highly significant new piece is an element now in a private collection in Cordoba (Figures 33–35). This is a cyma or impost block, the element that sits above a capital and supports the springers of arches. Since there is always more than one springer for an arch, we can imagine that there were originally several matching impost blocks in the building from which this element came. Normal for this period would be an opening of three arches, each supported by impost blocks, of which the flanking two would have abutted against the wall: we see this arrangement all over Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ (Figure 101). We can therefore reasonably assume that there were originally four similarly decorated impost blocks. Only the front half of this cyma survives, the back half having apparently suffered damage by being torn from its original placement. The fact that the inscription starts at the front and wraps all the way around the cyma suggests that it was originally visible from all four sides, and thus supported the springer to the right or left of the central arch, rather than occupying one of the flanking positions against a wall. However, this example is unique. No decorated cymas have appeared at ‘in any of the significant spaces’ at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, though there are examples of non-figurative cymas; those with inscriptions mostly date from the period of al-Ḥakam II’s reign.¹⁸⁵ Martínez Núñez has

181 *Anales*, §36.

182 Ocaña 1976, recently updated and summarised by Martínez Enamorado 2006, 16 ff. A full list of all the inscriptions naming Jaʿfar – though not including the David Collection piece, discussed below – is provided in tabulated form at pp. 66–7.

183 Martínez Enamorado 2006, 53; Meouak 1999, 215.

184 Vallejo 2007; Vallejo 2010; Vallejo and Montilla 2019.

185 Martínez Enamorado 2006, 51, citing Mora Vicente 2002, 180. Martínez Núñez 2015, 43 #33, 68, publishes a rare inscribed cyma from the reign of ʿAbd



FIGURE 101 Tripartite arcade in the Upper Basilical Hall, looking onto the garden, Madinat al-Zhara'

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

suggested that the fragment decorated with the heads of sharp-toothed beasts, found at al-Rummāniyya, might have come from a figurative cyma.¹⁸⁶

At the front, the cyma shows two affronted griffins, represented as winged animals combining the body of a lion and the upper torso of an eagle, amongst deeply drilled vegetation; this vegetation occupies all the upper corners of the cyma and is carved in the manner of a capital, perhaps evoking the style of the capitals that originally sat below these impost blocks. On its damaged sides are seen the rear ends of two hooved quadrupeds, no doubt gazelles. There is no suggestion of a combat scene on the sides, suggesting that paired gazelles and paired griffins alternated with each other

around the four sides of the cyma. This arrangement recalls the 'Amirid capital reused in the Casa del Gran Capitán in Cordoba (Figures 26–7, Chapter 4). The figurative decoration of this cyma suggests that the residence from which it came was a private one, given the uniformly non-figurative nature of the official art of the Umayyad state, while *munyas* as sites of otium seem to have led to a more relaxed attitude towards figurative representation.¹⁸⁷

The cyma preserves part of an inscription, which begins on the front, at top right, with a long *basmala*, and appears to name 'Abū Aḥmad Ja'far al-ḥājjib'; it ends with the date, which Martínez Enamorado reads as 353/964–5, while María Antonia Martínez Núñez suggests 356/966–7.¹⁸⁸

al-Raḥmān III (datable c. 345H). On p. 66 she observes that otherwise all the known cymas with inscriptions belong to al-Ḥakam's reign.

186 Martínez Núñez 2015, 66 n. 33.

187 See the discussion on 'decoration' in Anderson 2013, 72–87.

188 The complete inscription is reconstructed by Martínez Enamorado 2006, 10, as follows: *bismillāh al-raḥmān*

The name Jaʿfar would appear at the far left of the front inscription band, which is oddly smoother compared to the clear relief of the remainder of the inscription, and invites speculation that the name was later deliberately removed, by a rival or later occupant of the building from which this element came. Martínez Enamorado interprets Abū Aḥmad as Jaʿfar al-Şiqḷābī's *kunya*, though this was never used in the many commissions he carried out in the caliph's name. On those inscriptions, Jaʿfar habitually celebrated his relationship to the caliph and the Umayyad dynasty, by employing the *nasab* Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, and proclaiming himself the

caliph's *mawlā-hu wa ḥājibu-hu*.¹⁸⁹ Nor does it appear in the inscriptions from the House of Jaʿfar at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ. That was his official residence, which he occupied at the grace and favour of the caliph: as such, epigraphy from this residence underlines Jaʿfar's relationship with his caliphal patrons. There is no reference to the caliph in the cyma's admittedly incomplete inscription – the blessings in the opening eulogy on the cyma are for (*li-*) Jaʿfar himself. Furthermore, unusually, the name as given here follows an Arab-style onomastic system, rather than that usually employed for freedmen.

Two capitals survive which likewise bear the *kunya* Abū Aḥmad.¹⁹⁰ One, of which only a volute remains, excavated in Valencia, clearly reads the phrase 'li-Abī Aḥmad Jaʿfar' (Figure 102), while the other is a capital now in the Romero de Torres collection in Cordoba (Figure 103), whose inscription has been reconstructed as reading a full *basmala* (as on the cyma) followed by: *li-Abī Aḥmad Jaʿfar ḥājib amīr al-muʿminīn aṭāla a[llāh baqā-hu fatamma bi-ʿawn al]lāh wa-niʿmatu-hu fi [sana ... thala]th miʿa*.¹⁹¹ In both cases the complete date is missing, but assuming an identification with Jaʿfar al-Şiqḷābī, Carmen Barceló (in her various publications of these elements) dates the capitals broadly to the period 350–360/960–971, coinciding with the apogee of his career. Given the coincidence with the use of the *kunya* on the cyma, as well as its probable date, it seems highly likely that the two capitals and impost block all come from the same building, possibly a *munya*, constructed in the mid-960s, perhaps by Jaʿfar al-Şiqḷābī.

On the other hand, this may be an example of the confusion between the two *ḥājibs* named Jaʿfar. Martínez Núñez has instead identified the 'Abū Aḥmad Jaʿfar [ḥājib] amīr al-muʿminīn' on

*al-raḥīm barakah min allāh li-abī a[ḥmad jaʿfar] / [a]-ḥājib ṣāḥib al-[kḥayl wa]-tīrāz ḥājib amīr al-muʿminīn aṭāla allāh baqāʾahu bi-ʿawn allāh fa-tamma allāh wa-niʿmatu-hu fi sana tha]lātha wa khamsīn wa thalath miʿa (353/19 January 964–7 January 965). The missing section, including the reconstruction of the date, is extrapolated from the wording of the two surviving capitals also naming Abū Aḥmad Jaʿfar (discussed next): Barceló and Cantero 1995 reconstructed this as 353/964–5, though Barceló et al are more cautious in their 1998 publication, 29–31, dating the volute in Valencia broadly to the 960s–970s. Martínez Núñez commented (personal communication, 08/02/15) that the date 'could be 356 H, since scarcely a fragment of the final grapheme of the unit [i.e. the '6' in this case] has been preserved'. In a publication later that same year, she described it as 'un ejemplar muy anómalo', which she includes – in her list of known cymas with inscriptions – 'con muchas reservas', though without explaining what her reservations are (Martínez Núñez 2015, 66 n. 33). Carmen Barceló has also expressed doubts over the authenticity of this object: 'Si comparamos los signos y nexos del cimacio con los de los capiteles que he atribuido al fatā ʿYaʿfar y otros cordobeses del mismo periodo y personaje, sus diferencias son bien notables y discordantes' (Barceló 2015, 194–195). In a personal communication (29/07/20), she writes 'Mi sospecha de que sea obra realizada *ad hoc* para el mercado de antigüedades se basa en el análisis de su inscripción que, además de anomalías en la redacción del texto, muestra muchas torpezas e incoherencias de carácter cronológico y estilístico en sus signos epigráficos'. If the cyma should be associated with al-Muṣḥafī rather than al-Şiqḷābī, as discussed below, this might explain some of the stylistic differences she perceives from the capitals inscribed in al-Şiqḷābī's name.*

189 See the table of his titles in Martínez Enamorado 2006, 66–7.

190 Martínez Enamorado 2006, 30, 48–52; Martínez Núñez 1999; Barceló, Cressier and Lerma 1988–90, 29–31, no. 2.1, fig. 5, plates 1–11; Barceló, Cressier and Lerma 1990; Barceló and Cantero 1995; Barceló 1998, 225–6 (A1).

191 Barceló and Cantero 1995, 424–5.



FIGURE 102 Volute inscribed *li-Abī Aḥmad Jaʿfar*, excavated in Valencia
 © SIAM (SERVICIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN ARQUEOLÓGICA MUNICIPAL),
 AYUNTAMIENTO DE VALÈNCIA, INV. 1/237



FIGURE 103 Capital inscribed in the name of Abū Aḥmad Jaʿfar; Museo de Romero de Torres,
 Córdoba
 © ANTONIO VALLEJO TRIANO

the two capitals as referring to Jaʿfar al-Muṣṣḥafī.¹⁹²

Though he is known to have had the *kunya* Abū'l-Ḥasan, she notes that his first-born son was named Aḥmad, and that it was not unusual to use a double *kunya*. But al-Muṣṣḥafī was not, apparently, named *ḥājib* until the very end of al-Ḥakam's life. However, the word *ḥājib* in the inscriptions is actually a reconstruction, again based on the identification with Jaʿfar al-Şiqlābī, and only the final *-bā'* of the word is legible. Martínez Núñez suggests that an alternative reading of this word would be *kātib*, which could then refer to al-Muṣṣḥafī, who occupied the post of personal *kātib* to al-Ḥakam before he acceded to the caliphate.¹⁹³ These two capitals may thus have come, instead, from a construction sponsored by al-Muṣṣḥafī – but, until this was suggested, it was thought that nothing material had survived in his name. Now, perhaps, we can also associate with him a unique figurative impost block, and another inscribed object, discussed below.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, al-Muṣṣḥafī was celebrated for his poetry, and perhaps his patronage interests lay more in literature than in art, though as a member of the court elite, al-Muṣṣḥafī would surely have wanted to surround himself with a beautiful setting that made a physical statement of his lofty position, especially once he was promoted to *ḥājib* and became the chief political figure in the state. Indeed, there are incidental references to a *munya* al-Muṣṣḥafīya in the sources: al-Maqqarī tells us that once he had fallen from grace, al-Muṣṣḥafī was 'so ruined and impoverished that he was compelled to sell [al-Manşūr] his *munya* in al-Ruṣāfa, which was one of the most magnificent residences in Cordoba'.¹⁹⁴ This loss was nostalgically evoked by his grandson, Muḥammad Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn Jaʿfar al-Muṣṣḥafī, who, on passing by one day, lamented in a poem: 'Stop a moment before al-Muṣṣḥafīya

and weep for an eye without its pupil! Ask Jaʿfar about his power and generosity in times past!'.¹⁹⁵ Ibn 'Idhārī mentions a *Munya* Jaʿfar, where Hishām II stayed briefly in 399/1008–9, and where he designated 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo to be his heir to the caliphate.¹⁹⁶ Lévi-Provençal believed this to have been a residence of Jaʿfar al-Şiqlābī, while Barceló and Cantero actually rule out the possibility that it could be identified with al-Muṣṣḥafī's *munya*, because elsewhere this is called 'al-Muṣṣḥafīya'.¹⁹⁷ This is far from conclusive, however, as al-Muṣṣḥafīya is an adjective, and could merely have been employed poetically in Muḥammad Abū Bakr's lament, rather than indicating an actual name for the *munya*. In the same way, *munyas* associated with the 'Āmirids were called al-'Āmirīya or al-Ḥājibīya (see Chapter 4).¹⁹⁸ Martínez Núñez seems happy to associate the *Munya* Jaʿfar with al-Muṣṣḥafī.¹⁹⁹ The sources also contain hints of other levels of patronage: according to Ibn Juljul, al-Muṣṣḥafī had his own personal physician, Aḥmad ibn Ḥakam ibn Ḥafşūn, who was also in charge (*muqīm*) of the *ḥājib*'s residence.²⁰⁰ Al-Muṣṣḥafī or another member of his family may also have founded a mosque in the centre of Cordoba (*dākhil Qurṭuba*), though

195 Pérès 1990, 138; see also de Felipe 1997, 182.

196 *Bayān* 111:42–43 [translation, 47–8].

197 Lévi-Provençal 1957 [1996], 247, n. 125: 'una *Munya* Cha'far (es decir, Cha'far el Esclavo), residencia de Hishām II'; Barcelo and Cantero 1995, 429. Martínez Enamorado 2006, 30, 48–52, follows them in this, though he notes 'but this is far from being conclusive'.

198 Pérès 1990, 136–7, mentions that the late eleventh-century poet Ibn Zaydūn gives the names of various *munyas* in a poem (*muwashshah*) which he does not reproduce; these include al-Ja'fariya, but nothing further is known about this *munya*, such as whether it could be associated with one of the two *ḥujjāb* of that name, nor about most of the others named by Ibn Zaydūn. Pérès comments that apart from the first two (al-Ruṣāfa and al-'Aqīq), Ibn Zaydūn is the only one to mention them: 'Is this because he invented them? It seems more logical to suppose that all these places had existed in the period when Ibn Zaydūn went to them with Wallāda, but after the end of the eleventh century, they had ceased to attract the young *desocupados* of Cordoba'.

199 Martínez Núñez 1999, 94, n. 38.

200 Meouak 1999, 189.

192 Martínez Núñez 1999, 85.

193 Meouak 1999, 187; de Felipe 1997, 179.

194 Al-Maqqarī, 183; *Nafh*, I, 471. On the *Munya* al-Muṣṣḥafīya, probably built between 961 and 979, see Ruggles 2000, 118.

the only evidence for this is a topographical memory in a later source.²⁰¹ If the cyma did come from al-Muṣḥafī's *munya*, later taken over by al-Manṣūr after the former's fall from grace, this might explain the deliberate erasure of the name Ja'far from the inscription at the front.

Another object has come to light in recent years that can now be associated with al-Muṣḥafī's artistic patronage because of its epigraphic relationship with the cyma and two capitals discussed above. This is a vertical element carved from white marble, now in the David Collection in Copenhagen, bought on the art market in 2009 (Figures 104–107).²⁰² It is carved on three sides with a design of trilobed arches with pronounced voussoirs enclosing flourishing vegetal decoration; its fourth side has a much rougher surface and a concave depression running top to bottom, about the same height and diameter as a lead pipe; the top of the object is flat, with the pipe hole passing up into it. As such it has been identified, by María Antonia Martínez Núñez and Antonio Vallejo, as the decorative cover for the piping that would have fed a fountain head standing on the flat top of the object, pouring water into a fountain basin of the 'Āmirid type (Figures 108–109).²⁰³ This also

helps to explain what would have abutted and hidden the blank spaces seen on the short ends of the three complete 'Āmirid basins. The decoration on the sides of the David Collection piece might have reflected or continued whatever decoration was carved on the sides of the fountain basin against which it was set; we can understand the relationship perfectly if we look at al-Manṣūr's basin (Figure 113), where the arcade on the back is stylistically extremely close to the trilobed arches of this marble 'pipe cover'.

An inscription runs around the lowest level of the piece, where it is least visible, though this placement recalls the column bases from Madīnat al-Zahrā' that are inscribed with the names and titles of the ruler. In the object's more recent history, it was (appropriately) used as the base for a fountain, so the original sharpness of many of its details has been eroded away; the 'front' of the object (side 2) is most worn, and here the inscription is most difficult to make out. However, according to Martínez Núñez's reading, the 'pipe cover' again mentions Abū Aḥmad Ja'far: (1) *baraka min allāh li-ab[ī]* (2) *[a]ḥmad ja'far al-hāj[ib]* (3) *[ṣāhib a]l-khayl wa al-burud*. The extremely close stylistic relationship of this piece to al-Manṣūr's basin, made in 377/987–8, suggests a similar chronology, though obviously before 979 when al-Muṣḥafī fell from grace. The title *ṣāhib al-khayl wa ...* was initially taken as associating the pipe cover with al-Ṣiqḷābī, who is named as *ṣāhib al-khayl wa'l-ṭirāz* in an inscription on one of the small decorative arches from the baths in the House of the Pool ('Vivienda de la Alberca') at Madīnat al-Zahrā', though this dates from the year 350/961, before he became *ḥājib*. However, as mentioned in Part 1, in 971 al-Muṣḥafī received the office of head of the postal service (*barīd*), when he was put in charge of moving its headquarters.²⁰⁴ This later chronology and the stylistic parallels point to al-Muṣḥafī

201 Zanon 1989, 99, cited in de Felipe 1997, 185, 329: 'La importancia adquirida por el linaje fue tal que su nombre pervivió en la topografía de Córdoba, donde hacia lugares ya denominación hacia referencia a ellos. Una muestra de ello lo constituye la mezquita llamada Masjid al-Mushafi situada dentro de la ciudad; aunque no existe ningún dato que prueba con certeza que esta denominación procede de un miembro de la familia, consideramos que queda dentro del ámbito de lo posible'.

202 David Collection, inv. 25.2009, H: 75 cm. I believe this object remains unpublished, although it is available on the David Collection's website. My thanks to Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer and Will Kwiatkowski for sharing with me images and their reading of the inscription.

203 This identification was provided in a report written in January 2015 on the object's inscription. I am extremely grateful to Prof. Martínez Núñez for taking the trouble to reread this inscription and share her thoughts with me. On examples of pipe covers found during excavations at Madīnat al-Zahrā', which do not have carved decoration, see Vallejo 2010, 239–240, figs. 191–2 (for a

reconstruction of how they would have worked to supply water to one of the plain sarcophagi also found at the site).

204 Meouak 1999, 186.

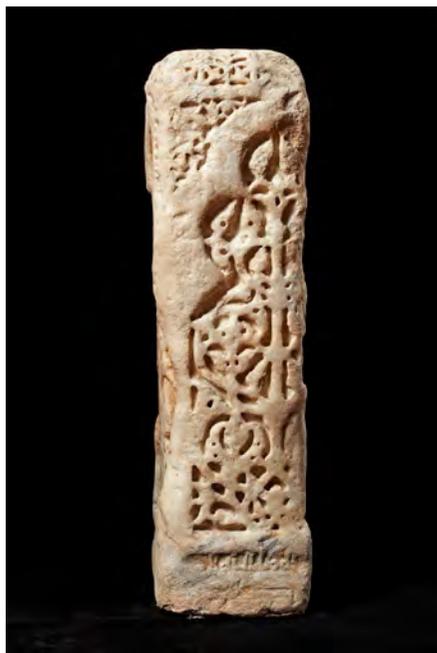


FIGURE 104 Pipe cover for a fountain basin:
side 1, 971–9, marble; The
David Collection, Copenhagen,
inv. 25/2009
© PERNILLE KLEMP



FIGURE 105 Pipe cover for a fountain basin:
side 2, 971–9, marble; The
David Collection, Copenhagen,
inv. 25/2009
© PERNILLE KLEMP



FIGURE 106 Pipe cover for a fountain basin:
side 3, 971–9, marble; The
David Collection, Copenhagen,
inv. 25/2009
© PERNILLE KLEMP



FIGURE 107 Pipe cover for a fountain basin:
interior, 971–9, marble; The
David Collection, Copenhagen,
inv. 25/2009
© PERNILLE KLEMP

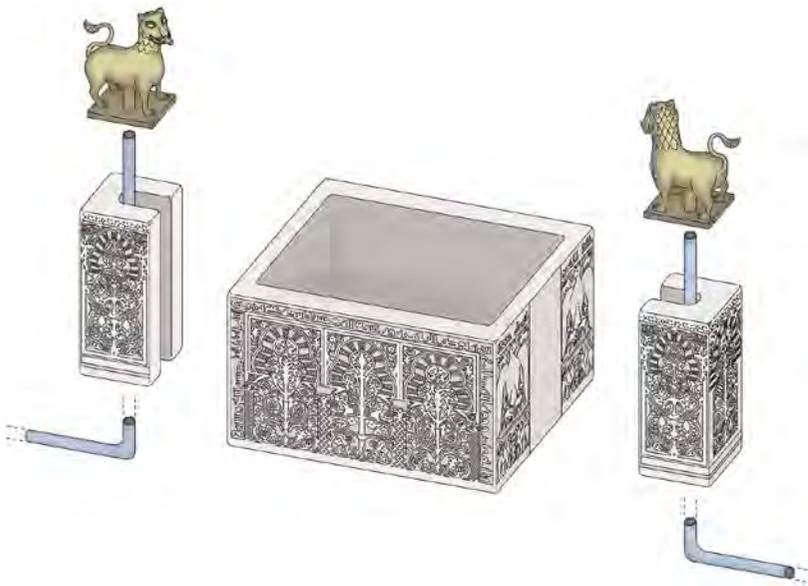


FIGURE 108
Exploded view of a reconstruction
of al-Manşūr's basin showing pipe
covers and lion fountain heads
© MATILDE GRIMALDI

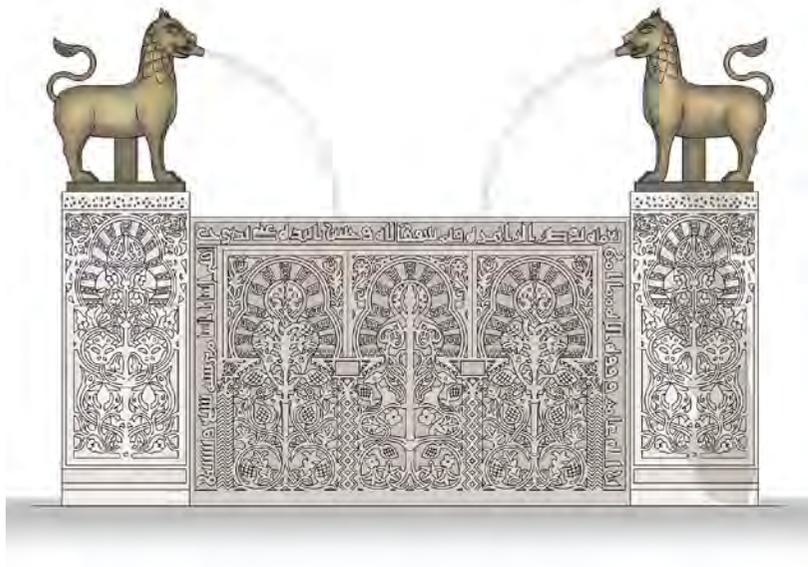


FIGURE 109
Proposed reconstruction of
al-Manşūr's basin with pipe
covers and lion fountain heads
© MATILDE GRIMALDI

as the patron, and in fact this title allows a more precise dating for the pipe cover, of 971–9.

This reading would suggest that the reconstruction of the word *ḥājib* on the capital in Cordoba (Figure 103) is, in the end, correct, and that the two marble capitals should likewise date from the 970s rather than the 960s. These capitals were carved in

the composite style, which is stylistically more consonant with the decoration on the pipe cover. The echinus of the capital in Cordoba is carved with a deeply drilled out vegetal scroll, which might mirror the border of drilled decoration that runs along the top of all three sides of the Copenhagen piece – but the carving of both is not well enough

preserved to tell whether they were originally meant to match. The capitals both originally measured around (H) 26 cm × (W) 25 cm × 15 cm (diameter at the base), and had long inscriptions running all around the top of the echinus (which survive best on the volute in Valencia). They both represent considerable time on the part of the carver and investment on the part of the patron. Let us not forget that al-Maqqarī described the Munyat al-Muṣṣḥafiyya as ‘one of the most magnificent residences in Cordoba’.

A vast residential complex, known as the Plan Parcial de RENFE, uncovered during rescue excavations in 1997–8, has been tentatively identified as the physical remains of al-Muṣṣḥafi’s private residence. Its dimensions are huge – ten times the size of the largest domestic house yet excavated in Cordoba – arranged around seven courtyards, all configured around one large central courtyard containing a garden and pool.²⁰⁵ The archaeologists who excavated it consider that the property extended further to the north with a zone of gardens and orchards.²⁰⁶ All this indicates that this was the residence of someone of high social status: a minister or courtier of high rank. Felix Arnold lists the ten residences cited by the historical sources that can be associated with statesmen of this level, but only a few can be located in the neighbourhood where this structure was found:²⁰⁷ to the north of the city, between the suburbs of Cercadilla and the Bāb al-Yahūd, around 500 m from the northern wall of the madina of Cordoba, close to one of the arterial road of the city, in use since Roman times.²⁰⁸ This area was subject to suburban development in the third quarter of the tenth century (i.e. 950–975), precisely when al-Muṣṣḥafi became *ḥājib* and built ‘one of the most magnificent residences in Cordoba’. This chronology for the construction of the residence is supported by the archaeology, including the ceramic

finds at the site.²⁰⁹ Of the *munyas* cited by Arnold, only one fits the location and chronology, and that is al-Muṣṣḥafi’s residence. The identification is speculative, but would appear to verify the information from the historical sources. The surviving fragments of architectural decoration that are discussed here may well have come from this site.

An interesting feature of the animals on the cyma is that they have a black substance inlaid into their eyes: this survives on the left-hand griffin but appears to have fallen out of the right-hand griffin, leaving a deep empty eye-socket. The only other example of this use of black inlay for the eyes, of which I am aware, is the volute from al-Rummāniyya (Figure 29): in the procession of birds on its sides, the birds’ eyes are likewise inlaid with a black substance.²¹⁰ The accepted date for the construction of al-Rummāniyya by Durri al-Saghīr is 965, after a fragmentary inscription that preserves part of a date.²¹¹ Might this shared technique indicate a date for the cyma in the 960s, even that it was produced in the same workshop as the architectonic elements for al-Rummāniyya? The eagles’ eyes on the two marble basins made for al-Manṣūr and ‘Abd al-Malik in later decades

209 Salinas 2008, 248.

210 Castejón 1945, 208, noted ‘a most curious detail in these birds’, which is that each of their eyes contained what he considered to be a metallic incrustation, suggesting that they were originally inlaid with a piece of metal or jewel. Felix Arnold confirmed (personal communication 29/07/20) that they did not analyse this substance during their recent work on al-Rummāniyya.

211 Arnold, Canto García and Vallejo Triano 2015, 132–3, believe this to be the fragment of a basin, as reconstructed in their Fig. 63b; while Martínez Núñez 2015, 66 n. 33, intriguingly suggests that it might have come from another cyma. For the finds of al-Rummāniyya’s architectural decoration, see (in chronological order of publication) Velázquez Bosco 1912, 31–2, plates 10, 35; De los Santos Jener 1926; *Anales de la Comisión Provincial de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Cordoba* 1926, 19–21; Terrasse 1932, 166 n.; Castejón 1945, 203–209; Castejón 1949, 235–236; Castejón 1954, 155; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181, figs. 245, 252; Anderson 2013, 72–87. For publications of the new archaeology at the site, see Arnold, Canto García and Vallejo Triano 2008, 2015 and 2019.

205 Arnold 2009–10; Arnold 2017, 101–2.

206 Ventura et al 2000, 340.

207 Arnold 2009–10, 270.

208 Ventura et al 2000, 341.

both have deep hollows for their eyes: could these have been intended to receive an inset substance (Figures 116, 132)? A 'bright soft metal', most probably silver, has recently been identified inlaid into the eyes of figures on the ivory casket in Doha, as discussed in Chapter 7 (4.1.1); and it was common for jet to be inlaid into the eyes of the ivory sculptures carved in the kingdom of León from the 1060s onwards.²¹² Could this have continued a technique that was already being practised in the caliphal sculpture workshops? If the musicians' capital (Figure 31) had retained its heads, might they also have had black inlaid eyes?

The patronage of the cyma remains enigmatic: while it *likely* names Abū Aḥmad Ja'far, it clearly gives the title of *ḥājib* and a date in the 350s/960s – but al-Muṣḥafī was not *ḥājib* at this date, and al-Ṣiqlābī was no longer *ṣāḥib al-khayl*, if this is the title which follows *ḥājib*. There remains the possibility that al-Muṣḥafī was appointed *ḥājib* by al-Ḥakam II after the death of al-Ṣiqlābī in 360/970, and that this office was *confirmed* by Hishām II after his father's death. (Is it significant that the inscription says *ḥājib* not *al-ḥājib*? As we saw in Chapter 1, various people could act in the role of *ḥājib* in court ceremonies.) The unusual figurative decoration of the cyma and the use of an inlaid substance in the eyes seems to belong to the 960s; if it did once adorn the Munyat al-Muṣḥafīyya, this suggests a range of styles, perhaps added at different times, over the course of al-Muṣḥafī's long career.

We have noted the extremely close stylistic comparison between the Copenhagen 'pipe cover' and al-Manṣūr's basin, though some motifs on the pipe cover are slightly different: the large flower at centre right of its best preserved side (side 3 following the inscription, Figure 106) does not appear on al-Manṣūr's basin, while the Copenhagen piece does not feature the starlike flowers that become a characteristic motif on 'Āmirid marble carvings (seen, for example, at top and bottom of the central

arch section on al-Manṣūr's basin). These variations may be explained by the slightly different chronologies. The Copenhagen 'pipe cover' is also very close stylistically to another decontextualised marble element, now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid (Figures 110–112). This has a large circular hole on its underside so was probably the socket for the post above a door, or was reused in this way at a later date. It does not seem to be another cover for a fountain pipe: though the socket might have supported a pipe, there is no indication that a pipe could have passed through the length of the element; and the decoration is orientated so that the flat end (on which a fountain head might have stood) is at the bottom. If it were originally a doorpost, this element would have been up against a wall. Only two (opposing) sides of this piece have carved decoration, and there is no suggestion of an inscription. The arrangement of the floral scrolls within trilobed arches with voussoirs is very close to the David Collection piece, though the leaf motifs within do not exactly match; while the border of drilled decoration that runs along the top of all three sides of the Copenhagen piece seems to find a match in a similar drilled border on the Madrid element. Could these stylistic consonances indicate that the piece in Madrid is another decontextualised architectural element from al-Muṣḥafī's *munya*? If so, the prevalence there of the designs based on trilobed arches – a motif that was employed in 'Āmirid art from its earliest surviving example (al-Manṣūr's basin) – might suggest that this formed part of an artistic vocabulary developed under al-Muṣḥafī, which was continued under al-Manṣūr.

The griffin motif depicted on the cyma appears to represent the earliest extant use of this motif in al-Andalus. Glaire Anderson has argued that the cyma's griffins – prevalent as they are in Byzantine and Sasanian silks – were introduced to Cordoba through imported textiles, during Ja'far al-Ṣiqlābī's tenure as *ṣāḥib al-tirāz*, and thus their employment on the cyma might specifically evoke that office (she is understanding al-Ṣiqlābī

²¹² Such as *Art of Medieval Spain* cats. 111, 114.



FIGURE 110 Doorpost, 970–990, marble: right side; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 1972/103/1

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FIGURE 111 Doorpost, 970–990, marble: left side; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 1972/103/1

© MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO NACIONAL, MADRID / FOTO: ÁNGEL MARTÍNEZ LEVAS



FIGURE 112 Doorpost, 970–990, marble: underside; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 1972/103/1

© MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO NACIONAL, MADRID / FOTO: ÁNGEL MARTÍNEZ LEVAS

as the patron of this object).²¹³ Alberto Montejo has argued for a deeper significance for the use of the griffin motif.²¹⁴ Noting its prominent presence both here and on the basin made twenty years later for al-Manṣūr (Figures 116, 118B), and used subsequently on the other 'Āmirid basins (Figure 132), as well as on the Pamplona casket (Figures 121, 123), Montejo argues that the griffin motif was a symbol of authority specifically associated with the Andalusī *ḥujjāb*; indeed that it was an emblem of the office of the *ḥijāba*, and it was for this reason that it was later widely used on works of art made for the 'Āmirids. If this interpretation is correct, it seems that again al-Manṣūr was adopting and continuing an artistic motif that had already been established by his predecessors in the office of *ḥājib*.

Where was the workshop that produced the architectural decoration for Durī's, al-Ṣiqlābī's and al-Muṣḥafī's private residences located? If the cyma was carved for Ja'far al-Ṣiqlābī, his access to the architectural workshops through all the commissions he carried out on behalf of the caliph put him in a position to order such works for himself. Certainly that would have been the case with the decoration of the House of Ja'far at Madīnat al-Zahrā' – but the implications of this are that the state workshops also undertook jobs for buildings outside the palace-city and outside the specific patronage of the Umayyad caliphs. Surely Durī's role in the luxury arts industry, as revealed by his involvement in the pair of ivories made in 964 for al-Ḥakam II (Figure 86) and Ṣubḥ, gave him similar access. This opens up the probability that the caliphal workshops also undertook work for members of the court elite, as Antonio Vallejo has recently argued.²¹⁵ He notes, 'The material evidence thus shows a more complex reality that is not restricted exclusively to Madīnat al-Zahrā' and official buildings. The proliferation of palaces among the members of the aristocracy linked to

the state, which we know mainly from written sources, generated an increased demand for decorative materials made of marble, especially support elements and other elements about which we are little informed'. Furthermore, he notes that the anonymous expression *baraka min allāh li-ṣāhibihi*, 'blessing from God to its owner', is inscribed on the gussets of some capitals, associated not only with palaces but also with mosques, whose construction was sponsored by this elite as pious works. He makes the intriguing suggestion that if these non-state commissions were indeed produced within the caliphal workshops, the state may have controlled this commercialisation in some way, perhaps by receiving 'taxes or benefits of some kind from this activity'. This has wider implications for the discussion in the following section, that these workshops also produced portable objects under the wider patronage of the court elite.

Al-Manṣūr was thus not the first non-royal figure to make use of the luxury arts ateliers to produce decorative architectonic elements for a palatial construction that he was building for himself. By the time he commissioned the first of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira's buildings, it may have been quite well-established practice that the caliphal workshops took on other work, especially if the state taxed it or benefitted in some other way. What is different about the 'Āmirid patronage of these industries is the extent and scale to which the *ḥājibs* engaged them, and the deliberate messages that were encoded in their visual imagery and epigraphic programmes, as we will see in the following chapters.

2.2 Anonymous Objects

Though no portable objects survive in either Ja'far's name, we can assume that ivories and other products of the luxury arts industry were made for such important court officials but have not survived. If an ivory gift was given by al-Ḥakam II to Ziyād ibn Aflaḥ, the *ṣāhib al-madīna* and *ṣāhib al-shurṭa* of Madīnat al-Zahrā', in 968 (Figure 12), it seems inconceivable that an ivory gift would

213 Anderson 2013, 87.

214 Montejo 2012.

215 Vallejo 2013, 116.

not have been given to Jaʿfar al-Şiqḷābī, the caliph's *ḥājib* and the person through whom the Cordoba mosque extension was carried out. Al-Şiqḷābī was at the peak of his career in the 960s, precisely when the greatest number of ivories was made. The question remains whether the luxury arts ateliers functioned as a royal monopoly, or whether men such as al-Şiqḷābī would have been able to commission their own objects; if Vallejo's suggestion of the commercialisation of the state workshops is right, there may have been no obstacle to this, if the price were right and the materials were available.

A figure of the importance and stature of al-Şiqḷābī, who did not hesitate to boast of his titles on the architectonic elements he commissioned on the caliph's behalf, would not have hesitated to do the same with any ivory he commissioned for himself; and, on the model of the Ziyād ibn Aflaḥ pyxis, it is likely that a caliphal commission would have named him as well. But there is a possibility that, among the several extant objects (including ivories) with *un*-named patrons, we are looking at objects made not for the open market, but for members of the court elite or the state administration, beyond the restricted circle of the caliph, his family and closest officials. This is the scenario in which we can imagine al-Manşūr's commissioning of the silver palace for Şubḥ being possible. As we have seen, there were thousands of *fityān* of differing hierarchies within the Cordoban bureaucracy. These men would have wished to signify their high status through the symbolic ownership of objects associated with the ruling class. This elite market could afford the expensive materials employed in such commissions, and had access to the craftsmen of the Dār al-Şināʿa, who may have been allowed the flexibility of working for them. Protocol may have dictated that these non-royal/non-*ḥājib* patrons not name themselves. The standard commissioning formulae on objects produced in the court ateliers reaffirmed an institutional hierarchy at whose summit was the ruler (or regent), with the court bureaucracy arrayed below him. The inscriptions on luxury objects, as

on architectonic elements, mark them as having been produced under caliphal (or ʿĀmirid) patronage. Official commissions may have had their inscriptions formulated within the court chancery, subjected to rigorous inspection to ensure that they conformed to court protocol. This access may not have been available to private patrons from outside the ruling circle. The craftsmen may thus have followed a text given to them by the commissioner, or resorted to a standard series of good wishes. These had the benefit of being politically neutral, for clients who did not enjoy high status at court, and may also have been easier to formulate if one's Arabic was not so good.

In his study of the ʿĀmirid-period ivory casket now in Doha, whose anonymous inscription comprises a long list of blessings (Chapter 7: 4.1.1; Appendix 4.16), Oliver Watson discusses irregularities in the inscription, one reason why some scholars considered this object to be a forgery when it first appeared on the art market.²¹⁶ These irregularities include the use of the full *basmala* and the presence of a month in the date, though, as we have seen, the architectonic elements made for al-Muşḥafi included a full *basmala*; the inscription on al-Manşūr's basin may well have begun with the full *basmala*; and it will be seen later on the Palencia casket. The minbars from the al-Qarawiyyīn (Chapter 7: 2.5) and Andalusīyyīn mosques (1.1, Appendix 4.4) also specify the months in their inscriptions; the former (made in 395/1005, the year after this casket) also includes the phrase *wa dhālik fi*, as does the Doha box. The Doha box's inscription features a number of spelling mistakes (*yūmn*, *şābighah*, *li-şāhibihā*), though such mistakes are actually surprisingly common, even on the ivories made for members of the caliphal family. The word *al-āʿāliyah* is otherwise unknown in these inscriptions, though a related form, *yad ʿāliyah*, occurs on another anonymous casket, in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris (dated 355/966). As Watson points out, the misspellings on the Doha box seem to result from

²¹⁶ Watson 2005.

phonetic transcriptions of the way people actually spoke in contemporary society – for example, the lengthening or shortening of vowels (*yūmn* for *yumn*), the substitution of heavy for soft letters and vice versa (*ṣābighah* for *sābighah*). This kind of phoneticised spelling is characteristic of the inscriptions on tombstones, which also regularly employ the full *basmala* as well as more specific dates, including months: see, for example, the very specific date given on the epitaph of the son of an ‘Āmirid *fatā* (Jam‘ah or Jum‘ah ibn Fattūḥ/Futūḥ/Fatūḥ), where the date of death is given as ‘Wednesday eve at ni[n]e (nights) from] Jumādā II 374/18 November 984’ (Figure 8).²¹⁷ As Watson notes, tombstones were the one kind of formal inscription that every well-heeled ordinary person would have occasion to commission.²¹⁸ The Doha box may thus have been, as Watson concludes, a ‘commercial piece ordered by a wealthy individual for his own pleasure’.

The lack of a named owner in the inscription on the Doha box associates it with other anonymous commissions, including the casket in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, and another in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence, which is undated (Figures 148–149, Appendix 4.19). The inscriptions on both these caskets follow the same formula as the Doha box: a short string of blessings as single nouns, followed by a longer series of blessings pairing nouns and adjectives, before the phrase ‘to its owner’ and, on the Paris box, the date. For the blessings, words are used that are *not* part of the vocabulary of court inscriptions, where the blessings usually share roots with *alqāb* or other honorific titles, as we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 8. Words like *sābighah* are employed on these three anonymous boxes (misspelt as *ṣābighah* on both the Doha and Bargello boxes), while the phrase *yad ‘ālīyah* on the Paris

box has morphed into *al-ā‘ālīyah* on the Doha box, produced some forty years later.²¹⁹

It is also highly likely that apprentices practised their carving skills on the objects made for non-royal patrons. On the lid of the Bargello box, for example, to the right of the central mount, something seems to have gone awry with the carving of the leaf motifs, which have got tangled and crowded; they are not clearly defined or well-executed, compared even with the left-hand side of the mount, as if the carver lost his way during the process and had to make the best of a bad job (Figure 149).

These anonymous commissions are an interesting phenomenon which require deeper study.²²⁰ But thinking of them as a commercial production for a totally open market, as Watson implies in his study of the Doha box, is missing the mark. This industry, physically based at the heart of the palace-city and principally functioning for the needs of the court, could only have been accessed by an elite associated with the court – that is, those who held offices (and, presumably, high offices) in the state bureaucracy. Indeed the *fityān*, the elite slaves who supervised the court commissions, would have had physical access to these workshops, and could sometimes have commissioned a piece for themselves, alongside the court commissions they were overseeing, hence the close stylistic and iconographic associations that can be noted between the Doha box and other contemporary ‘Āmirid ivories (Chapter 7).

A picture of less restricted patronage of the luxury arts implies a larger scale of production than we can now judge from the extant pieces. As Watson has noted, there are obvious reasons why court-commissioned objects have survived in greater numbers: ‘they were kept together in the court treasury, gathered centrally as individuals died, looked after carefully, given in groups as

217 Barceló 2014, 129–30.

218 Watson, 2005, 169.

219 See the comparative discussion of these anonymous inscriptions in Watson 2005, 169–70.

220 Contadini 2017 revisits this issue, though only mentions the Andalusī ivories in passing (p. 438).

diplomatic gifts. They were ready to be looted en masse ... and would subsequently be donated in groups to Christian churches, which have been the main if not the only guardians of Islamic ivories since medieval times'. The objects made in the more 'commercial' branch of the industry would not have been centrally stored, and 'as individual items without a treasury structure to care for them [they were] much more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of history'.²²¹ Just as the wealthy inhabitants of Cordoba had private libraries, it is likely that they also had private *khizānahs*, imitating those of the caliphs, in which to store their own precious objects; but the lower rank – and possibly lesser quality – of these objects may have made them less appealing to Christian kings and noblemen and thus less likely to be rededicated and preserved in the churches of northern Iberia.

2.3 *How al-Manşūr Used Objects*

The technical and decorative similarities between ʿĀmirid objects, the recurrence of the same craftsmen's names on objects and in ʿĀmirid architectural contexts, and the designation of the *fiṭyān* through whom these works were carried out as ʿĀmirid freedmen through the *nisba* 'al-ʿāmirī', argues for a continuation of this centralised luxury arts industry under direct ʿĀmirid patronage. Furthermore, the inscription on al-Manşūr's basin states that it was manufactured *bi-qaṣr al-zāhira*, 'in the palace of al-Zāhira'. Consequently it may be deduced that one branch of the Dār al-Şināʿa was also *physically* associated with the ʿĀmirids, located within the precincts of their palace-city. We do not know whether the core of the state atelier remained based at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, though the absence of any evidence for Hishām II's own patronage of art and architecture combined with the shift of patronage power to the ʿĀmirid palace-city would argue against that. Was the Dār al-Şināʿa one of the state institutions transferred from Cordoba to al-Zāhira at the time of the city's foundation? If so, it would presumably have

been one of the first to go, since the 'magnificent' decoration of al-Manşūr's palaces required the involvement of craftsmen. Indeed, Ibn ʿIdhārī's statement – that 'he brought artists and labourers [to work on the construction]... and in this way revetted the palaces with a magnificence that wearied the eyes' – may be interpreted not just as a topos or gesture of rulership, but as an indication of the physical transfer of a state institution that previously had an intimate patronage association with the caliphs.²²² An obvious inference is that, in addition to objects and architectonic decoration in stone and marble, the extant ivories and objects in other media that can be associated with the ʿĀmirids (Chapter 7) were also manufactured at al-Zāhira.

As far as we can tell from the surviving dated inscriptions, the manufacture of luxury objects appears not to coincide with major architectural projects; the exception is al-Manşūr's basin, made in 987–8, the same year in which he began his construction of the Cordoba Mosque extension. It was possibly a special commission to commemorate that significant architectural intervention (see discussions in Chapters 7 and 8). In more general terms, the development of the luxury arts industry under the ʿĀmirids coincides with the increasingly elaborate court protocol that was discussed in Chapter 2: luxury objects and furnishings were an essential ingredient in this 'ritualisation' of the court, and in order to continue to cultivate his courtiers and allies, al-Manşūr needed a ready supply of objects, textiles and money to present as *khilʿa*. Moreover, the increasing intensity of ʿĀmirid military campaigning and diplomatic relations also necessitated the production of luxury goods to fulfil the ritual of gift exchange, as may have been the context for the creation of the Braga pyxis (Chapter 2).

This notion of 'strategic gift giving' (*iṣṭināʾ*) was introduced at the start of this chapter, with the anecdote about al-Manşūr commissioning a model palace in silver as a gift for Şubḥ, which

221 Watson 2005, 171.

222 *Bayān* 11:295 [translation, 457].

won her heart and support and in turn that of her consort, the caliph himself. Perhaps more important than the object was the staged presentation of the gift: as Ballestín comments, '[Ibn Abī 'Āmir] did not make this gift to Şubḥ with discretion, but ostentatiously and with as much publicity as possible. He wanted the people to see this extraordinary gift ... We can imagine that the fact that they talked about it for a long time afterwards, word running from mouth to mouth, was precisely the effect that Ibn Abī 'Āmir wanted to achieve'.²²³ All the sources emphasise al-Manşūr's generosity to his close courtiers. Eduardo Manzano has called this a 'profligate policy of gift-giving', a canny calculation from the beginning of Ibn Abī 'Āmir's career of how to cultivate loyalty in the right places, recognising the 'complicities and common interests, networks of power and mutual interest' that according to Manzano characterised al-Andalus in the tenth century.²²⁴

Francisco Prado-Vilar has argued that al-Manşūr's employment of 'the discourse of the gift' had a darker side, that we can observe 'a constant fluctuation in its field of meaning among reward, bribery and punishment'.²²⁵ Specifically, he argues that al-Manşūr was the creative force behind the iconographic programme of the al-Mughīra pyxis (Figures 3, 171), made for the younger brother of al-Ḥakam II in 968, several years before the crisis in which al-Mughīra was murdered for being the main threat to Hishām's legitimate succession (Chapter 1). Prado-Vilar's ingenious reading of this pyxis, argued across two articles, is as a 'hostile warning' to al-Mughīra, to 'enjoy his comfortable life as a member of the royal family ... and leave to others the execution of political power'.²²⁶ Prado-Vilar's perception of al-Manşūr's role in this commission is on the melodramatic side, referring to his 'unbounded ambition', even

his 'Machiavellian mind'.²²⁷ This belies a common misconception of the historical complexities of this period, which Prado-Vilar nuances somewhat in his later article. Whether or not al-Manşūr was the commissioner of the al-Mughīra pyxis, technically his position at court by this date could have enabled his access to the luxury arts ateliers, as it allowed him to commission the silver palace for Şubḥ. Prado-Vilar's reading prioritises a sophisticated mindset which conceived an iconographical programme replete with allusions to poetic language, as well as the visual language of mirrors for princes, in particular the international bestseller, the *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Such a programme relies on the equally sophisticated and educated mindset of the object's recipient, to correctly read and interpret the allusions, and thus the warnings, embedded therein. This sophisticated interplay between poetic and visual language – what Prado-Vilar calls the 'complex dialectic interface between the visual rhetoric of portable objects and courtly poetic discourse' – certainly provides the context in which I understand the setting of 'Āmirid works of art, and the appreciation and understanding of their iconographic and epigraphic programmes by al-Manşūr's close courtiers.

Al-Manşūr also employed this tactic outside the internal world of the Cordoban court, in particular through the distribution of gifts to his soldiers and allies after his successful military campaigns. An especially elaborate gift was distributed in the aftermath of al-Manşūr's campaign against Santiago de Compostela in 997. Assembling his Christian allies 'and others who had shown themselves the friends of the Muslims', he 'rewarded each man according to his rank, distributing robes of honour among them and their followers'. The list has been preserved as follows:

2285 pieces of various kinds of *ṭirāzī* silk (*shiqqa*); 21 pieces of sea-wool (*şūf al-baḥr*); two '*anbarī* [perfumed with ambergris] robes; 11 pieces of *siqlatūn* [scarlet coloured

223 Ballestín 2004a, 64.

224 Manzano 2006, 481.

225 Prado-Vilar 2005, 163, n. 88.

226 Prado-Vilar 2005, 153; 1997, 29.

227 Prado-Vilar 1997, 30.

textiles]; 15 pieces of striped material (*murayyash*); 7 brocade carpets (*namat*); 2 robes of Byzantine (*rūmī*) brocade; and 2 marten (*fanak*) furs.²²⁸

This sumptuous list begs the question whether textile gifts to his allies were a feature of all al-Manşūr's campaigns, or whether participation in this exceptional campaign deserved exceptional recompense. The more than 2000 pieces of *ṭirāz* distributed on this occasion was not booty captured during the Santiago campaign. The techniques named in the list indicate that these were precious textiles produced or acquired in Cordoba, implying that al-Manşūr had brought them with him on campaign, in order to distribute them later as rewards for good service in battle. This was likely something he did as standard: for example, in 978, Count García Fernández of Castile, while campaigning against al-Manşūr, attacked the fortress of Gormaz, seizing it and a substantial booty, including many Andalusī textiles, which he immediately dedicated to the Monastery of San Simón in Covarrubias.²²⁹ As Xavier Ballestín has discussed, *khilʿa* did not consist solely of textiles and robes of honour, but often included coin and other gifts such as horses, accoutrements and arms.²³⁰ Perhaps the ivories that al-Manşūr is said to have had with him in his campaign tent (see below) might likewise have been brought for later distribution as *khilʿa*. During the campaign, the display of these objects added to their value, and made them more appreciated at the moment of their distribution.

All this implies that al-Manşūr actively commissioned works of art in order to have a ready supply of textiles and other gifts to distribute after his successful campaigns or through his intense diplomatic activity. Given how many campaigns al-Manşūr and ʿAbd al-Malik prosecuted, the Dār

al-Şināʿa and Dār al-Ṭirāz under the ʿĀmirids may have been operating almost entirely to feed this need for *khilʿa*. It is significant, then, that there are no surviving textiles inscribed in the name of any of the ʿĀmirids. The hidden, incidental occurrences of 'al-Muzaffar' on the Suaire de Saint Lazare (Figure 136A) do not make it a *ṭirāz*; indeed ʿAbd al-Malik's *laqab* may have been kept deliberately small and imperceptible, so as not to risk appearing too much like a *ṭirāz* inscription.

On the other hand, the surviving silk textile inscribed with the name of Hishām II indicates that the official products of the Dār al-Ṭirāz, those intended to be given away as state gifts, continued to observe the royal protocol of naming the ruler and his titles. One of only two examples of *ṭirāz* to survive from al-Andalus, the so-called 'Veil of Hishām' is an almost full-width fragment (1.09 m is preserved, which is almost selvedge to selvedge) of a long headdress woven in silk taqueté and originally crimson in colour, which would have had tapestry-woven bands at each end (Figure 9, Appendix 4.2).²³¹ One of these tapestried bands survives: it is divided into three equal zones, comprising two identical inscriptions in mirror-image on either side of a central band containing thirteen figurative medallions. The inscriptions invoke blessings in the name of 'the *khalīfa*, the *imām* ʿAbd Allāh Hishām al-Muʿayyad bi-llāh, *amīr al-muʿminīn*'. The lettering is slightly floriated and is carefully plotted so that *al-khalīfa* appears at the centre. The figurative medallions are rounded octagons rather than circles, and are separated by stylised floral motifs. Eleven of the medallions feature alternating birds and quadrupeds, while the two medallions on the far right contain small

228 Serjeant 1951, 33, after al-Maqqarī (*Analectes*, 1: 271); see also Bayān II:319 [translation, 495]; Dozy 1913, 519–520; and Holod 1992, 44.

229 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 568. Many Andalusī textiles remain in this ecclesiastical collection to this day.

230 Ballestín 2006.

231 Preserved in the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, inv. 298. For the bibliography on this textile, in chronological order of publication: Fernández y González 1875; Artiñano 1917, 10, cat. 43, plate 1; Gómez-Moreno 1919, 395; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 192, #211; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 345–347, fig. 404a; Serjeant 1951, 33; Bernis 1954, 198, plates 2, 4–6; May 1957, 14–17, figs. 3–5; García Gómez 1970, 44; Partearroyo 1982, 353; *Al-Andalus* 225–226, cat. 21; Partearroyo 1996, 62; Pérez Higuera 1994, 42, 86–87; Woolley 1995, 68–69, fig. 2; *Santiago-Al-Andalus* 370–1; Valdés Fernández 2001; Mackie 2015, 173–5 (5.5).

human figures. Both have long hair, only vague facial features, and are seated on cushions; the right-hand figure extends a hand in the direction of his companion in the left-hand medallion, and holds in his other hand a round-bottomed bottle, which Fernández y González read as a sceptre. The left-hand figure has its hands folded in its lap.

In 1875, Fernández y González conjectured that the figure holding the sceptre/bottle was Hishām II himself, and that second figure was his mother, Şubḥ, even that she might have commissioned the textile, the blessings in the inscription representing her well-wishes for the future of the caliphate. This suggestion has lingered in the literature, though his interpretation of the symbolism of the animals in the other medallions has been quietly forgotten. However, as Pérez Higuera notes, the two human figures should be read as ‘symbolic manifestations of power and not concrete personifications’. In fact, they can be related to other works of art datable to al-Manṣūr’s *ḥijāba*. They evoke the gestures of the seated figures of the *majlis* scene on the Pamplona casket (Figure 120); as on the ivory, the figures are enclosed within medallions, separated by floral motifs. In other medallions on the textile, the birds that appear to hold worms or snakes in their beaks recall the ducks and worms on the ‘Āmirid capitals and basins (Figures 23–4, 118A, 161–170). Without taking these stylistic connections too far, given the different execution demanded by the different materials and their associated techniques, they again imply the close executive relationships between the different branches of the luxury arts industry, and that these continued during the ‘Āmirid period.

The presence of Hishām’s name on this textile in no way indicates that this was a piece commissioned by him or intended for his personal consumption.²³² Since a major role of the industry was to produce textiles explicitly to be given as *khil’a*, it cannot be assumed that Hishām ever even saw this textile, unless he presented it to someone.

The textile was found in the mid-nineteenth century wrapped around relics in a casket under the altar of a church in San Esteban de Gormaz (prov. Soria), a region in which al-Manṣūr campaigned in 989 and 993–4 (see Timeline). It could have belonged to a member of al-Manṣūr’s army who received it as a reward for good service; if the Santiago campaign is anything to go by, this could have been a Christian ally, who subsequently rededicated the textile to his local church. Presumably the more than 2000 pieces of ‘*tirāzi* silk’ given away after the Santiago campaign would all have borne similar inscriptions in Hishām’s name. Thus, while al-Manṣūr adopted the royal role of bestowing *tirāz* as *khil’a*, he did so explicitly in the caliph’s name.

In order to have such objects ready to distribute at the end of the campaign – before your armies and allies disperse to their regions – you need to carry an appropriate number of luxury objects with you into the field, so that the campaign tent becomes a sort of travelling *Khizānah*, where these objects are stored but also no doubt displayed, their presence spurring the army and allies on to heroic deeds in order to receive them as rewards. This may be why al-Manṣūr is said to have had ivories and other precious objects with him in his campaign tent, though this is related in verse in the mythologised account of one of the heroes of the so-called ‘Reconquista’: the *Poema de Fernán González* was written down c. 1260, ‘recording’ the heroic battlefield deeds of Fernán González, first Count of Castile (d. 970). Stanzas 276–280 sing of the looting of a number of ‘precious ivory caskets’, vessels made of gold, hangings and soft furnishings of silk, arms and armour made from gold and silver, from al-Manṣūr’s campaign tent at his frontier base in Medinaceli. The stanzas run:

276	Quando fue Almozor fincó de los cristianos cojieron sus averes tan grand aver fallaron	grand tierra alexado, el campo bien poblado; que Dios les avié dado; que non serié contado.
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²³² Valdés Fernández 2001, 386, believes this was an item of clothing owned by the caliph, i.e. part of his turban.

- 277 Fallaron en las tiendas
muchas copas e vasos
nunca vio tal riqueza
seriénd' abundados
- 278 Fallaron y maletas
llenos d' oro e de plata,
muchas tiendas de seda
espadas e lorigas
- 279 Fallaron *de marfil*
con tantas de noblezas
fueron pora San Pedro
están en su altar
- 280 Tomaron d'esto todo
más fincó de dos partes
las armas que fallaron
con toda su ganancia
- sobejano tesoro,
qu' eran de fino oro;
nin cristiano nin moro;
Alexánder e Poro.
- e muchos de çurrones,
que non de pepiones,
e muchos tendejones,
e muchas guarniçiones.
- arquetas muy preçiadas,*
que non serién contadas;
las más d'aquellas dadas;
oy día asentadas.
- lo que sabor ovieron,
que levar non podieron;
dexar non las quisieron.
a San Pedro venieron.²³³

233 I have followed the spelling and formatting of the recent edition of *The Poem of Fernán González*, in Such and Rabone 2015, 174. The translation that follows is also taken from here (p. 175). Ruiz Souza 2001a, 31, also cites this poem.

(276) "With al-Mansur now a good distance away,
The field was left well peopled with Christians;
They gathered their possessions, granted them
by God,
And found such great wealth as to be beyond
tally.

(277) They found in the tents an abundant treasure:
Many cups and goblets made of fine gold;

The poem states that these ivories were rededicated by Fernán González at the church of San Pedro de Arlanza (prov. Burgos), where they were 'placed on the altar' as trophies; it is likely that the visible presence of 'very precious ivory caskets' in the treasury of that church led to the myth that they had been captured in battle from that supreme enemy of the Christians, 'Almanzor'. The two Andalusí ivory caskets that survived in the Monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos also came to be associated with Fernán González (Figures 99, 174), even though the larger casket, which came to hold Santo Domingo's remains, was not even produced until 1026, some fifty years after Fernán's death.²³⁴ Obviously such mythologised accounts cannot be relied upon for their historical content, though they have been taken as factual accounts by several historians of ivory.²³⁵ Indeed Fernán González and al-Manşūr would never have crossed paths: the *hājib's* first campaign was not undertaken until 977 (see Timeline), seven years

Such riches as no Christian or Moor had ever seen – it would have sufficed Alexander and Porus.

(278) Many cases they found there, along with many bags,
Filled with gold and silver – no sign of copper coins –,
Many silken pavilions and many tents of war,
Breastplates and swords and a great mass of armour.

(279) They found *caskets of ivory very great in value*,
With other noble objects impossible to count;
To San Pedro de Arlanza were most of these given,
Where to this day they are displayed upon its altar.

(280) From this great hoard of wealth, they took as they desired;
Two thirds and more remained they could not carry;
But the arms they had found they wished not to leave behind.
They came to San Pedro, bringing all of their gains."

234 Ferrandis 1935, 51–2, cat. 1; 88–91 cat. 25.

235 Ferrandis 1928, 59; Ferrandis 1935, 21; Kühnel 1971, 5; Shalem 1995, 24 and n.16; Makariou 2001, 58–59.

after Fernán's death, although of course his son, García Fernández (d. 995), encountered al-Manṣūr on the battlefield. Nevertheless, what interests us here is the memory that this poetic account preserves of al-Manṣūr's patronage of luxury objects or, at least, that luxury objects were a *sine qua non* of the status of Muslim potentate that al-Manṣūr held in the popular Castilian imagination in which context this poem was created.

Also interesting is the suggestion that these objects had been captured in battle, and had therefore been taken into the field. Though the notion that Islamic objects transferred across Christian borders purely as the result of booty in such campaigns has been challenged in recent years,²³⁶ the fact that stores of objects to be distributed as *khil'a* were transported with the army is corroborated by what we know of the management of al-Manṣūr's North African campaigns. This was the case from the time al-Ḥakam appointed the young Ibn Abī 'Āmir to the post of *qāḍī al-quḍāt* and inspectorate (*amāna*) of the Maghrib in 973, when he was sent 'with shipments of money, jewels, ornaments and presents of honour, so that he may distribute them abundantly' among those Berber tribes who wanted to adhere to Umayyad authority.²³⁷ The functionaries that travelled with him on this occasion included a *khāzin* (treasurer), the *ṣāhib al-makhzūn*, responsible for payments, and his friend Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr, *ṣāhib al-khizāna wa'l-sikka*. Once al-Manṣūr was in a position to appoint his own officers, he entrusted his governor al-Sulamī with administering and distributing gifts of honour to the Berber chiefs. Al-Sulamī did not receive a fixed number of gifts to distribute as *khil'a*, but had discretion to freely use all the resources necessary, implying that these resources were available on the ground and had been supplied from Cordoba for the purpose.²³⁸

It can be assumed that a military campaign provided the opportunity for a particularly potent form of display, and al-Manṣūr would surely have continued to hold court in his campaign tent, receiving not only his courtiers, generals and soldiers, but also his enemies and their envoys. A tent acted as temporary ('soft') architecture,²³⁹ and, in this respect, it might be suggested that the ceremonial described in Chapter 2 represented only a slightly more formalised version of that conducted in the campaign tent. Though the sources provide no information about 'Āmirid campaign tents, an entry in al-Rāzī's *Annals* mentions the large red tent (*qubba*) that al-Ḥakam gave as a gift to his general, Ghālib.²⁴⁰ This had a 'marvellous appearance and was a beautiful sight', and the caliph ordered him 'with precise instructions and explanations, to erect it in the middle of his camp, to live and receive in it, and to use it to enhance his prestige and the desperation in the heart of his enemy'. Al-Manṣūr would surely have secured for himself just as marvellous a campaign tent as Ghālib, whose defeat marked the culminating moment of his rise to power, and used it in just this way; he could have enhanced its visual impact with luxury furnishings, including textiles and precious objects, to recreate the physical environment of his *majlis* at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. 'Abd al-Raḥmān III also filled his campaign tent with luxury contents, as we know from the account of what was looted from it after his defeat at Simancas in 939. Ramiro II of León (d. 951) and Fernán González of Castile made off with the tent itself, the clothing stored within it – presumably *khil'a* ready to be distributed at the end of the campaign – and most notably 'Abd al-Raḥmān's personal copy of the Qur'ān.²⁴¹ As we saw in Chapter 5, al-Manṣūr also took with him

236 Prado-Vilar 1997; Ruiz Souza 2001a; Anderson 2014; Rosser-Owen 2015a.

237 Ballestín 2004a, 54–8, citing Ibn Ḥayyān, *Muqtabis*, 123; *Anales Palatinos*, 156.

238 Ballestín 2004a, 159.

239 In his writings on the Fermo chasuble (Chapter 7: 2.4), in which he argues that the textile was originally a tent, Shalem uses the term 'soft architecture': see Shalem 2014a and 2017 (Introduction).

240 *Anales*, §119. On the Arabic terminology used by al-Rāzī for campaign tents, see García Gómez 1967, 169–170.

241 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 567, citing Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 257.

on campaign his autograph copy of the Qurʾān, as well as the winding sheet, woven by his daughters, in which he should be buried if he fell, and a casket in which to collect the earth from every battlefield. No doubt these almost talismanic objects had a prominent place in his campaign tent as well. The visibility of the portable objects he brought with him on campaign would provide an opportunity for al-Manşūr to reassert their messages to those who visited him in his tent. While the *Poema de Fernán González* may be anachronistic, its verses nevertheless supply one possible context for how al-Manşūr used the precious objects that he owned, one which also suits both the militaristic language and the aesthetic of the imagery on the extant objects' epigraphy and iconography, as discussed in the following chapters.

In addition to al-Manşūr's use of objects in strategies of loyalty and legitimation and for the display of power, wealth and status, one final and important consideration is his apparent delight in engaging with the material *thing*. As we saw in Chapter 3, the poet Şāʿid al-Baghdādī was only admitted to al-Manşūr's *dīwān* of court poets after improvising verses in description of an elaborately laid tray. This tray contained objects executed in and decorated with precious metals and gems and scented woods, with hidden compartments and sculptural figures, perhaps even automata. Though Şāʿid's initial verses were satisfactory, they were not spectacular, and in particular he overlooked a detail – 'a boat, in which was a maiden rowing herself with oars of gold'. Al-Manşūr pointed this out to him, and Şāʿid improvised new verses on this motif; finally 'al-Manşūr regarded the poem worthy of the object described'. As Prado-Vilar has pointed out, this anecdote, and especially the fact of al-Manşūr's initial unhappiness with the neglect of one aspect of its decoration, indicates an interested and deep engagement with the materiality and visuality of the object. It 'reveals a model of viewing courtly portable objects that privileges close observation and attention to detail'; the viewer 'finds pleasure in the discovery of nuances

and variations on the commonplace'.²⁴² Further, the appropriate language that brings the material objects fully to life is poetry. This tray and its sculptures would have been manufactured by artisans in the ʿĀmirid luxury arts industry, and given al-Manşūr's close engagement with each detail, as indicated in this anecdote, the craftsmen may have worked to his direct specification.

This chapter has aimed to outline the location, infrastructure and personnel of the caliphal luxury arts industry, the Dār al-Şināʿa, how it functioned and what material resources it consumed, to indicate the extent to which its caliphal, and later its regency, patrons could and did control the products that were made in it. We have established that already in the early years of Hishām's reign, and certainly by the early 980s, the ʿĀmirids had taken control of this industry, which they relocated, in whole or in part, to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. As far as we can reconstruct, the way in which the industry had functioned under the caliphs was continued under the ʿĀmirids; but since so few extant objects were made under direct caliphal patronage, compared to the surviving ʿĀmirid objects, it is difficult to speculate further as to whether the *ḥājibs* engaged more closely than the caliphs in the functioning of their luxury arts industry and in the creation of its products. We have begun to understand the ways in which the ʿĀmirids controlled and exploited this industry in their articulation of power; we have also outlined some of the functions and likely audiences of the objects they commissioned. It is now time to discover what these objects were. The next chapter introduces the works that can be associated directly or stylistically with ʿĀmirid patrons, identifying for the first time a corpus of ʿĀmirid art. In Chapter 8, we will look to the iconography of these works and the semantics of their epigraphy, to attempt to define more clearly the messages of self-expression that the ʿĀmirids hoped to convey through their patronage of the luxury arts.

²⁴² Prado-Vilar 2005, 156–7.

Building a Corpus of ‘Āmirid Art

What is most amazing about this hall, and what ignites the vision, is its decoration. The eyes remained locked to the great frieze which ran around it on its lower part; it was of white marble, polished so that its surface resembled ivory, because of the purity of its shine and the clarity of its colour. It was worked with figures of animals, birds and trees with fruits, and many of these figures connected by tree branches and fruits, capriciously, and they corresponded to one another in a game of forms, so that he who looked at them fixedly had the sensation that they moved, or that they made signs to him. But each figure was isolated from the others, and had a different form and ignited the gaze from top to bottom. This frieze was bordered on top by an engraved inscription which ran all around the hall from its entrance, which hardly lacked in being more elegant than the penning of a calligrapher; its letters had a marvellous form; they could be read from a long distance and contained beautiful verses dedicated to their constructor al-Ma’mūn.

IBN JABĪR, late eleventh century¹



This chapter will identify for the first time a corpus of objects that can be associated with ‘Āmirid patronage. Some of these objects are well-known, but they have never before been considered as part of a group or contextualised within the patronage structures that created them. The uncertainty manifested over the authenticity of those ivory objects that appeared on the art market during the twentieth century – the Sanchuelo pyxis lid and the casket in Doha – stems largely from the fact that there has hitherto been no framework within which to contextualise and understand ‘Āmirid art, so their unusual styles and iconography left some scholars uncomfortable.² This chapter will establish a body of ‘Āmirid art to form the basis of our discussions in Chapter 8 of these objects’ iconography, function and meaning.

Considerably more objects associated with the ‘Āmirid *ḥujjāb* are extant than can be associated with the Andalusī Umayyad caliphs themselves. Apart from the enormous number of surviving architectonic elements, especially from Madīnat al-Zahrā’, inscribed with the caliphs’ names – especially that of al-Ḥakam II – only a handful of objects can be linked to the caliphs. The *ṭirāz* now in Cleveland is the only object that can be associated with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, if the reconstruction of its inscription can be relied upon; however, as discussed in Chapter 6, this is unlikely to have been a personal possession of the caliph, rather one of thousands of textiles woven for the distribution of *khil’a*. Only two objects survive in the name of al-Ḥakam which are likely to have been personal possessions: the openwork ivory pyxis now in the Victoria and Albert Museum

¹ This passage comes from an eye-witness account written by a courtier of the Banū Dhū’l-Nūn, of the festivities held by al-Ma’mūn (r. 1043–1075) in honour of the circumcision of his grandson and heir, to which the highest men of the state were invited. Text transmitted by Ibn Bassām 1975, v:vii:147–148, and translated with commentary in Robinson 1995, 448–459.

² For example, concerns were expressed by Antonio Fernández-Puertas over the ivory casket that surfaced at Sotheby’s in 1998, now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. For details of his concerns, see note 107 below.

(Figure 86);³ and an eight-lobed fountain basin now in the Archaeological Museum in Granada.⁴ For Hishām II, apart from the Girona casket, probably commissioned for him by his father (Figures 1–2), and the *tirāz* discussed in Chapter 6, there is a fragmentary foundation inscription in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan which gives his titles and appears to state that he ‘ordered’ something (*amara*), without preserving any further information about what this might have been (Figure 48, Appendix 4.3).⁵ It is an interesting fact that most of the extant luxury objects from the reigns of the three caliphs were made for the women of their family.⁶

The objects included in this chapter have been identified first and foremost through the inscriptions that several of them bear, which name al-Manṣūr himself or his two heirs (the inscriptions themselves are given in Appendix 4). There are no other ʿĀmirid family-members evidenced in the inscriptions, and we know nothing about female patronage in the family. These inscribed objects form a small core group, which is then expanded by adding objects that have close stylistic or iconographic relationships with them, or which feature the signatures of the same craftsmen. It will also include a discussion of objects that have been attributed broadly to the late tenth or early eleventh century, to see whether they can indeed be understood within the context of the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Šināʿa. I will present the objects in

chronological order according to what can be associated with each of the three ʿĀmirid patrons in turn. I will then expand the discussion to encompass the broader panorama of objects that can be attributed to this period, and conclude with a discussion about the ‘language’ of ʿĀmirid art.

1 Objects Associated with al-Manṣūr

1.1 *The Andalusīyyīn Minbar (Dated 369/980 and 375/985; Figures 5–7; Appendix 4.4)*

As we have seen in the inscriptions commemorating the refurbishments of city walls and bridge construction by al-Manṣūr (Chapter 4, Appendix 4.6, 8, 9), the official inscriptions from this period name Hishām as the caliph, but specify the name and role of the commissioner and their titles, which derive from their relationship with the caliph. It is important to note that in the few official inscriptions that include al-Manṣūr’s name, they do not omit the name or importance of the caliph, and indicate clearly that it is from him that al-Manṣūr derived his authority and legitimacy to build.

This is the model followed in the earliest dated object with a direct ʿĀmirid association: the wooden minbar from the Andalusīyyīn Mosque in Fez, the political context for whose creation is discussed in Chapter 1.⁷ As outlined there, this minbar was originally commissioned for the Andalusīyyīn Mosque by Buluqqīn ibn Zīrī (r. 979–985), the Fatimid governor of Fez. It was dedicated in Shawwāl 369/April–May 980, just fourteen months after he had conquered Fez from the Umayyads. Henri Terrasse called the minbar a ‘geste de

3 Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cat. 5; Beckwith 1960, 14, pl. 7; Kuhnel 1971, cat. 27; Rosser-Owen 2012; Anderson 2014, 19–22.

4 Inv. 1242. This elegantly simple marble basin was made in 360/970–71. Its inscription consists almost entirely of blessings of well-being for the ruler, but also tells us that it was made under the supervision of his *hājib* Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Šiqḷābī. It made its way to Granada at some point after the sack of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, possibly at the same time as the basin brought by Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs (4.2.1, below), and was preserved in a Nasrid house in the Albaicín, known as the Casa del Chapiz (former home of the Escuela de Estudios Árabes). *Arte Islámico en Granada*, 269, cat. 66; Cabanelas Rodríguez 1980–81.

5 Souto 2007, 115, Inscription 11.

6 Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015; Anderson 2012.

7 The main study of this minbar remains Terrasse 1942, 5–6, 34–52, plates 49–92, esp. 54–61 for the inscribed panels. See also *Al-Andalus* 249–251, cat. 41; Cambazard-Amahan 1989; Bloom 1989, 106–12; *Esplendor: Catálogo*, 69–72; *Les Andalousies* 186–189, cat. 220; Bloom 2013, 156–8; *Maroc Médiéval* 127–129, cat. 35. The tenth-century minbar was encased in a new minbar probably commissioned by the Almohad ruler Muḥammad al-Nāṣir when he reconstructed the mosque between 1203 and 1207; it integrated the backrest in such a way that it remained fully visible within the Almohad minbar.

souveraineté', a potent marker of the establishment of Fatimid domination in the region.⁸ Though the original backrest does not survive, it is likely that its inscription employed Shi'i formulae and benedictions, which would have been considered heretical and anathema to the Umayyad armies when they reconquered Fez in Rabī' 1 375/July–August 985. In Jumāda II 375/October 985 – only three months after the reconquest – a new backrest was installed on the minbar, in the name of the Umayyad caliph. Its inscription – the physical manifestation of the names pronounced in the weekly *khuṭba* – states that 'the *ḥājib* al-Manṣūr Sword of the State (*sayf al-dawla*)' ordered this backrest to be made on behalf of (*li-*) 'the Imām 'Abd Allāh Hishām al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh'.

Adding an Umayyad backrest, with new and appropriate religious formulae, was effectively erecting a new minbar in the Umayyads' name, symbolising the final victory over the Fatimids in the Maghrib. It also proclaimed the 'Āmirids' success at gaining control, via their Berber clients, of these rich cities and their access to the precious commodities sourced from trans-Saharan trade networks. Al-Manṣūr was also making a statement similar to that of his Córdoba Mosque extension: that his policies embodied continuity with the Umayyad regime, but that the control of the state was firmly in his hands. Interestingly, the title 'Sayf al-Dawla' is not otherwise known for al-Manṣūr from the historical sources, though it is also used on the Lisbon inscription (Appendix 4.6). As we saw in Chapter 1, this title was held by al-Manṣūr's predecessor as *ḥājib*, Ja'far al-Ṣiqlābī. Could it be that this title had come to be associated honorifically with the office of *ḥājib*? Another possibility is that al-Ḥakam had given him this title when he appointed the young Ibn Abī 'Āmir to the post of *qādī al-quḍāt* and inspectorate (*amāna*) of the Maghrib in 973, a post which Ballestín notes is equivalent to that of *dhū'l-wizāratayn*, the double vizierate of civil and military administration.⁹ Its

use here, however, clearly proclaims the truth of this title: al-Manṣūr really was the 'sword of the state', capable of defeating its enemies, as underlined by the expression 'May God bring him complete success!'. The carefully worded inscription – prominently stating al-Manṣūr's role in the conquest of the Maghrib, but stressing that this was done in the caliph's name – is no doubt how the foundation inscription of his mosque extension would have been worded, if he had erected one there. Significantly, the 'Āmirids may also have commissioned a new minbar for the other congregational mosque in Fez, the al-Qarawiyyīn, during the *ḥijāba* of his son 'Abd al-Malik (2.5 below).

The new Umayyad backrest was carved in the identical style and technique as the Zīrid minbar. The two rectangular panels which flank the new backrest were reused from the earlier minbar, since one of them bears the date of 369/980; the other features a Qur'ānic verse on the necessity of prayer (24:36): as Terrasse observed, this inscription was 'equally applicable to Sunni as to Shi'i orthodoxy', which is why this panel was kept.¹⁰ Al-Manṣūr's cousin 'Aṣqalāja, who had reconquered Fez, was the man on the ground who would have carried through the practical details of the commission, presumably acting on orders from al-Manṣūr. Since the earlier minbar had been made only five years before, it is highly likely that its craftsmen were still available, and given the short amount of time in which the new backrest was created, 'Aṣqalāja probably hired the same workshop. Most likely, then, the Andalusīyyīn minbar was created locally in Fez, and as such is one of very few Maghribi objects to survive from the tenth century.

Its decoration owes little to the models offered by Andalusī art. According to what we know of the new minbar commissioned by al-Ḥakam for the Great Mosque of Córdoba, that object resembled closely the extant Almoravid minbar commissioned from Córdoba by 'Alī ibn Yūsuf ibn Tashfin for the congregational mosque he founded in

8 Terrasse 1942, 37.

9 Ballestín 2004a, 57.

10 Terrasse 1942, 39.

Marrakesh, and later moved by the Almohads to the Kutubiyya Mosque.¹¹ That impressive object, completed in 1137, is decorated with carved woods of different types, marquetry, incrustation and inlay. We do not find any of these techniques on the Andalusīyīn minbar, which is entirely carved from locally available cedar wood.¹² Terrasse noted the ‘oriental’ style of the carving, highlighting its connections to the Abbasid artistic repertoire and especially the ‘bevelled style’ associated with Samarra. He related its idiosyncratic style of Kufic to inscriptions at the Nilometer in Fustāt, dated 199/814–5, and concluded that these ‘eastern’ influences were the result of ‘Fatimid syncretism’.¹³ He also drew several parallels with the Aghlabid minbar at the Qayrawān Mosque in Ifrīqiya, the most ancient and highly-venerated mosque in North Africa. Indeed a full comparative study of the motifs on the Andalusīyīn minbar may reveal that its art historical parallels relate to a local aesthetic, one that owes more to the precedents of Qayrawān, than to Abbasid parallels. Certain motifs seem particularly close to the Qayrawān minbar, such as the rounded leaf motif (which looks rather like a coffee bean) that borders the inscription on the backrest. The heart-shaped palmette friezes that feature on many of the border panels across the body of the minbar relate to the plaster decoration from the palaces at Ajdābiya and Surt, constructed by the Fatimids on their progress towards Egypt.¹⁴ There are also nods to Cordoba: the two patterns of geometric interlace at the bottom corners of the backrest are comparable to the patterns used in the marble window grilles that al-Manṣūr would install in his Cordoba Mosque extension a few years later (Figure 54); there is also occasional use of a trilobed arch, which might allude to Cordoba’s

maqṣūra. In sum, the new backrest was created as a careful imitation of the rest of the minbar, a sort of microcosmic equivalent to the ʿĀmirid Mosque extension which would get underway a few years later. But the inscription unequivocally states that the act was undertaken in the name of the Umayyad caliph.

1.2 *Al-Manṣūr’s Marble Basin*
(Dated 377/987–8; Figures 108–109,
113–118; Appendix 4.7)

The second extant object that can be directly associated with al-Manṣūr shifts our attention from public to private art. This is the spectacular marble basin found in Seville and now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid.¹⁵ This basin is the only securely identifiable physical survival of his palace-city, al-Madinat al-Zāhira, since its inscription states that it was made *bi-qaṣr al-zāhira*, under the direction of Kh- (Khalaf or Khayrah, as discussed in Chapter 6), the *fatā al-kabīr al-ʿāmirī*, in the year 377/987–8. Significantly, the basin was created in the same year as al-Manṣūr began his extension to the Cordoba Mosque, a confluence that will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. It is the earliest of a range of extant basins, in varying levels of completeness, that can be associated with the ʿĀmirids – as we will discuss below, we can reconstruct about thirteen basins made for ʿĀmirid patrons. Several of these have the same large rectangular format as al-Manṣūr’s basin, which may have been inspired by or even carved from Roman sarcophagi (Chapter 6). Al-Manṣūr’s basin seems to have established the iconographic model for those that were made for his son ʿAbd al-Malik or are otherwise undated.

11 Bloom 1998; *Al-Andalus* 362–7, cat. 115; *Maroc Médiéval* 192.

12 Though it possibly incorporates the earliest known turned-wood spindles, a technique which would later become widely used in the Arab world to create *mashrabiyyah* windows: Terrasse 1942, 42.

13 Terrasse 1942, 44, 48.

14 Bongianino 2015.

15 Inv. 50428, dimensions: 1.05 m (L) × 77 cm (W) × 68 cm (H); found in a well in the Calle Lista in Seville in the 1880s. Bibliography: Gallotti 1923, esp. 380–385, fig. 5, pl. 4; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 194 (#216); Revilla Vielva 1932, 77, cat. 201, pl. 19; Castejón 1945, 202, 199; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 188, figs. 246a, 247b, 247d, 249; Zozaya 1991, 66–7, fig. 4; Kubisch 1994; Rosser-Owen 2003, 2007.



FIGURE 113
Basin made for al-Manṣūr,
987–8, marble; Museo
Arqueológico Nacional,
Madrid, inv. 50428
© MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO
NACIONAL, MADRID /
FOTO: ÁNGEL MARTÍNEZ
LEVAS

These are regularly described in the secondary literature as ‘ablution basins’, though this is obviously incorrect since their extensive use of figurative decoration precludes their use for *wudū*’ or as water reservoirs for the adornment of religious spaces.¹⁶ Instead these massive basins must have come from the halls and gardens of the ‘Āmirids’ palaces and *mynyas* (Chapter 4). They seem to have been identifiably ‘Āmirid’, judging by later patterns of dispersal: al-Manṣūr’s basin was recovered from Seville, which became the Almohad capital, and as we will see ‘Abd al-Malik’s basin was taken all the way to Marrakesh, perhaps by the Almoravids. Other basins, such as those now in the Museo de la Alhambra (2.3.3, 4.2.1), were brought to new locations by men who rose to prominence as Taifa rulers, and were thus probably looted from ‘Āmirid palaces during the Fitna years. Others may have travelled beyond the borders of al-Andalus, to judge by the strange artistic parallels exhibited by the baptismal font in San Isidoro de León (Figure 159), discussed below (4.2.1).

Two sides of al-Manṣūr’s basin are almost completely preserved (the original back, Figure 114, and

the original left-hand short side, Figure 116), while the eagles on the right-hand short side have been reinstated with plaster casts taken from the opposite end. The original front (Figure 115) is recreated from several large fragments, including a plaster cast of the fragmentary lion-and-gazelle combat, whose original remains at the Palacio de Lebrija in Seville. The inscription begins on this side (Figure 117), occupying a border that runs above a frieze of ducks and fishes; it continues above the eagles on the left-hand short side, and then runs around the three outside edges of the back of the basin, surrounding the decoration of the arcade: it runs vertically up the right-hand side, along the top and down the left-hand side, ending with the date at the bottom left-hand corner. As we will discuss in Chapter 8, the inscription is carefully disposed so that key words, such as al-Manṣūr’s name and titles, are placed in significant locations (Figure 117B&C); the wording of the inscription also encodes significant meanings.

Though fragmentary, the surviving decoration of the basin’s front shows that originally it bore the same motif of lions attacking gazelles as is best preserved on the long sides of the Bādīs basin (see below 4.2.1, Figures 156–158): symmetrical

16 For example, Lévi-Provençal 1931, 195 (#218).



FIGURE 114 Al-Manṣūr's basin: side which was originally the back
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 115 Al-Manṣūr's basin: side which was originally the front
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 116 Al-Manṣūr basin; short side with eagles
© ARCHIVO MUSEO ARQUEOLÓGICO NACIONAL, MADRID

repeated groups of long-maned lions, their faces depicted frontally with open and mustachioed mouths, which jump on the back of and bite into tall deer with elaborate antlers. The stylistic parallels in the way the mustachioed lions are depicted recalls the volute and the three marble basins from al-Rummāniyya (Figures 29, 85), and it is just feasible that the same craftsman was involved in both creations (Chapter 6). A wide border runs along the left-hand edge and part of the top, filled with ducks pecking at fish and turtles (Figure 117A), of the same type as can be seen on several other marble objects which can thus be associated with ʿĀmirid art (4.2.3).

The surviving short side of the basin (Figure 116) has a central area left plain, where the mechanism for supplying and draining the basin of water would have been attached. As discussed in Chapter 6, this blank space was likely covered with a carved marble projection, such as that now

in the David Collection (Figures 104–107), which would have hidden the pipework. On top of this ‘pipe cover’ would have stood a fountain-head, most likely in the form of an animal (Figures 108–109) – this may have mirrored the particular animals carved onto the sides of the basin, such as the ‘terrible lion’ carved of ‘scented aloeswood’ as described in al-Jazīrī’s poem about one of the fountains in al-Manṣūr’s royal hall (Chapters 3, 8). As water poured into the basin from the fountain-head, the overflow was probably drained out via the large hole (now filled-in) at the top of the plain area. Further holes for pipes can be seen at the back of the basin, probably added later since they pierce the decoration. On either side of this plain area are two panels featuring heraldic eagles with splayed wings, who shelter smaller animals in, above and below their wings: below are two affronted griffins on either side of a small shoot (these also appear on the Pamplona casket, 2.1); on



FIGURE 117 Al-Manšūr basin, details of the inscription: A. *našr wa ta'yīd*; B. *li'l-ḥāḡib al-Manšūr*; C. *Abī ʿĀmir Muḥammad*; D. *bi ʿamalihi bi-qašr al-zāhira*
 © MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 118 Al-Manşūr basin, details of the decoration: A. small deer with antlers; B. small griffins
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

the eagles' shoulders are two facing quadrupeds, perhaps tiny lions; and held in the eagles' talons are two addorsed horned gazelles.

It has been suggested that the large birds depicted here are not actually eagles, because they have pointed ears, and that instead they represent frontally depicted griffins.¹⁷ It is true that the heraldic eagles depicted on the lid of the pyxis made for al-Ḥakam do not have pointed ears (Figure 86); however, griffins in al-Andalus tend to be depicted with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle – compare, for example, those on the front of the cyma made for one of the Jaʿfars (Figures 33–35, Chapter 6), or indeed those seen under the feet of the eagle on al-Manşūr's basin. The bird that is unequivocally an eagle on a Fatimid lustre-painted dish made around the same date as this basin is also represented with pointed ears (Figure 119). The viewer of this motif undoubtedly *sees* a heraldic eagle, and that is what is meaningful. We will discuss the significance of this iconography in Chapter 8 but, for now, we can note that it is likely that the images seen here evoke emblems from the banners of the Umayyad army: the eagle had been introduced by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III onto his military banners and thereby became a prominent emblem of the Andalusī Umayyad dynasty. It was employed on

the banners which the caliph included in his *khilʿa* gift to Mūsā ibn Abī'l-ʿAfiyya (Chapter 6), and on the ivory casket made for al-Ḥakam II. If the eagles here stand for the Umayyad caliphs, the small griffins – significantly, under the eagles' feet – may stand for the office of the *ḥājib*, as suggested by Alberto Montejo.¹⁸ Indeed the griffin becomes one of the prevalent motifs seen on ʿAmīrid objects, and their craftsmen even introduce new twists to the motif by sometimes representing it with antlers (as seen on the Pamplona casket 2.1, the large V&A casket 4.1.2, the short sides of ʿAbd al-Malik's marble basin 2.3.1, and later on the Silos casket, Figure 174, dated 417/1026¹⁹).

The remaining long side (now perceived as the front, but originally the back, if we follow the inscription) features a beautifully arranged decoration of three trilobed arches, with alternating voussoirs, set into square frames supported by small columns with textured decoration, and delicately carved capitals and abaci, of which the two central abaci are hollowed out and might have contained something inset in another material (a precious metal, such as silver, which was later melted down and reused?). These may have contained signatures, as seen on a marble panel, possibly from the Cordoban Alcázar, also carved with an arcade

17 Montejo 2012.

18 Montejo 2012.

19 Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cat. 25; Kühnel 1971, cat. 40.



FIGURE 119 Lustre bowl decorated with a heraldic eagle, signed by Muslim, Egypt, late tenth–early eleventh century; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 63.178.1

of three arches (Figure 93, see below): indeed, this earlier panel may have been the model for the ʿĀmirid use of this motif. On either side of the abaci are seen the type of roll corbels found throughout the Great Mosque of Córdoba, and which become increasingly decorative in al-Manṣūr's extension. As we have discussed (Chapter 6), it is possible that the ʿĀmirid *fatā* under whom the basin was created also worked in some capacity on al-Manṣūr's mosque extension.²⁰ The background of this architectonic framework is filled with a flourishing garden, beautifully designed and carved, in which we can make out several elements that seem characteristic of the art of the ʿĀmirid period, such as the trilobed arch or the starlike six-petalled flower encircled by its stem.

The realism with which the architectonic elements are represented here – the trilobed arches,

the voussoirs, the roll corbels, the volutes of the capitals, the textured decoration of the columns – suggests the representation of an actual architectural setting: an arcade set in a flourishing garden, depicted from the perspective of a viewer looking out from within a pavilion, their view framed by its entrance arches (Figure 101). As noted in Chapter 5, the architectural arrangement that became so symbolic during the reigns of the first two caliphs was the division of space into three naves, framed by three arches and crowned by three domes, framing the caliph at the centre. This three-dimensional arrangement – seen in both the key aulic spaces of Umayyad Córdoba, the Salón Rico and al-Ḥakam's *maqṣūra* at the Córdoba Mosque – is rendered as two-dimensional by the motif of the triple arcade, which Montejo relates to Roman triumphal arches and views as a symbol

20 Souto 2010, 221 (2.38: discussing Khalaf).

of caliphal power.²¹ The carving of motifs within a framework of arches may have been inspired by Roman sarcophagi, of which several examples have been recovered from Madīnat al-Zahrā' and other sites in Cordoba (Figures 91–92, Chapter 6), though the device of three arches may already have been symbolically represented on carved marble objects in the caliphal period. A thick marble panel depicting a triple arcade may have come from the Umayyad *qaṣr* in Cordoba, or its Rawḍa – its provenance is not certain (Figure 93).²² Like al-Manṣūr's basin, the architectonic motifs are represented faithfully, with spiralling columns, curling capitals, and abaci from which spring very round horseshoe arches; these enclose an entirely vegetal decoration, formed of large, bold leaf motifs with deep drilling. Carved into the abaci is the information that the panel was carved by Ṭarīf.

Was al-Manṣūr's basin thus following a known format, one which may have had an explicitly caliphal resonance, as evidenced by this piece, if it did indeed come from the Umayyad *qaṣr*? If so, it is applied on the basin with an 'Āmirid twist, through the use of trilobed rather than round horseshoe arches, and architectonic devices that recall the 'Āmirid extension to the Cordoba mosque, then being built. Other devices on the basin's other sides may emblematised the *hājib*'s relations with the Umayyad caliph and his army. The significance of the remainder of the basin's iconographic and epigraphic programme will be explored in more detail in Chapter 8, though aspects will be discussed in reference to the two other huge fountain basins made for 'Āmirid patrons, for which al-Manṣūr's basin apparently provided the model.

No other objects survive that were made for al-Manṣūr himself. While they surely existed, we have no surviving ivories inscribed in his name, though some of the most spectacular ivories produced in al-Andalus were made for his son and heir to the *hijāba*, 'Abd al-Malik.

2 Objects Associated with 'Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar (r. 1002–8)

The 'Āmirid Dār al-Ṣinā'a was obviously fully established during the course of al-Manṣūr's *de facto* rule, since from the reign of his successor, 'Abd al-Malik, though short, we have the greatest number of 'Āmirid objects surviving. Not insignificantly, these also include some of the largest objects to survive from the entire Umayyad period in al-Andalus.

2.1 *The Pamplona Casket (Dated 395/1004–5; Figures 120–127; Appendix 4.11)*

The largest and most spectacular of all the ivories to survive is the so-called Leyre or Pamplona casket, named after the museum in Pamplona which now houses it, and the Monastery of Leyre in Navarra where it was preserved probably since at least 1057, when the relics of the Christian martyrs Nunila and Alodia were translated into it.²³ It has the same truncated pyramidal shape as the silver-gilt casket made for Hishām (Figures 1–2), to which

23 Inv. CE000038, dimensions 23.6 (H) × 38.4 (L) × 23.7 (W). Bibliography: Ferrandis 1928, 75–76; 1935, vol. 1, cat. 19; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 299, figs. 313–314; Naváscues y de Palacio 1964a, 1964b; Kühnel 1971, cat. 35, plates 22–26; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 189 (#204); *Al-Andalus* 198–201, cat. 4; Harris 1995; Makariou 2001; Robinson 2007. As discussed in Chapter 2, the casket may have found its way to the kingdom of Navarra through kinship ties and possible diplomatic connections with Sancho II Abarca and his son Gonzalo. In the monastery at Leyre it came to hold the relics of the sisters Nunila and Alodia, and as Harris 1995 has argued, the casket may already have been in Navarra by c. 1057, which is when the crypt at Leyre was consecrated. The relics were wrapped in an unusual silk textile fragment, which is so far a unicum: it shows a repeat pattern of two affronted peacocks, with the Latin phrase 'Sitacu est' in mirror image under the birds' tails. It has been tentatively dated to the tenth/eleventh centuries, but its place of production remains a mystery. I owe this information to Pilar Borrego of the Patrimonio Nacional, who worked on its conservation and kindly sent me photographs. The textile is published in Uranga Galdiano and Iñiguez Almech 1971, 265–7, colour plate 15.

21 Montejo 2012.

22 Souto 2005; Montejo 2006, 252–254; Montejo 2012.

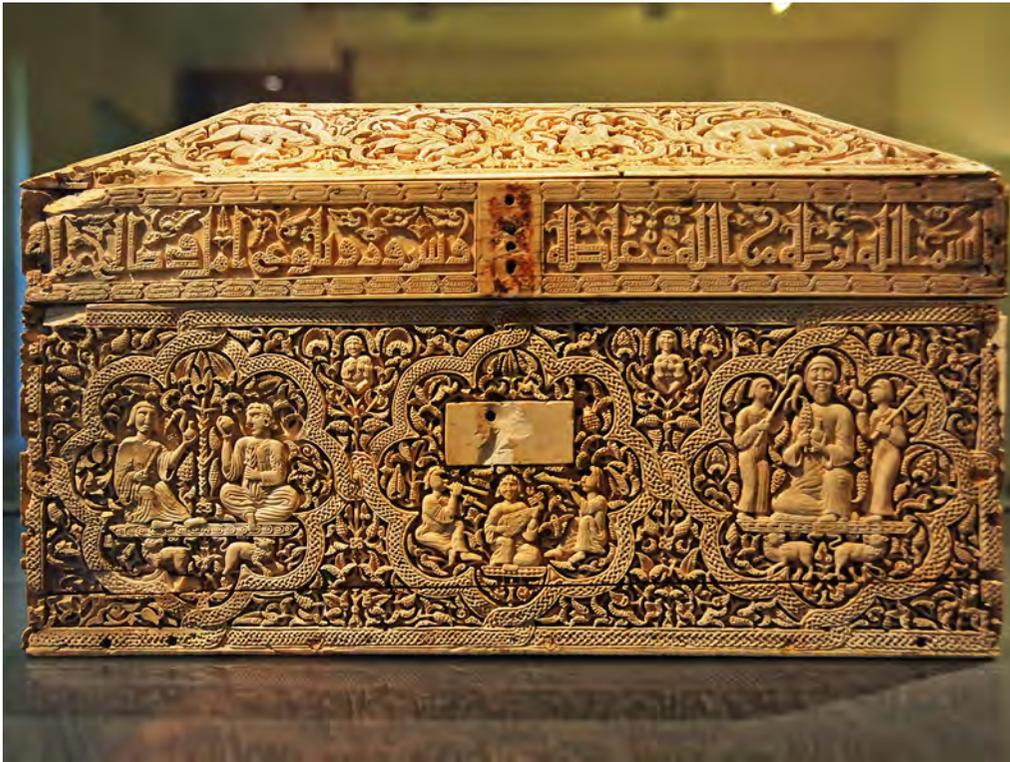


FIGURE 120 Pamplona casket, 1004-5, ivory: front; Museo de Navarra
© ANTONIO GARCIA OMEDES

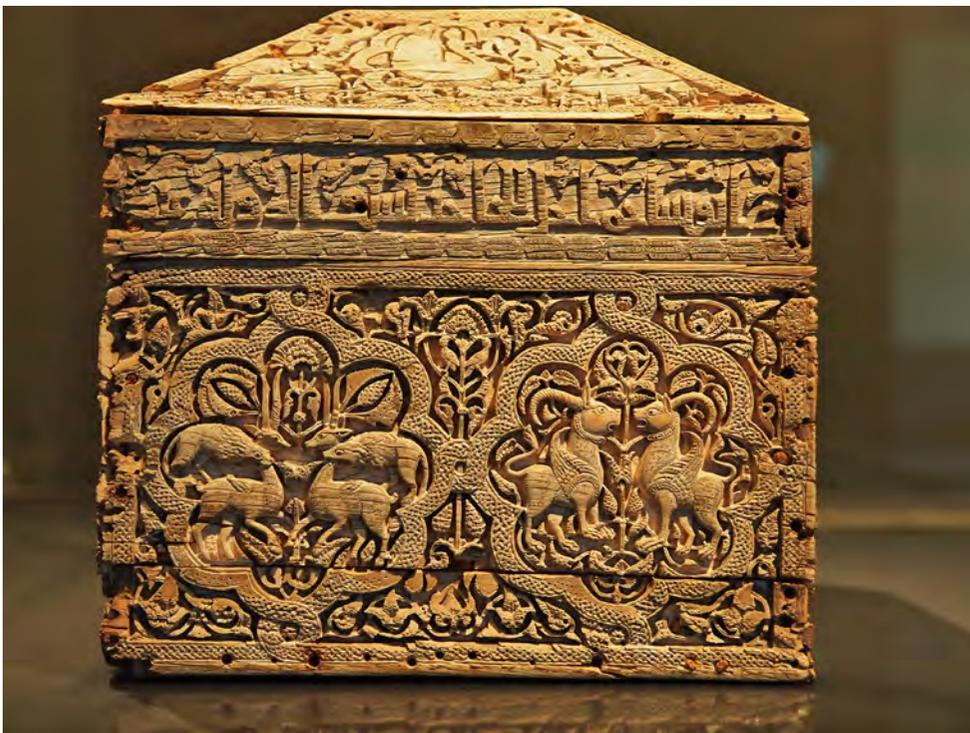


FIGURE 121 Pamplona casket: left side
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FIGURE 122 Pamplona casket: back
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it is also similar in size. These consonances in size and form were interpreted as significant by Cynthia Robinson, who argues that in commissioning his own casket, ‘Abd al-Malik deliberately selected Hishām’s casket as a model, which ‘strongly suggests imitative (and appropriative) intent’.²⁴ She argues further that the Pamplona casket employs ‘a format [...] clearly implicated in the issue of just who actually held the reins of caliphal power’, and that its use of figural ornament (‘in sharp contrast to the overall pattern of silver-and-niello vines and leaves with which Hishām’s casket is adorned’) deliberately ‘selected, manipulated and [gave] new meaning at ‘Āmirī hands ... a feature of the caliphal repertoire – figural ornament’.²⁵ This exclusive comparison between the two caskets does not take into account the possibility of other

objects that have not survived, but emphasises the Pamplona casket’s impressive monumentality.

The casket is formed from thick, single ivory panels attached to each other by ivory pegs. Measuring 23.6 cm high and wide, the panels on the casket’s long sides reach an astonishing 38.4 cm across, which is almost at the limit of the dimensions that an ivory panel can achieve without starting to reflect the curve of the tusk. It indicates that these panels were cut from an enormous elephant tusk. Its inscription (see Appendix 4.11) gives the date of 395/1004–5, and indicates that the *ḥājib* Sayf al-Dawla ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr commissioned this object for himself (*mimma amara bi-amalihi*). It was probably ordered to celebrate his victory over Sancho García of León in the same year, for which Hishām granted him the title Sayf al-Dawla, ‘Sword of the State’. As we saw above, the Andalusīyyīn minbar (1.1) tells us that his father also held this title, and it may have

24 Robinson 2007, 103.

25 Robinson 2007, 104.

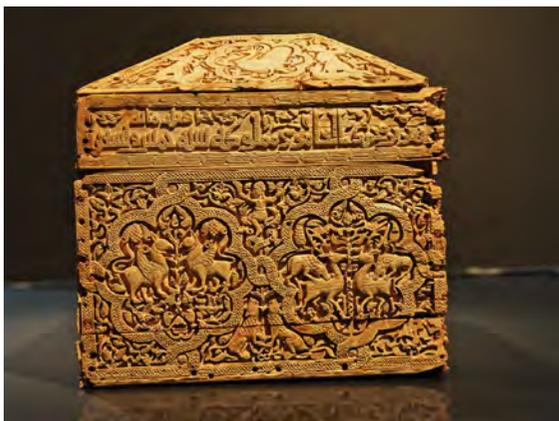


FIGURE 123 Pamplona casket: right side
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become honorifically associated with the *hijāba* by this date. The use of the peculiarly ʿĀmirid phrase *waffaqa-hu allāh* (see Chapter 8) underlines the association with a great military victory, as does the fact that the decoration of eight of its nine carved panels (excluding the inscription panels) feature combat scenes, including the striking image on the central medallion at the back of a man fighting two lions (Figure 127B), surely visualising ʿAbd al-Malik in the moment of his victory.

The main interpretive discussions of this casket have tended to centre on the *majlis* scene on the front (Figures 120 and 127A), and have been concerned with whether the large-scale bearded figure in the right-hand medallion was intended to represent ʿAbd al-Malik himself or the caliph Hishām II.²⁶ If we accept the lion-fighting man on the back of the casket as ʿAbd al-Malik, then we must accept the seated figure as ʿAbd al-Malik as well. Comparing the two, the facial features are similar on both, with a prominent triangular nose, bushy beard and moustache, and close-cropped fringe. On both sides of the casket this figure is depicted

26 Holod in *Al-Andalus* 198–201, cat. 4, followed Naváscues 1964a, 244, and identified this figure as Hishām II, because he wears a signet ring (or seal?) on his left hand, and holds in his right a bunch of flowers ‘in the mode of a sceptre’. Both Makariou 2001 and Robinson 2007, 107, identify him as ʿAbd al-Malik.

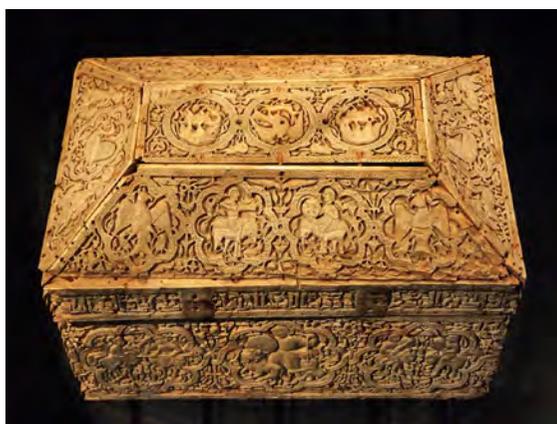
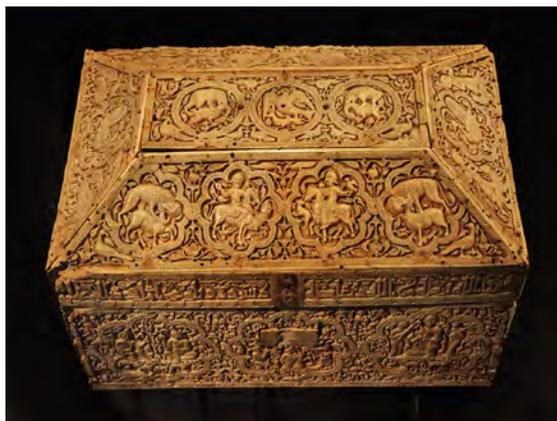


FIGURE 124 Pamplona casket: lid: A. front slope;
B. back slope
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at a considerably larger scale than the other figures around him, and forms the focal point of the design. The seated figure thus shows ʿAbd al-Malik, gathered with his *nudamāʾ* at a poetic *majlis* in the gardens of his *munya*, listening to the poetry sung by the musicians at the centre; in this way, the iconography of his ivory casket relates to that of the marble basin also made for him (2.3.1), which (I argue) ‘petrifies’ ʿAbd al-Malik’s favoured form of artistic expression, the poetic genre of *nawriyya*. If we attempt to understand the iconography of this casket as a whole – how all the scenes work together as a coherent message – the scenes on front and back complement each other to express the twin facets of ʿAbd al-Malik’s self-expression as embodying the virtues of the ideal ruler: on the

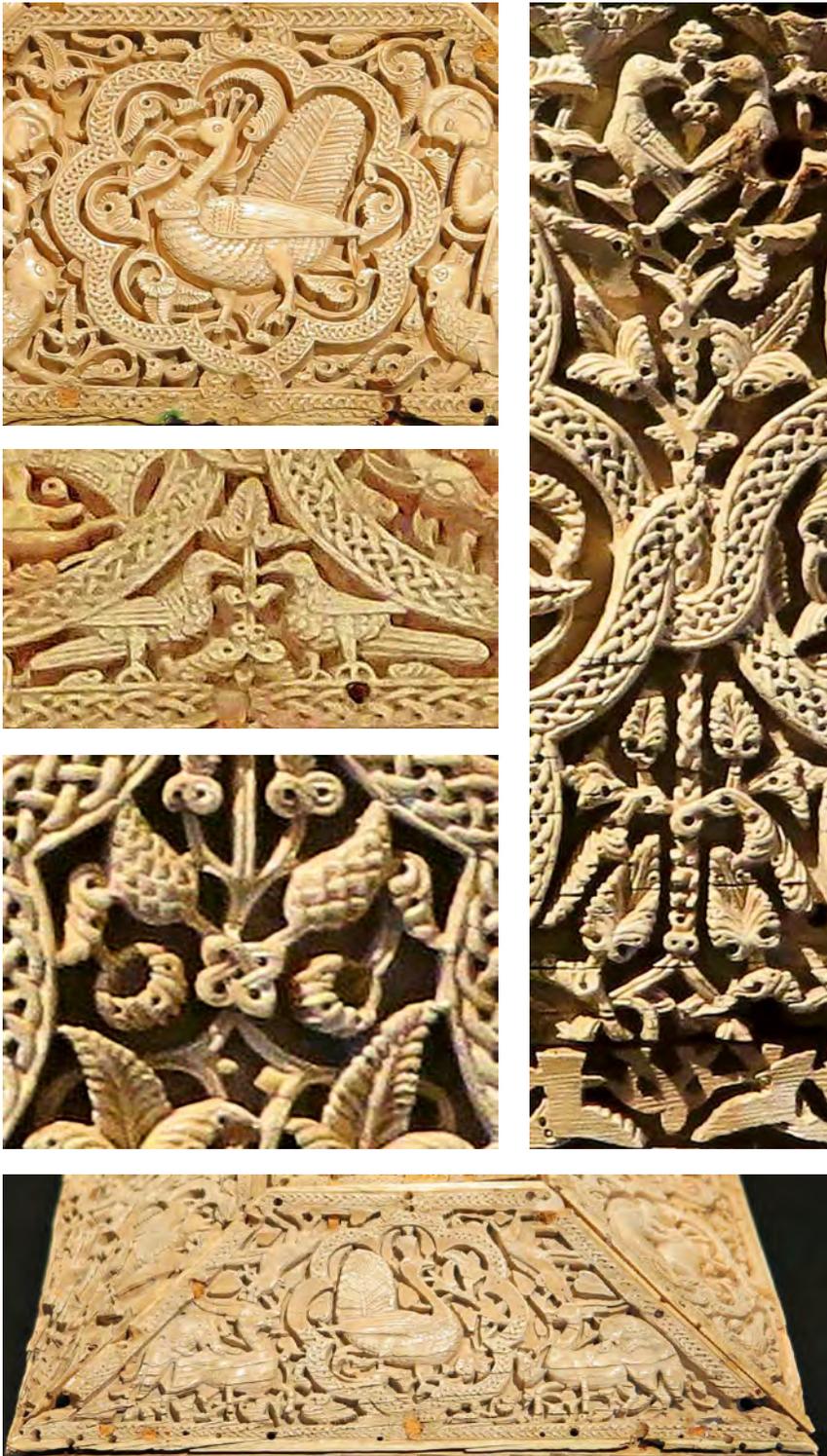


FIGURE 125 Pamplona casket, details of the decoration: A. peacock on the right lid slope; B. palmette leaf on lid; C. four-lobed knot motif; D. chainlink motif; E. animals biting onto shoots
 © GLAIRE ANDERSON (A, C, D AND E) AND ANTONIO GARCIA OMEDES (B)



FIGURE 126 Pamplona casket, hidden signatures: A. 'work of Faraj and his apprentices'; B. Faraj (lid); C. Rashīq (left side); D. Sa'āda (right side); E. 'āmir on the hindquarters of horses

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FIGURE 127 Pamplona casket, hidden signatures: A. Mişbāh (front); B. Khayr (back)
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one hand, the victorious prosecution of jihad; on the other, the cultivation of a sophisticated court culture. We will return to this interpretation in Chapter 8.

As discussed in Chapter 6, the casket was produced in the ‘Āmirid Dār al-Şinā’a under the direction of the *fatā al-kabīr*, Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī, and features the signatures of a whole workshop of craftsmen, led by the master, Faraj (Figure 126). That it was a team effort emphasises the importance of the work as well as indicating that ‘Abd al-Malik perhaps wanted it created as quickly as possible, to commemorate both his victory and new title. Iconographically and in terms of the quality of its carving, the casket is a *tour de force*. The inscription, in very elegantly carved calligraphy with beaded letters, recalls some carvings at Madīnat al-Zahrā’ (Figure 88), and as Watson has stated, its mere appearance ‘proclaims that it bears an important message ... Its broad, beaded letters, monumental scale, and sure calligraphy ... is in an authoritative style hardly matched by any other Spanish ivory.’²⁷ Its text further calls for ‘blessings from Allah, goodwill, happiness, and the

fulfilment of hopes through good [or pious] works, and extension of life’. These hopes are significant for interpreting the iconography of this casket, which we will discuss in the next chapter.

Among the animal combat scenes that fill the panels on the casket’s remaining sides are specific motifs that connect it to the marble basins: lions attacking quadrupeds, including antlered deer, on the front and top of the lid and the short sides; on the back of the lid, heraldic eagles (also with ears) clutching small birds in their talons; on the short sides, affronted griffins, one pair of which unusually sports antlers (on the left-hand short side). Antlered griffins are also seen under the heraldic griffin on the best-preserved short side of ‘Abd al-Malik’s marble basin (2.3.1, Figure 132), suggesting an iconographic connection between these two spectacular objects made for the same patron. As we will discuss in Chapter 8, the specific motifs that recur on objects made for ‘Āmirid patrons seem almost to be dynastic emblems or symbols of their office. We will be returning to various elements of the Pamplona casket throughout the discussions to follow.

²⁷ Watson 2005, 168.

2.2 *The Braga Pyxis (Datable 1004–8, Figures 11, 15; Appendix 4.12)*

A second ivory was made for ʿAbd al-Malik, the so-called Braga pyxis, after its preservation in the Treasury of Braga Cathedral in Portugal.²⁸ This cylindrical casket is again particularly large for the Andalusī ivories, at 20 cm in height (its diameter is about standard at 10.4 cm). This was also made under the direction of Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī, the same *fatā al-kabīr* as directed the Pamplona casket, though no date is specified in this object's inscription. It can nevertheless be dated after 395/1004, since it includes the title Sayf al-Dawla which ʿAbd al-Malik received as a result of the León victory, and before 399/1008, the year of his death. It may well have been commissioned at the same time as the Pamplona casket. As with that object, the inscription on the Braga pyxis states that ʿAbd al-Malik commissioned it directly ("This is what he ordered to be made for him"). However, in contrast to the somewhat militaristic decoration of the Pamplona casket, ʿAbd al-Malik's pyxis features a repertoire of entirely peaceful scenes, of paired birds and animals and human figures harvesting fruit from trees. This is set within luxurious vegetation framed by an architectonic structure, which evokes the same concept of looking out through the arches of an arcade onto a flourishing garden as on al-Manṣūr's marble basin. The cylindrical form of the pyxis also suggests a microcosmic version of a domed garden pavilion, in which the ʿĀmirids and their *nudamāʾ* might have sat to enjoy their poetic *majālīs*. We will elaborate on the significance of this iconography in Chapter 8.

The sense of natural idyll that its decoration conveys prompted Renata Holod to suggest that 'it could have been made for a specific personal celebration, such as a marriage, or an occasion of a calendrical observance, such as the summer or fall

harvest festival.²⁹ Since no marriage is recorded for ʿAbd al-Malik at this time, and a commission to commemorate a calendrical occasion might be expected to at least include mention of a date, it is more likely that this object was commissioned as a gift. As we saw in Chapter 2, this ivory pyxis likely found its way to its current home in Portugal during its patron's lifetime, as a diplomatic gift; indeed it supplies unique proof of this kind of exchange, in the form of the silver chalice and paten that were commissioned almost contemporaneously by the recipient of the gift, Menendo González, count of Galicia (also d. 1008), to be stored inside it. Was the pyxis specially commissioned for this purpose by ʿAbd al-Malik, or was it originally made for his private use but considered precious and iconographically appropriate enough to be repurposed as a gift? The wording of its inscription probably argues for the latter, since an object purpose-made for a particular recipient would probably have included his name in the inscription (Chapter 6). The extent to which the ʿĀmirids engaged in diplomatic relations and the importance of gift exchange in this process implies that the craftsmen of the Dār al-Ṣināʾa were kept busy under the ʿĀmirids in the production of precious objects for that purpose, and the Braga pyxis is a unique survival of one of these.

2.3 *Marble Basins*

2.3.1 Basin Made for ʿAbd al-Malik (Datable 1004–7, Figures 128–133; Appendix 4.13)

Turning now to objects in marble, the largest of the three complete extant marble basins can be associated with ʿAbd al-Malik. It was discovered in 1923, built into the walls of an obscure side room of the Madrasa Ibn Yūsuf in Marrakesh.³⁰

28 Bibliography: Ferrandis 1928, 77–78; Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cat. 20; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 190 (#205); Kühnel 1971, 43–44, cat. 36, plates 29–30; *Al-Andalus* 202, cat. 5; *Art of Medieval Spain* 148–149, cat. 73; Prado-Vilar 1997, 33–4; Walker 2016, 237–8.

29 *Al-Andalus* 202, cat. 5.

30 It is now in the Musée Dār Si Saʿīd in Marrakesh, inv. MAR.O.03/1071/92, dimensions: 1.55 m (L) × 84 (W) × 71 (H) cm. Bibliography: Gallotti 1923; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 194–195 (#217); Castejón 1945, 202, 199; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181–88, fig. 246a; *Al-Andalus* 255, cat. 43; Rosser-Owen 2007; Rosser-Owen 2014, 181–2, where I discuss the context in which this basin,



FIGURE 128 Basin made for 'Abd al-Malik, datable 1004–7, marble: overall view; Dar Si Sa'ïd Museum, Marrakesh, inv. MAR.o.03/1071/92
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FIGURE 129 'Abd al-Malik basin: original front, after Gallotti 1923, fig. 1



FIGURE 130 'Abd al-Malik basin: original back
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FIGURE 131 'Abd al-Malik basin: original left side (decoration and inscriptions effaced)
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 132
'Abd al-Malik basin: original right side
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 133
'Abd al-Malik basin: interior view
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

Jean Gallotti obtained permission to excavate it and thereby discovered the entire basin, with all four sides intact, though the decoration on the front and left-hand short side has mostly disappeared (Figures 129, 131). In fact it seems to have been deliberately effaced, and this may have been done to make the basin more acceptable in the religious environment in which it was reused. In contrast, the purely floral decoration on what was originally the back is remarkably well-preserved (Figure 130); the eagles preserved on the right-hand short end may have been up against a wall and were thus invisible.

The inscription is well-preserved though the full date does not survive at the end. Again, it can be approximately dated by ʿAbd al-Malik's titulature, this time between 1004 and 1007. The *terminus post quem* is indicated by the inclusion of the honorific Sayf al-Dawla, received after the campaign against León in 1004. However, the absence here of his second *laqab*, al-Muẓaffar – granted him by Hishām in Muharram 398/October 1007 in celebration of his victory at Clunia over a Christian coalition led by Sancho García of Castile³¹ – indicates that it was completed before then. The quite aggressive titulature – emphasising ʿAbd al-Malik's status as *ḥājib* and Sword of the State, but also Defender of the Faith (Nāṣir al-Dīn), Tamer of Polytheists (Qāmiʿ al-Mushrikīn) and protector of the caliph (if that is what is implied by the *kunya* Abū Marwan) – suggests that this spectacular basin was again intended to commemorate a great victory, presumably over Christians in the north of the Peninsula.

As with al-Manṣūr's basin, the inscription begins on the least well-preserved long side of the basin; this was thus the front of the object, though it is hardly ever illustrated and this basin is best-known today from the floral bands that decorate what was originally the back. On the front of the basin (Figure 129), a frieze of birds, fishes

and turtles surrounds all four sides of the central zone, with the inscription band running along the top: this shows how the border on the front of al-Manṣūr's basin (1.2, Figure 117) would originally have looked. Judging by the shapes of the bumps in the heavily-defaced central area, and also the remains of a vegetal element at the vertical axis, it is possible to deduce that this side of the basin would once have featured the same groups of lions attacking gazelles as are so well-preserved on the ʿBādīs basin' (4.2.1, Figures 156–158), and which also occurred on the front of al-Manṣūr's basin. As with those other ʿĀmirid basins, the short sides bore the emblematic decoration of paired heraldic eagles sheltering small animals, including griffins; again it can be seen from the shape of the bumps that remain on the defaced left-hand short side that the decoration was identical there to the right-hand side, which is preserved. Again a narrow plain area, this time with a moulding, between the two eagles was probably where a pipe cover and fountain heads were attached to the basin; a pipe hole on the defaced short side has since been filled in. The hole that pierces the lower part of the defaced long side, and would thus have marred the original decoration, was probably drilled through at a later date, perhaps once the basin was installed in the Madrasa, to provide a means of emptying the water.

The decoration of the long side that is now displayed as the front but was originally the back (Figure 130) is remarkably well preserved in its upper two-thirds. It is carved in high relief and divided into two zones: the lower is a horizontal band of floral scrolls featuring the kind of 'striated' leaves which occur later on ivories manufactured at Cuenca under Taifa patronage. The upper zone consists of a shorter horizontal band filled with palmettes of two different varieties, which are alternately framed by a pyramidal or quadrangular stem. This is framed on all four sides by a frieze of starlike six-petalled flowers, of the same type as we see on other ʿĀmirid objects. The vegetal

which weighs an estimated 1200 kg, could have been brought to Marrakesh.

31 On which see *HEM* 11:288–289.

decoration represented on this face of the basin provides a useful source for a typology of the different floral elements and forms which prevailed in 'Āmirid art. It also calls to mind the *nawriyya*, or poetic descriptions of flowers, which was 'Abd al-Malik's favourite poetic genre and flourished in the highly literary environment of the poetic *majālis* gathered under his patronage. This connection will be explored further in Chapter 8.

The lower third of this side of the basin is plain and seems to have been totally smoothed down at the background level of the floral decoration above. This suggests it was originally carved but this carving has been removed. Perhaps it was originally decorated with figurative scenes (also in horizontal bands?), deemed unsuitable for the basin's new religious context. Stylistically, however, this would have disrupted the elegant arrangement above, and more likely would perhaps have been a mirror-image of the palmette band with its star-flower surround. Could its new setting have necessitated the removal of this decoration for some reason, perhaps in order to fit an available space? This zone has been so well smoothed down that it is impossible to tell anything about its original decoration. Likewise, no inscription survives above the zone of floral scrolls, though a plain band of the same width as the inscription band runs above it. Again this is recessed in the marble, indicating that the original inscription has been carefully chiselled off. To fit the model of other 'Āmirid objects, in particular al-Manṣūr's basin (1.2), the text here would probably have stated the place of manufacture and name of the *fatā* through whom the commission was carried out. The organization of the decoration on this basin thus parallels that of al-Manṣūr's basin, since it contains one long face of purely vegetal decoration in contrast to a second long face that features animal combat groups. Again, the significance of this will be discussed in Chapter 8.

2.3.2 Basin Made for 'Abd al-Malik, Found in Toledo (Appendix 4.14)

At least one other marble basin was apparently made for 'Abd al-Malik. A fragment of a 'cuve d'ablutions' inscribed *'Abd al-Malik ibn ... [al-Manṣūr?]* was published by Lévi-Provençal, without any illustration or accompanying description.³² He says nothing about the style of epigraphy or whether the fragment bears any decoration at all, but he believed it to date to the tenth century. Found in 1916 in the Casa de Suero Téllez de Meneses in Toledo, it was in 1931 in that city's Museo Arqueológico Provincial, though no further information is given.

2.3.3 Fragments from a Basin, Found at the Alhambra (Figures 134–135, Appendix 4.15)

Fragments of other decorated basins do survive, including some thirteen fragments found in the Secano at the Alhambra;³³ perhaps these fragments come from a second 'Āmirid basin brought to Granada by Bādīs (4.2.1, below). The two fragments at the top left of the drawing in Figure 134 (A and E) contain parts of a Kufic inscription. Gómez-Moreno was right in reading [... *ib*]n *Abī 'Āmir* in the larger fragment (E), that is, part of the name of al-Manṣūr or one of his sons, though not necessarily 'Abd al-Malik. By comparison with the formulae of other 'Āmirid inscriptions (see Appendix 4 and discussion in Chapter 8), it is now possible to read the remaining letters of this inscription as *waffaqa[-hu allāh]*, 'may [Allah] bring [him] complete success!'. Unfortunately, too

³² Lévi-Provençal 1931, 195 (#218).

³³ Gómez-Moreno 1951, 188, fig. 248; Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 722–3, fig. 562; *Arte Islámico en Granada*, 278, cat. 73 (the Bādīs basin). I am grateful to Purificación Marinetto Sánchez for arranging for me to study and photograph these fragments in the Alhambra Museum in February 2007. The bird fragment in Figure 135 was not depicted in either Gómez-Moreno's drawing or Torres Balbás' photograph, while fragments D, E, J and K were not in evidence.

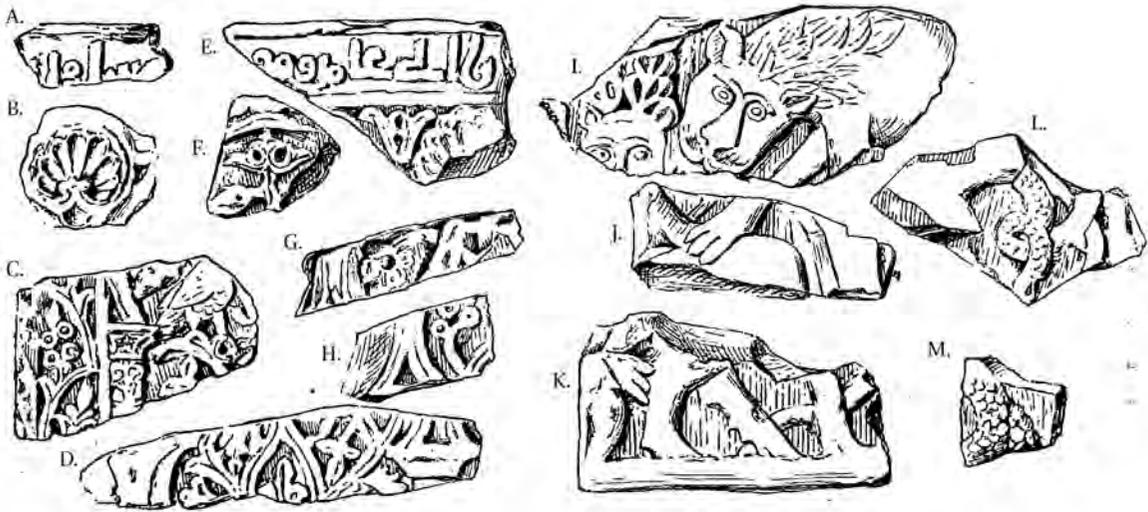


FIGURE 134 Basin fragments in the Museo de la Alhambra, after Gómez-Moreno 1951, 188, fig. 248



FIGURE 135 Basin fragment showing the body of a bird, Museo de la Alhambra, inv. 277: A. front; B. interior profile, indicating that it comes from the side of a basin

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little remains of the letters on the second fragment (A) to read its inscription.

Most of the fragments in this group can be reconstructed to represent decoration which parallels that of al-Manṣūr's basin: I and J (now attached to each other in the gallery display at the Museo de la Alhambra) show a mustachioed lion attacking a gazelle with elaborately carved antlers; K appears to present the feet of some of the same figural group to the left of the vertical axis (compare with the Bādīs basin, 4.2.1). Five of the fragments (C, D, F, G, H) are decorated with floral motifs, of stems and flowers, and one (C) contains the lower part of a bird, with a body decorated with scales. Three of these five pieces also contain architectonic elements: fragment C clearly shows a column, capital, abacus and springer of an arch, and two others (D, H) also contain an abacus and springers. Altogether this would have resulted in a decoration similar to that on the back of al-Manṣūr's basin, though with the addition of birds among the foliage. Indeed, it might be closer to the bird-filled arcading of the Braga pyxis: not enough survives of the arches in these fragments to tell if they were horseshoe or lobed in profile, but the capitals that support them (seen clearly in C) have the same curlicue form as the capitals on the Braga pyxis (2.2) and al-Manṣūr's basin (1.2). Such stylistic connections across media reinforce the suggestion made in Chapter 6 that the same craftsmen were working in different materials within the 'Āmirid Dār al-Šinā'a.

Other motifs among these fragments are a bit more unusual: the scallop shell (B) is not found on any other object that can be identified as 'Āmirid, and indeed was not a common motif in Andalusī art of this period. It is seen in architecture, most spectacularly within the dome of al-Ḥakam II's mihrab chamber at the Cordoba Mosque, so perhaps objects with this motif have just not survived. The two fragments on the far right (L and M) seem to represent the curled body of a snake, again depicted with a scaly texture. While these two fragments seem to go together, they do not fit

with the rest of the pieces. They may fit, however, with another fragment that was not published in Gómez-Moreno's drawing or Torres Balbás's photograph, but which is also part of this group (Figure 135). This fragment also shows the lower part of a bird, its body decorated with scales: its leg is represented with the same carved oval as used on the lions of the Bādīs basin to represent the musculature of their hindquarters, which is rather incongruous in a bird; and the long folded tail has a 'collar' part of the way down, with vertical striations below. Such a bird is not seen on any of the other marble basins, but this combination of stylistic elements again recalls the ivories: it is closest to birds on the Braga pyxis (2.2) and the anonymous casket in the V&A (4.1.2), both datable to the early eleventh century, where three such birds fill the upper interstices of the right-hand sides (Figures 153, 155E). The interior profile of the marble fragment suggest that this bird appeared on one of the basin's short sides, since it incorporates a corner. Might the bird have been part of another kind of combat scene, in which it attacks the scaly-bodied snake? Such a motif would be paralleled on other examples of 'Āmirid art discussed below, including the fragment of another basin's frieze with ducks, fishes and a worm (4.2.3.4, Figure 169), and the ducks which seem to fight over a worm on a sandstone capital (Figure 23, Chapter 4). These recurring motifs – related to water and thus appropriate for the decoration of fountain basins – are some of the defining characteristics of the 'Āmirid marble group, and these basin fragments might indicate that occasionally they were represented on a larger scale than in borders or small objects.

Fragments of two other basins are known, though they have no inscriptions relating them to 'Abd al-Malik or any other 'Āmirid patron; as such they will be discussed below (Section 4), along with the third complete example of this 'large basin type', that moved by Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs to Granada at some point in the early eleventh century (4.2.1).

2.4 *The 'Suaire de Saint Lazare' (Datable 1007–8) and Its Comparanda (Figures 84, 136; Appendix 4.18)*

The next object associated with ʿAbd al-Malik is one of the small number of textiles that can be attributed to al-Andalus in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. This is the so-called 'Suaire de Saint Lazare', a large length of blue silk taffeta embroidered with coloured silks and gold-wrapped threads.³⁴ This elaborate textile was used to wrap the relics of Saint Lazare d'Aix, who died in 420 AD, and may have been introduced to his tomb in October 1146 when his relics were translated to the newly-completed church of Saint Lazare in Autun.³⁵ When the tomb was opened and inspected in 1727, the 'écharpe de soie' wrapping the relics was said to measure 4.45 m × 90 cm. During the French Revolution the textile (and the relics) were fragmented and dispersed, though many pieces were subsequently returned to the cathedral in Autun. Today the two largest sections of the embroidery are held in the Treasury of Autun Cathedral (a vertical panel measuring 2.35 × 1.10 m after a recent conservation project, Figure 84) and the Musée Historique des Tissus in Lyon (inv. 27.600, dimensions 1.67 × 0.76 m, Figure 136).³⁶

Its association with ʿAbd al-Malik stems from the inscriptions that are almost hidden in two

places on the main fragments of the textile: the belt of one of the mounted falconers on the Autun fragment clearly reads 'al-Muẓaffar', while a badly-damaged inscription on the round shield carried by one of the riders on the Lyon piece was read by David Storm Rice as 'al-Muẓaffar, aʿazza-hu'llāh', 'may Allah strengthen him' (Figure 136A).³⁷ Since, as we have seen, ʿAbd al-Malik received the *laqab* al-Muẓaffar in October 1007 and died in October 1008, Eva Baer reasonably argued that the production of this textile took place within that one-year window. Marthe Bernus-Taylor even suggested that the textile might have been commissioned in celebration of the Clunia victory in 1007, though there is nothing specific in the iconography to suggest that.³⁸ It has recently been suggested that the inscription 'al-Muẓaffar' in the belt of the horseman on the Autun fragment continues across the belts of the two horsemen who follow him, and may be reconstructed as 'naṣru-hu' (middle horseman) and 'allāh' (third horseman), forming the phrase 'al-Muẓaffar naṣru-hu'allāh', 'may Allah bring him victory'.³⁹ This would further strengthen the textile's association with the Clunia victory.

The use of 'hidden' inscriptions, with al-Muẓaffar named discreetly on a shield and a belt, recalls the craftsmen's signatures scattered over the panels of the Pamplona casket (Chapter 6). As Sheila Blair pointed out, these hidden names 'connect the figural imagery of the casket with its patron',⁴⁰ and this appears to be the case with the textile as well. It is perhaps significant that the silk features no main inscription, since that would seem too

34 Storm Rice 1959; *Les Trésors des Églises de France* (exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1965), 423, cat. 795, pl. 33; Baer 1967; *Les Andalousies* 136–137, cat. 136; Makariou 2001, 52–57; Marcelli and Wallut 2003; Dor 2017. Its blue silk ground was dyed with indigo; its embroidery is in five colours: red to outline the figures, yellow, green, bluish-black and beige. The gold thread was produced by Z-twisting a gilt membrane made from animal gut around a beige silk core: see Dor 2017, 134, for a summary of the technical analysis, and fig. 111 for a magnified detail of the gold-wrapped threads.

35 Marcelli and Wallut 2003, 115; Dor 2017, 126–8.

36 *Les Andalousies* 136–137, cat. 136. A third fragment, measuring 29 × 55 cm, is held in the Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris (inv. CL.21865). A small fragment (7 × 7.5 cm), showing a flying falcon trapping a hare, surfaced on the art market in 2007 and was bought by the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha (inv. TE.150.2007): Dor 2017, 135, fig. 112.

37 Baer 1967, fig. 4 for the figure with inscribed belt, fig. 3 for the inscribed shield, and n. 7a for Storm Rice's reading.

38 *Les Andalousies*, 136–137, cat. 136: 'Sans doute cette merveilleuse étoffe lui fut-elle offerte par le calife lui-même en récompense, comme c'en était l'usage dans tout le monde islamique'. She seems to believe it was a *khil'a* given to al-Muẓaffar by Hishām II.

39 Dor 2017, 132–3. She notes that this reading had been surmised by the Orientalist Joseph Toussaint Reinaud in 1856, but never published and therefore forgotten.

40 Blair 2005, 84.



FIGURE 136
 Suaire de Saint Lazare, late tenth
 century, embroidered silk and
 gold thread; details: A. horseman
 bearing shield inscribed 'al-Muẓaffar,
 a'azza-hu'llāh'; B. seated sphinxes
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 SYLVAIN PRETTO

blatantly like a *ṭirāz* textile – though of course it is always possible that an inscription was once embroidered on part of the textile that has not survived. Sophie Makariou was unequivocal in associating this textile with ʿAbd al-Malik: on the basis of the beardedness of the figures labelled ʿal-Muzaffar, combined with the lack of beard on one of the small figures on the ʿHishām *ṭirāz*, whom she interprets as depicting Hishām II himself, she identifies the large-scale bearded figure on the front of the Pamplona casket as ʿAbd al-Malik. Since all the horsemen on the Suaire are bearded, it is not clear whether she considers them all to represent ʿAbd al-Malik. She also suggests that the horseman who carries the inscribed round shield and brandishes a sword might be a device to represent ʿAbd al-Malik’s other *laqab*, Sayf al-Dawla, ‘Sword of the State’.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Ali-de-Unzaga rightly cautions that ‘several historical figures in other periods carried the title al-Muzaffar and had the means, the opportunity and the motive to commission prestigious embroideries; they cannot therefore be neglected as possible “candidates” represented in the figure displayed on the Saint Lazare textile’.⁴²

The decoration of this impressive textile is organized in large six-lobed roundels with double borders, each one measuring 22 cm at its external diameter (12 cm internally). As has frequently been observed in connection with the Cordoban ivories, the lobed medallions on textiles such as this example may have influenced the designs on other luxury objects.⁴³ Eighteen complete and fragmentary

large medallions survive on the largest fragment, in Autun, and the interstices are filled with smaller polygonal cartouches. For the most part these contain eagles depicted in part-profile, their wings-splayed, alighting on prey (always hares); they are rendered in an almost identical way to the central medallion on the topmost plaque on the lid of the Pamplona casket (Figure 124). A few of these polygonal cartouches contain cheetahs, only revealed during recent conservation, and not illustrated in any of the publications of this object.⁴⁴ The larger medallions are filled with horsemen and sphinxes, in alternating rows and all facing in the same direction. A single medallion shows a pair of affronted seated sphinxes (Figure 136B), which may originally have formed a central pivot in the composition: the horsemen and sphinxes in procession behind the right-hand sphinx all faced to the left, as it does, while the figures which proceeded behind the left-hand sphinx may have faced to the right, as it does. This would create an overall sense of horizontal symmetry to the textile’s composition. No figures facing to the right have been preserved, however.⁴⁵

The horsemen, arrayed in procession, seem to be setting off for a hawking party. Their horses are depicted in a standardised way with a small head, pale face and shaggy mane, a large body with the front right leg raised as if walking, and identical caparisons. The way in which their harnesses are buckled across their bodies compares closely to the depiction of horses on ivories of this period (the Pamplona casket 2.1, Sanchuelo’s pyxis lid 3.1,

41 Makariou 2001, 54.

42 Ali-de-Unzaga 2017, 119, listing the other al-Muzaffars in n. 128. However, these improbably include an Abbasid general from the early tenth century, Fatimid and Ayyubid generals, and a Mamluk sultan of the early fourteenth century. Staying with the Andalusī context for the likely production of this embroidery, the candidates reduce to six, all Taifa rulers of the early to mid eleventh century, all of them ʿĀmirid descendants, previous ʿĀmirid officials, or rulers who followed the ʿĀmirid model of legitimation.

43 Dor 2017, 138–9. Ariane Dor proposes another association between the ivories and textiles such as this,

embroidered with gold and colours: she wonders if the pigments (usually red, blue and green) that have been identified on some of the ivories, such as the panel in the Met (4.1.3), ‘reflect the color arrangement of certain ceremonial garments’. This is a nice idea, however it cannot be established that the pigments on these ivories are original to the object. Analysis of the pigments on the Ziyād ibn Aflah pyxis in the V&A showed them to be ‘traditional pigments’, which cannot be dated by analysis; at best, we can say they are pre-modern: Rosser-Owen 2012, 316 n. 41.

44 Marcelli and Wallut 2003, 116.

45 Marcelli and Wallut 2003, 121, fig. 4.

the Doha casket 4.1.1), including a harness decoration which dangles part of the way down the horse's back rump. The men themselves are all treated differently, though they all wear the same outfits.⁴⁶ The sides of their tunics fall to triangular points below their seats, again paralleling the treatment of tunics on the outermost medallions on the back of the Pamplona casket. Various different criss-cross or striated techniques are used to render patterned textiles and folds in their clothing. Their headdresses vary: round turbans, 'tricorn' turbans, and a distinctive conical hat that is unusual in al-Andalus; some are bare-headed, as horsemen invariably are on the ivories. Their poses vary too: some face frontally, others are in profile; some seem to wave aloft a hunting bird in each hand; others have a single bird and hold 'a hooked staff resembling a polo stick' (which Baer notes is also seen on the Fermo chasuble, on which see below).⁴⁷ Others hold a spear and have a quadruped sitting on the rump of their horse: a cheetah in one case, and in another what seems to be a long-horned antelope, of the same type as seen in some of the medallions of the Pamplona casket (2.1) and the short ends of 'Abd al-Malik's marble basin (2.3.1).

The stylistic parallels with the 'Āmirid ivories are many, though the sphinx is an unusual motif in the artistic repertoire of al-Andalus at this period. These creatures are all represented in identical pose, prowling to the left very much in the mode of lions *passant* on Byzantine textiles, but they appear to have female heads with long black hair and the suggestion of women's breasts on their upper torso. Baer commented that these sphinxes may be 'the earliest dated example ... in medieval Islamic art', since the other parallels she cites – mainly Fatimid – do not date before the middle of the eleventh century.⁴⁸ By comparison, there are

no other types of human-headed quadrupeds on the Cordoban ivories, though harpies (along with other mythological beasts) appear on the embroidery from Oña (Figure 137C), which is a close technical and stylistic parallel to the Suaire de Saint Lazare, possibly even a model, as we will see below. This apparent introduction of a new motif into Andalusi art may relate to the widespread use of griffins in 'Āmirid art, a motif which might have been introduced in the 960s, to judge by the cyma (Figures 33–35, discussed in Chapter 6), and which Montejo suggests might have become a symbol of the *hijāba*.

The Suaire de Saint Lazare's large dimensions – over 4 metres long when it was first recovered, but possibly larger originally – and the vertical arrangement of its decoration, with no indication given by the conservators who worked on its recent restoration that it had undergone any tailoring, suggest that this textile was not made as an item of clothing.⁴⁹ Its monochromatic blue ground with large roundels and details picked out in gold and coloured silks would have made it an extremely impressive object when it was new. The large size of the medallions – over 20 cm in diameter – implies that its design could be appreciated from a distance, as well as close to. The use of gold thread would also have added substantial weight. This may therefore have been made as a wall or tent hanging or other item of soft furnishing, to

46 Described by Baer 1967, 37, as 'a long-sleeved, knee length closed over-gown with a small collar opening and a narrow belt at the waist. Below this gown the riders wear tight breeches and knee-boots.'

47 Baer 1967, n. 16.

48 Baer 1967, 43.

49 Dor 2017, 135, thinks that the evidence of seams in the base fabric of the embroidery 'could possibly suggest that the Suaire de Saint Lazare was originally designed as a garment', but this seems to be based in part on misunderstanding the textile in Oña (on which below) as a 'very rare surviving example of a garment from the caliphal period in Spain'. If the Suaire de Saint Lazare had been tailored as a garment, the interventions would be visible in the embroidered elements rather than the base fabric. These seams are more likely to have been from joining a number of panels of fabric together to make the base textile as large as possible, in order to serve as a hanging or tent panel. Dor also sensibly observes that the 'complexity of the [design] and the presence of the inscriptions become difficult to read if the cloth is folded'.

adorn one of ʿAbd al-Malik's palatine spaces, possibly even his campaign tent.

And it may not have been the only one. Its design is extremely close to another silk, which I have not had the opportunity to study in person and good quality photographs have not been published: this is a highly unusual *printed* silk, preserved among the textile treasures of Saint Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral, probably added to the tomb at the time the relics were translated in 1104.⁵⁰ The Durham silk is very worn and fragmentary, but sufficient details survive to relate it, stylistically at least, to the Suaire: its two surviving medallions are eight-lobed, rather than six-lobed, but they enclose mounted falconers wearing short tunics and holding birds of prey aloft in their left hands; their horses have a 'complicated bridle and decorative trappings', and a small animal runs below the horses' feet. Anna Muthesius was not able to conduct a full technical analysis of this textile, as it is framed behind glass, but an earlier publication by Gerard Brett noted that 'the gold was printed onto a resinous base'.⁵¹ The description of the technique is unclear, and it is not specified whether the entire decoration was printed in gold, or if some decoration was woven or embroidered in coloured silks, and only partially printed in gold; given the absence of that information, it would seem the former is more likely.

Silk printing is very rare: ancient examples are known from the Near and Far East, though a spectacular example, which is combined with embroidery on a half-silk (silk warps and cotton wefts) textile now in the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg, can be associated with the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir and dated 918–924.⁵² Muthesius cites examples

that were made in Iran and Egypt, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁵³ Brett noted 'uncertainties' in the printing of the Durham fragment, which suggested to him 'all the marks of an experiment ... in an unaccustomed technique'. Muthesius believes this accords with the possibility that it was 'produced in Spain in the tenth to eleventh centuries when in all probability the technique of silk printing was a new introduction'.⁵⁴ Given the extremely close stylistic parallels with ʿAbd al-Malik's embroidered silk, was this an example of another large hanging produced for him? Did the ʿĀmirids introduce this rare and innovative textile technique into al-Andalus? How did it get to Durham a hundred years later? Muthesius notes that the quality of the textiles amongst Saint Cuthbert's relics attest to the reverence in which his relics were held as well as to royal and noble patronage, which led donors to send precious textiles to his tomb from Europe and Byzantium.⁵⁵ Perhaps ʿAbd al-Malik's innovative printed silk came – perhaps through *khilʿa* – into the possession of an Iberian or French Christian, who later deemed it unusual enough to be a precious gift to the saint.

The silk and gold embroidery technique also associates the Suaire de Saint Lazare with two other important textiles, whose dates of production are the subject of some debate.⁵⁶ These are

50 This information is taken from Muthesius 1995, esp. 81–89. My thanks to Ana Cabrera for bringing this object and this publication to my attention.

51 Brett 1956.

52 Mackie 2015, 120–1 (3.39). The gold leaf is applied by means of an adhesive medium. Examples of the application of gold leaf to textiles are the famous early ikats from Yemen, whose *ṭirāz* inscriptions are 'printed' in gold leaf: see the example in Mackie 2015, 122–3 (3.41).

53 A block-printed example in Mackie 2015, 158–161 (4.34), is attributed to Iran or Iraq, eleventh–twelfth centuries.

54 Muthesius 1995, 89.

55 Muthesius 1995, 95.

56 Another related embroidery that should be mentioned, especially for its stylistic and technical connections to the Oña embroidery, are the embroidered fragments that used to adorn the Mitre of San Valero in the monastery of Roda de Isábena (prov. Huesca). These textiles are now lost, stolen in 1979, and only known through Felipa Niño's 1941 publication. She likened their technique to that used in Fatimid embroideries on which basis she attributed the fragments to the late tenth/early eleventh century (ie the ʿĀmirid period): Niño 1941, 142. The repeat pattern of a peacock in profile inside an octagonal cartouche is identical to one on the Oña embroidery (which was not known to Niño, since it was only discovered in 1968), and on that basis the two embroideries must have been made at the same

a fragmentary textile from the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, near Burgos (Figures 13, 137),⁵⁷ and a chasuble associated with Saint Thomas Becket (d. 1170), preserved in Fermo Cathedral, near the Adriatic Coast of central Italy (Figure 138).⁵⁸ Both are also related to the Suaire stylistically, in that their figurative decoration is organised within large roundels, though they are circular rather than lobed, and while the medallions on the Suaire are all independent from each other, on the other embroideries they interlink: the design of the Oña silk forms a complicated network of interlocking compartments, while on the Fermo chasuble the medallions are set side by side, interlinked by small roundels which overlap their borders. The interstices on all three are filled with eight-pointed motifs, and the large roundels have double borders, 'beaded' with applied coils of gold thread (on the Suaire this technique is also used to adorn the horses' harnesses).

The Oña embroidery has been most frequently assigned to the tenth century, specifically to the patronage of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, through stylistic comparisons but mainly through the interpretations of the single medallion which contains a human figure (Figure 137A). This has been widely considered by scholars to be a 'portrait' of a significant ancestor of the first caliph: for Manuel Casamar and Juan Zozaya, it depicted Mu'āwiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, while for Miriam Ali-de-Unzaga it depicts 'Abd al-Raḥmān I, the first independent Umayyad amir to rule in al-Andalus, with whom 'Abd al-Raḥmān III drew deliberate parallels. Both studies see this portrait of a significant ancestor to have been used as a legitimising device at the time of 'Abd al-Raḥmān's declaration of the caliphate,

date and in the same workshop. I am grateful to Ana Cabrera for discussing this with me and bringing this article to my attention.

57 On this textile, the key studies are Fernández-Puertas 1977; Casamar and Zozaya 1991; Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 2012b, 2017.

58 On this textile, the key studies are Storm Rice 1959; Ciampini 2000, 2009; Shalem 2017.

underlining his claim to his rightful inheritance as Umayyad caliph. In contrast, Sophie Makariou had identified this figure as 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr, on the basis that she saw a large signet ring on the extended finger of one of the hands; this was one of the emblems of office worn by the Umayyad rulers, and since – according to her argument – these attributes had been usurped by the 'Āmirids, this must therefore be a portrait of the 'Āmirid commissioner of this textile.⁵⁹ However, in the recently-published colour images of this embroidery, it is clear that what Makariou read as a signet ring is part of the decoration of the figure's clothing, which the extended finger points across.

In any case, I would be wary of accepting the figure depicted here as a 'portrait' of a specific historical figure. It is true, as Ali-de-Unzaga points out, that it is only through lack of evidence that Islamic art historians have tended to understand depictions of people in medieval art as models or metaphors, rather than physically accurate representations of specific people.⁶⁰ But her arguments, though suggestive, are not totally convincing: a beard on a man is a standard device denoting maturity and authority; that the figure only has one eye stems from the fact that he is represented in fully profile position, an unusual and possibly significant aspect. This pose is not seen on any of the seated figures on the Cordoban ivories, who are usually depicted frontally, though the use of profile is often seen in the depiction of riders. Finally, the two plaits that Ali-de-Unzaga identifies as falling down his back are not at all clear: these match the colour of his turban rather than his hair, and would more easily be understood as the tails of his headcovering. None of the remaining attributes are sufficient to establish that this medallion contains a portrait, be it of Mu'āwiya, 'Abd al-Raḥmān I or 'Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr.

Other motifs on the textile, however – in particular, the bird of prey that rides on the back of a horse, which occurs in five medallions on the

59 Makariou 2001, 55.

60 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 565.

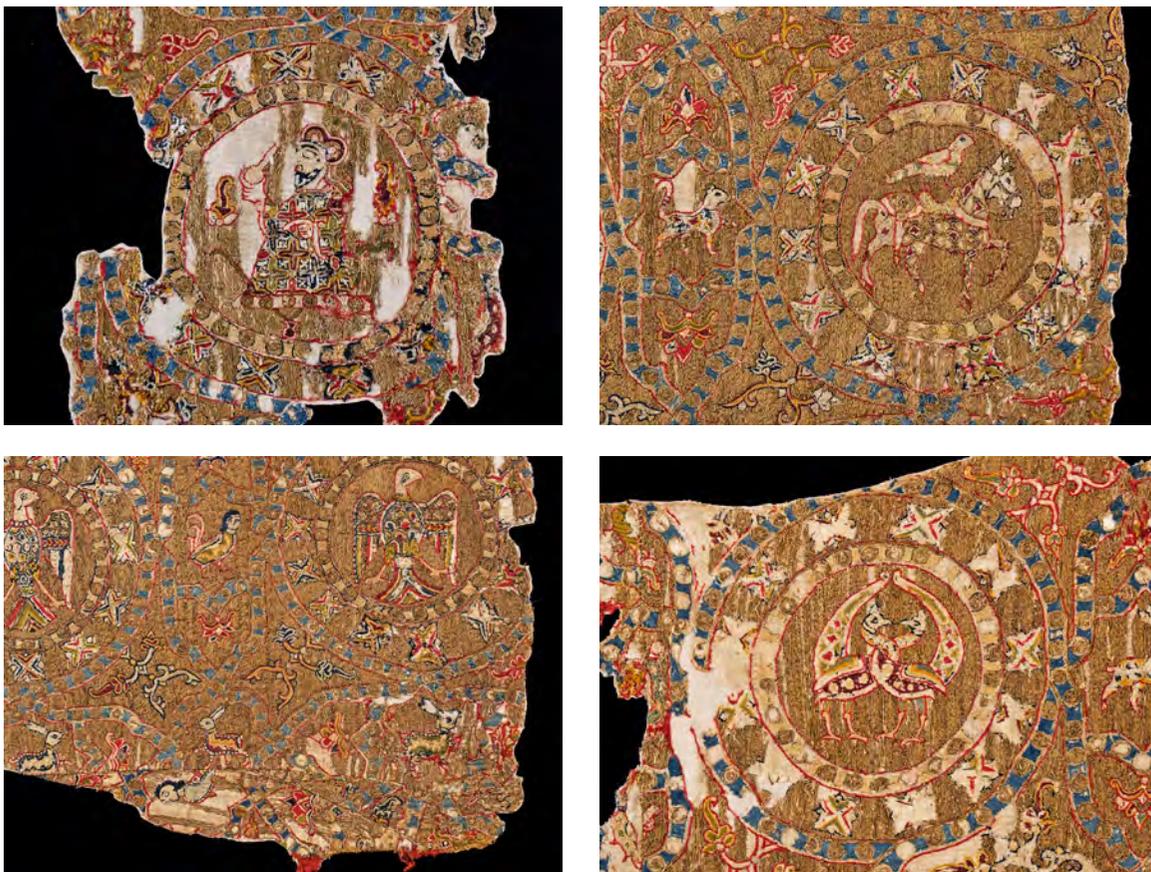


FIGURE 137 Embroidery from the Monastery of San Salvador de Oña, tenth century, silk and gold thread; details of various motifs: A. medallion with seated ruler; B. bird on horseback; C. heraldic eagles and harpy; D. peacocks with entwined necks

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Oña silk (Figure 137B) – relate more to eleventh-century contexts. This motif is unusual and is only otherwise known from Andalusí green-and-brown ceramics, the best-known example being a bowl found during excavations of the Taifa city of Madinat Ilbira (Elvira), near Granada.⁶¹ Technical studies might provide a more objective understanding of this textile. Ali-de-Unzaga notes the correlation between the gold content of the metal thread used on the Oña embroidery, and that of

the dinars minted by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III.⁶² While this is certainly suggestive, it does not lead to the conclusion that the textile was woven during ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s caliphate, since the gold coins could have been hammered into leaf to make gold-wrapped thread at a later date, especially in times of gold shortage (Chapters 1, 6).

While noting that it was tailored in its later Christian context, Ali-de-Unzaga nevertheless associates the original Islamic textile with clothing, ‘a rectangular mantle or cape of the type *rida*

61 *Al-Andalus* 234–235, cat. 28.

62 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 563–4; 2012b, 6, citing Canto García 1994.

makrūma.⁶³ But with so much gold thread lying on the surface of the embroidery, this textile would have been immensely heavy, and the large circular roundels, which have an external diameter of 20 cm, imply that its design could be admired from a distance. Could the Oña embroidery, again, have been a wall or tent hanging or other item of soft furnishing? Was it associated with one of the Umayyad army's campaign tents, for example, which might have continued in use under the 'Āmirids? If the Oña embroidery is tenth-century, it offers a stylistic, technical and functional model for the Suaire de Saint Lazare – an especially significant model if it had been made for the first Umayyad caliph.

In discussing the means by which this embroidery might have found its way from Cordoba to Oña, Ali-de-Unzaga proposes an association with the 'Āmirids.⁶⁴ The Monastery of San Salvador was founded in 1011 by Sancho García (r. 995–1017), third Count of Castile, son of García Fernández who had offered such resistance to the 'Āmirids. As we saw in Chapter 2, Sancho rebelled against his father around 994, likely with al-Manṣūr's support, and was offered sanctuary in Cordoba – his arrival was one of the events celebrated by Ibn Darrāj's panegyric poetry. Sancho broke off relations with Cordoba in 1000 to join the Christian coalition of that year, but signed a truce with 'Abd al-Malik (now *ḥājib*) in 1003, until 1007 when 'Abd al-Malik defeated him at Clunia. As mentioned by Echevarría, there is also a possibility that Sancho's sister, Oñega, was given to al-Manṣūr as a wife or concubine. These relations between the County of Castile and the 'Āmirid *ḥujjāb* could thus provide one means by which the embroidery changed hands, but Ali-de-Unzaga does not attempt to explain how the embroidery came into 'Āmirid possession in the first place. Another, perhaps more likely occasion for the embroidery to have changed hands was the relationship between 'Abd al-Raḥmān III and Toda of Navarra, who was his

paternal aunt through her mother's marriage to the Umayyad amir 'Abd Allāh (r. 888–912). Glair Anderson has discussed the diplomatic activity between these two blood relations, which may have resulted in the creation in the Cordoban ateliers of the magnificent ivory processional cross from San Millán de la Cogolla (see below, 4.1.4), given Toda's patronage of that monastery.⁶⁵ Toda was also Sancho's great grandmother,⁶⁶ and it is conceivable that a gift from 'Abd al-Raḥmān to Toda of a luxury textile likewise from the caliphal ateliers could have passed down through the generations to be part of the founding donation to the Monastery at Oña.

The silk and gold textile from which the Fermo chasuble was made is at first sight a simpler tale (Figure 138). It features a long inscription that was read by Storm Rice as including the significant information that it was dated 510/1116, and made in Almería, the city which became the main textile producing centre under the Almoravids and Almohads.⁶⁷ This reading of the inscription has recently been called into doubt, however, and it has been suggested that this information no longer stands.⁶⁸ The dating of the textile thus falls back on stylistic comparisons, though Regula Schorta's technical analysis of the base silk dates its double weft-faced technique between the 1030s and 1120s: the embroidery would obviously be later.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Shalem advances a hypothesis for the textile's creation that places it at the very earliest of that date range. He associates it with the 'Abbādids' claim in 1035 to have rediscovered the

63 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 567; 2012b, 3.

64 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 568–9.

65 Anderson 2014.

66 Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 569.

67 Storm Rice 1959.

68 Shalem 2017, 60–65, "Arabic inscriptions reread". The conclusion is unsatisfactory as the condition of the embroidery does not allow for a clear reading. It was shown to various epigraphists (none of whom was a specialist in Andalusī epigraphy). Abdullah Ghouchani initially read the date of 510H and the word al-Mariyya, but subsequently withdrew his reading.

69 Apud Shalem 2017, 77, "The embroidery of the Fermo chasuble reconsidered – reconstruction of original shape".



FIGURE 138 Chasuble in Fermo Cathedral, made from embroidered silk and gold thread, probably Almería, twelfth century; detail of the roundels depicting horseman
© JEREMY JOHNS

caliph Hishām II, a myth that was promulgated by the dynasty's founder Abū'l-Qāsim (r. 1023–42) and his son al-Mu'tadid (r. 1042–1069) as a means of legitimising their claim to be the new *ḥujjāb* of al-Andalus, a claim that was accepted by many minor Taifa states.⁷⁰ He suggests that the textile was a canopy, tent or pavilion created for the inauguration ceremony of Hishām's reappearance, to 'accentuate his presence, even if displayed empty'. Another inscription on the textile, which was not read by Rice, appears to read 'Allāh naṣratahah wa hafazahah wa hamahah', 'Allah make its victory and keep it and protect it', which Shalem interprets as bestowing the textile with a 'protective and almost amuletic character ... transmit[ting] the desired power of the imagined image of Hishām as protector of the 'Abbāids'. The textile could have been produced in the 'Abbāid

70 Shalem 2017, 95, "The textile contextualized". On the historical circumstances of the fictive Hishām, see this book's Conclusion.

capital, Seville, or it could have been received as one of the 'luxurious tributes presented by other courts'. We know that regional textile production centres were operating since the calphal period at Seville, as well as at Zaragoza and Almería,⁷¹ perhaps utilising craftsmen and materials brought from Cordoba during the Fitna. Shalem even postulates that the Cordoban Dār al-Ṭirāz could still have been active under the Jahwarids. It is plausible that a luxurious embroidered textile could have been produced at one of these Taifa states at this date, and thus might reasonably betray some ʿĀmirid influences, in technique as well as style.

As on the other two embroideries, the compartments are filled with birds and quadrupeds, but there appears to be a greater variety of designs on the Fermo piece, and the figural details are drawn in a less naive, clearer and more sophisticated way, which is almost naturalistic in some cases. The motifs that fill the large roundels are monumental,

71 Rodríguez Peinado 2012, 276.

filling the space in a way that they do not on the Oña silk or the Suaire de Saint Lazare. The griffin that fills one of the large roundels is almost classical in its grandeur. The motif of the eagle alighting on its prey bears no stylistic relationship to the depiction of that motif on the other two embroideries; the birds and quadrupeds in the small roundels seem stylistically distinct from those textiles as well. A row of roundels contains mounted falcons on horseback, as on the Suaire, but unlike on that silk these figures are extremely well 'drawn', with clear poses and facial features, better proportioned horses, a vegetal setting and small quadrupeds, which evoke the natural world in which they are setting off for the hunt. They are much more sophisticated than the rather naive horsemen on the Suaire. Instead of all processing in one direction, the roundels appear in mirror-image pairs, so that horsemen or eagles in contiguous roundels face each other. This appears to reflect the organisation of the designs of woven silks of the Almoravid period,⁷² and indeed the stylistic comparison to twelfth-century silks woven at Almería is much closer than to the embroidered motifs on the Oña silk or Suaire de Saint Lazare.

Technically and stylistically, there is just too much of a difference between these embroideries and one apparently made only a few decades later, potentially even by the same weavers. Indeed, if we compare the Fermo textile to an embroidered silk-and-gold-thread textile that could reasonably have been produced in Seville in the mid-eleventh century, they are very different objects. This is the textile which lines the lid of the reliquary casket of San Isidoro in León.⁷³ This saint's relics were translated from Seville in 1063, and the historical sources record that at the moment of departure,

72 Rodríguez Peinado 2012, 278, though she goes on to say 'aunque no podemos descartar que en el tiraz califal se realizaran también estos tejidos caracterizados por su decoración basada en sistemas especulares con animales reales o fantásticos confrontados incluidos en círculos perlados'.

73 *Art of Medieval Spain* 239–244, cat. 110: see p. 240 for an image of the textile lining the lid.

the Taifa ruler threw a luxurious silk and gold textile over the relics, as a farewell gift.⁷⁴ It is plausible to assume that this account contains the memory of wrapping the relics for transport in a precious locally-obtained textile; such a wrapping would later have been considered a 'contact relic', and we can thus imagine that it was reused as part of the lining when a new and special casket was made to house the relics upon arrival in León. This is somewhat circumstantial, but nevertheless may suggest what a mid-eleventh-century embroidery from Seville might look like: it is nothing like the Fermo chasuble. As such, I have no difficulty in accepting the Fermo embroidery as a product of the more developed textile production industry at Almería, operating under Almoravid patronage by the beginning of the twelfth century, as Storm Rice originally concluded.

2.5 *An Āmirid Minbar for the al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque? (Appendix 4.17)*

A final object that 'Abd al-Malik is said to have commissioned was a new minbar for the al-Qarawiyyīn mosque in Fez, installed in 395/1005. This does not survive, as it was superseded by the minbar commissioned for that mosque by 'Alī ibn Yūsuf ibn Tashfīn one hundred and fifty years later.⁷⁵ However, it is described by the Marinid historian Ibn Abī Zar' (d. 1340 or 1341) in his *Rawḍ al-Qirtās*, who transmits the text of the minbar's dedicatory inscription.⁷⁶ The formulae used are strikingly close to those of the Andalusīyyīn minbar (1.1), perhaps suspiciously so, even down to the fact that both were manufactured in the month of Jumāda II. Was the historian confusing the two, or did 'Abd al-Malik's minbar for the Qarawiyyīn mosque deliberately reference that commissioned by his father exactly twenty years before? Another cautionary note about the authenticity of Ibn Abī Zar's account is the fact that 'Abd al-Malik only received the title al-Muzaffar in 1007, two years

74 Rosser-Owen 2015, 53.

75 *Maroc Médiéval* 198–9, cat. 101.

76 Lévi-Provençal 1931, 196 (#221).

after the apparent dedication of this minbar. The remarks presented here thus remain speculative, though given what we know of ʿAbd al-Malik's patronage at the Qarawiyyīn mosque, discussed below, it is conceivable that he commissioned a minbar, in honour of and as a pair to that installed under his father's auspices at the Andalusīyyīn mosque.

The first noteworthy aspect of the inscription is that it credits the commission of the minbar to the caliph Hishām himself, but refers to him in terms that allude to al-Muẓaffar's deceased father in strikingly patent ways. Hishām is called 'caliph al-Manṣūr, Sword of Islam (*Sayf al-Islām*)', whereas al-Manṣūr himself was described as *Sayf al-Dawla* on the Andalusīyyīn minbar – a title which makes a clear distinction between the secular state (*dawla*) and the faith (*dīn*), which is the preserve of the divinely appointed ruler. Where the Andalusīyyīn inscription (Appendix 4.4) stated that al-Manṣūr commissioned the minbar *on behalf of* the caliph – who, significantly, is called imam there rather than caliph – this inscription clearly states that ʿAbd al-Malik's role in the Qarawiyyīn minbar was as supervisor of the work: 'under the direction of *his ḥājib*'. We can certainly imagine that the commission was entirely due to ʿAbd al-Malik's own initiative, but it is striking that he represents himself here as subservient to the caliph, in contrast to his father two decades before, who placed *himself* in the role of commissioner of the Andalusīyyīn minbar. On the other hand, the phrase 'may Allah the Most High bring *them* complete success!' puts the two men on a par – as if Hishām was able to conduct successful military campaigns alongside his *ḥājib*. Moreover, ʿAbd al-Malik legitimises himself as *ḥājib* by giving his full name and titles, and underlining his relationship with his father: 'Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar ibn Muḥammad al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir'.

Ibn Abī Zarʿ also records that the minbar was made from ebony and jujube.⁷⁷ Ebony is given as one of the precious woods from which the inlaid

panels were made that decorated the minbar commissioned by al-Ḥakam II for the Great Mosque of Cordoba, while jujube is a fruiting tree producing a reddish brown wood, which was used in the panels of the Kutubiyya minbar.⁷⁸ These materials associate the ʿĀmirid minbar for Qarawiyyīn with the Cordoba minbar, which was famous in its own day, and suggest that it had similar decoration, based on the chromatic contrast of panels carved from different precious woods. Given ʿAbd al-Malik's patronage of ivories at just this time, it is possible that its decoration would have included carved panels of ivory as well.

In 998, seven years before this new minbar was apparently installed, ʿAbd al-Malik had undertaken to embellish the Qarawiyyīn mosque.⁷⁹ He installed a marble basin near one of the entrance gates, which was fed with water from a nearby tributary; in 1968, there was still in this location an ablutions room supplied by a canal system. Could this be the remains of this ʿĀmirid construction, understatedly described in the sources as a 'marble basin'? If so, it calls to mind the ablutions pavilion that his father was constructing at the Cordoba Mosque at exactly this time: as we saw in Chapter 5, the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus* dates the completion of al-Manṣūr's 'hydraulic complexes' to the year 390/999–1000.⁸⁰ The mention of a marble basin, however, calls to mind the ʿĀmirid basins described above. Two of these are now in Morocco: ʿAbd al-Malik's own basin, which was recovered in Marrakesh (2.3.1), and the fragment of another basin which was later used to make a Marinid tombstone for the necropolis at Shāla, Rabat (4.2.2, Figures 94–96). These basins may well have been brought from Cordoba by the Almoravids in the early twelfth century, at the same time as they apparently transported a considerable number of columns and capitals from Madīnat al-Zahrā';⁸¹ however, the mention in the sources of a marble

77 Lévi-Provençal 1931, 196.

78 Bloom 1998, 22, 73.

79 Terrasse 1968, 5–15.

80 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:40 [11:46]; Pinilla Melguizo 1998.

81 Rosser-Owen 2014; *Maroc Médiéval* 394–6.

basin added by ‘Abd al-Malik to the Qarawiyyīn mosque also raises the possibility that he could have transported the basins himself. Was the basin for the mosque likewise designed and carved in the Cordoban Dār al-Šinā’a? Of course its design would have been somewhat different from those ‘Āmirid basins with which we are familiar, as its role as an ablutions fountain would have made the use of figurative scenes inappropriate.

In addition to an intervention that can easily be understood as a pious work – improving the mosque’s infrastructure – ‘Abd al-Malik is also said to have made a more decorative, even symbolic, intervention. He constructed a dome above the axial nave at the entrance to the prayer hall, and on top of (inside?) this dome he affixed talismanic sculptures, in the form of a rat, a scorpion and a serpent; it seems these had previously been fixed to the mihrab dome, and Terrasse believed they were ‘certainly made’ during the Fatimid domination of Fez.⁸² It is difficult to make sense of this strange anecdote. To start with, when could the Fatimids – or their Idrīsīd or Zīrid clients – have added these talismanic sculptures to the mosque? It could feasibly have been during the five-year occupation (980–5) after which the Umayyad recovery of the city was celebrated by al-Manṣūr’s commissioning of the Andalusīyyīn minbar. If so, surely any Fatimid symbols would have been cleansed from the Qarawiyyīn at the same time, especially if they had been installed in the mosque’s mihrab zone. Not only was this the key focus of prayer in the mosque – where the Umayyads would certainly have wanted to proclaim the return of Sunnism – but this zone had been part of an enlargement of the mosque undertaken in 956 by Fez’s Zanāta governors, under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s patronage.⁸³ They did not extend in front of the qibla wall, so that the mihrab stayed where it was, while the mosque was extended by several bays to the east, west and north. Nevertheless, the recent excavations inside

the mosque, in the area of the original qibla wall, have revealed fragments of carved plaster, with Qur’anic inscriptions in a simple Kufic script, and deeply carved vegetal designs, whose style and technique recall tenth-century Cordoban carving, such as the ivories. These probably come from the Zanāta refurbishment of the mihrab in the 950s.⁸⁴ At the same time, a new minaret, symbolically equivalent to that added to the Cordoba Mosque a few years before, was constructed in the courtyard, proclaiming the mosque’s new Umayyad identity (Figure 44).

If these possibly-Fatimid talismanic sculptures had been removed on the Umayyads’ reconquest of Fez in 985, perhaps ‘Abd al-Malik chose to display them as symbolic of the continued Umayyad control of Fez. Significantly, his interventions at the Qarawiyyīn Mosque were undertaken in the wake of his victory over Zīrī ibn ‘Aṭīyya, who had rebelled against Cordoba’s suzerainty, supposedly in protest at al-Manṣūr’s control of the caliphate at Hishām’s expense (Chapter 1). ‘Abd al-Malik was sent to confront him, in a battle that ‘reached epic proportions’.⁸⁵ As Xavier Ballestín comments, ‘Abd al-Malik’s victory over Zīrī ‘was the moment of greatest apogee for the ‘Āmirid *dawla*’.⁸⁶ ‘Abd al-Malik’s embellishments at Qarawiyyīn should be understood in the light of this significant victory, and of Umayyad policy in North Africa more

82 Terrasse 1968, 15.

83 Terrasse 1968, 12–14.

84 Ahmed Saleh Ettahiri, ‘La Qarawiyyin de Fès: solennité et magnificence d’une mosquée’, in *Maroc Médiéval*, 193–195, cats. 29–33, 98–100, 103–110. Further information about the excavations is given at pp. 193–7, in the context of the Almoravid expansion in 1134. Houses were uncovered with well-preserved and highly-sophisticated geometric and epigraphic decoration in red painting on plaster (cats. 98–100), and deeply carved three-dimensional plaster ornament (cats. 103–110). The dating of these fragments is not certain, apart from a broad chronology of 950–1130. Did the craftsmen come from Cordoba? It is hoped that Ettahiri’s article currently in press will resolve some of these issues.

85 Ballestín 2004a, 176.

86 Ballestín 2004a, 202.

broadly, as physically and visually marking the Umayyad/ʿĀmirid recovery of Fez.

These ‘talismanic sculptures’ may have had some special significance in this expression of victory, but it seems more likely that they had a practical, amuletic function. Rats, scorpions and snakes were very real, dangerous and troublesome pests, and are regularly depicted on medieval personal talismans, individually as well as in combination with each other.⁸⁷ The *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm (Picatrix)* – written in Cordoba around the middle of the tenth century⁸⁸ – contains many prescriptions for making talismans and amulets to repel rats, scorpions and serpents. These apotropaic images would not be out of place in a sacred context such as the Qarawiyyīn Mosque. By moving them to the new dome at the entrance to the prayer hall, placing them in a new liminal location, ʿAbd al-Malik was reinforcing the protective power of these amuletic sculptures over the building as a whole.⁸⁹

ʿAbd al-Malik’s interventions at the Qarawiyyīn Mosque should be viewed as a continuum of al-Manṣūr’s policy in extending the Great Mosque of Cordoba – a project that was still ongoing at the time – he was working on the caliph’s behalf, for the benefit of his people. In the case of Fez, we might imagine that ʿAbd al-Malik wanted to re-emphasise the Umayyad messages added to the mosque during the Zanāta extension of the 950s, after the period of Fatimid occupation and the threat of loss during Zīrī’s rebellion. As such, it would make sense that also in 998 ʿAbd al-Malik ordered the manufacture of a new Umayyad minbar, which took until 1005 to complete. In comparison, al-Idrīsī noted that al-Ḥakam’s minbar for the Córdoba Mosque took six craftsmen and their apprentices seven years to make; while Bloom has calculated that the production of the carved

panels for the Kutubiyya minbar would alone have required four craftsmen working continuously for five years.⁹⁰ If, as seems likely from Ibn Abī Zar’s account, the lost Qarawiyyīn minbar was constructed from individual carved panels on the model of the Córdoba and Kutubiyya minbars, it would not be unlikely that it took around seven years to manufacture. Might the Qarawiyyīn minbar have replaced another that bore unsuitably Fatimid formulae? Might it have been made in Cordoba and shipped to Fez, as was the Almoravid minbar? If so, its Cordoban manufacture and decoration – crafted in a Dār al-Ṣināʿa under ʿĀmirid control – would represent an even stronger statement of Umayyad control over Fez at this period.

3 Objects Associated with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ‘Sanchuelo’

3.1 *The ‘Ashmolean’ Pyxis (Dated 389/999, Figures 139–141, Appendix 4.10)*

The only extant object that can be explicitly associated with al-Manṣūr’s youngest son is the lid, now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, of an ivory pyxis whose body remains in a private collection.⁹¹ It is still unresolved whether the body of the pyxis should be considered as an authentic product of the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Ṣināʿa or, as Manuel Gómez-Moreno believed, was a fake, perhaps a product of the Valencian ivory carver, Francisco Pallás y Puig (1859–1926).⁹² If the body of the pyxis was the work of Pallás, it would be the only known Andalusī-style piece by him to

87 Porter, Saif and Savage-Smith 2017.

88 Fierro 1996c argues that its author was Maslama ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964).

89 I am grateful to Moya Carey and Liana Saif for discussing this unusual anecdote with me and confirming this interpretation.

90 Bloom 1998, 21 and n. 33.

91 Inv. EA.1987.3, dimensions: 10–10.5 (Diam) × 4 (max. H) cm × 9–15 mm (varying thickness of ivory); weight 200 g. Breck 1923; Gómez-Moreno 1927, 240–241, figs. 37, 38; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 189 (#203); Allan 1987a, 1987b; Rosser-Owen 1999; Rosser-Owen 2005, 257–8, 260.

92 Gómez-Moreno 1927, 240–241; Rosser-Owen 2005, esp. 257. Gómez-Moreno’s objections were mainly to errors in the inscription on the lid, but he is mistaken himself in some of them, understandable perhaps since he only studied the object in photographs.



FIGURE 139
Lid of the pyxis made for 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo, 999, ivory: overall view; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. EA.1987.3
© ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



FIGURE 140
Lid of the pyxis made for 'Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo: inscription showing the patron's name exactly at the front
© ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



FIGURE 141
Expanded view of the pyxis associated with the Ashmolean lid, private collection; after Breck 1923

be carved with decoration of human figures. In fact, in comparison with the skilful handling of his Gothic-style pieces, the figurative decoration on the pyxis body is clumsy. His tendency was to base his designs on known objects in Spanish museums, and there is no parallel for the designs on the pyxis body. Could it actually be authentic? The inscription on the lid dates the commission to 389/999, making this the first extant ivory since the production of the Ziyād ibn Aflaḥ pyxis thirty years earlier. Sanchuelo's pyxis thus potentially indicates the revival of the Andalusi ivory carving industry. Though we can no longer rely on the textual description that '8000 pounds of ivory' were given by Zīrī ibn ʿAṭīyya to al-Manṣūr in 994, such a means of supply is most likely, especially since the ʿĀmirids were now masters of the trans-Saharan trade routes (Chapter 2). Could its clumsy carving represent a first attempt by a new generation of carvers, unfamiliar with the material and unused to carving human figures? When we think that this pyxis dates from only five years before that virtuoso example of ivory carving, the Pamplona casket (2.1), its somewhat experimental and clumsily handled carving is surprising. Could it have been carved by apprentices? Nevertheless, some features of this pyxis, especially of its lid, are very innovative, while several motifs on the pyxis body find parallels in other ʿĀmirid ivories, in particular the Pamplona casket. This might suggest it should perhaps not be totally written off as a fake, at least not without a detailed physical inspection and perhaps scientific analysis of the ivory material.

The most innovative feature is the free-flowing decoration of the lid, where the horsemen ride unencumbered by any framework separating them from the vegetal ground. In other Andalusi pyxides, the decoration on the lid tends to follow that of the body, so if the body has a medalion structure, so does the lid – see the Mughīra and Ziyād pyxides, for example (Figures 3, 12, 171). However, the Braga pyxis (2.2) – the only other extant ʿĀmirid pyxis – has decoration in roundels on its lid, while its body decoration, though compartmentalised, has its decoration arranged

around an architectonic framework of horseshoe arches. Further, while the arches and roundels on the body of the Braga pyxis are round, the medalions on the lid are lobed. There is thus a notable difference between the arrangement on body and lid. On the non-figurative ivory pyxides, the decoration of the lids is not contained within a framework, and neither is it on the only two surviving Taifa pyxides.⁹³ However in all these cases, the style of the body is carried over into the lid, which is not the case on the two ʿĀmirid pyxides. This playful undermining of the usual formal relationship between lid and body can be noted as a characteristic of the ivories made for ʿĀmirid patrons, and recalls the way in which the capitals discussed in Chapter 4 also undermined traditional structural models.

The second noteworthy aspect of Sanchuelo's pyxis lid is the careful disposition of the inscription so that the patron's name appears exactly at the front of the lid (Figure 140). Not only that, but the long full name provided – *līʾ-wazīr abū al-muṭarrif ibn al-manṣūr abī ʿāmir muḥammad ibn abī ʿāmir* – occupies the full frontal space of the lid. This makes it unique among the ivories: the only other comparable instance of this is, again, the Braga pyxis where 'Sayf al-Dawla' appears near the front – but it should be cautioned that no space has been left for mounts in the carving of the Braga pyxis, and thus we cannot be sure where the 'front' of the lid actually was. In fact the lack of space for mounts is also seen on the Pamplona casket, and might be another feature of ʿĀmirid ivories. On Sanchuelo's pyxis, the focus on the front of the pyxis and on the patron's name is enhanced by the downward pointing spears and gaze of the horsemen on either side of the mountstrap. The flow of the inscription and decoration creates a circularity of vision that keeps bringing our gaze back to the front, directing the viewer's attention to the contents of the pyxis and encouraging them to open

93 Those in Narbonne Cathedral and the David Collection: see Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cat. 30; Makariou 1999; *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cats. 26, 28.

it.⁹⁴ The decoration of the pyxis contributes to this focus on the opening point: the horsemen of the two flanking medallions and the animals in the interstices all direct the viewer's attention to the central medallion with the court scene. This sits just below the patron's name on the lid. This circularity of vision – where the eye is arrested and made to follow back down towards a focal point of the decoration – is also seen on the rectangular casket in Doha (Figures 145–146), and may thus be another characteristic of 'Āmirid ivory carving – but it is first used on Sanchuelo's pyxis.

The central medallion on the body shows a court scene, as on the Ziyād pyxis (Figure 12), but here it is small-scale, squeezed in under the lock-plate in a manner similar to the central medallion on the front of the Pamplona casket, but much less skilfully handled. There is no obvious difference in scale between the seated central figure and his two attendants. The seated figure is also turbaned, which is unusual in the Andalusi ivories, where men go bare-headed. As noted above, several of the riders on the Suaire de Saint Lazare wear head-gear, so this may be a feature introduced in the late tenth century; turbaned figures also appear on the Xâtiva basin (3.2), which has also been associated with Sanchuelo, as we will discuss in a moment. Turbaned figures are also seen on the openwork ivory panels that are thought to have been made in Fatimid Egypt, though these are generally dated somewhat later, to the eleventh–twelfth centuries; the decoration of these likewise plays out across the surface without being contained in a framework.⁹⁵ Could we be starting to see some Fatimid stylistic influences here? Interestingly, this medallion with its court scene is flanked by 'royal' animals: a peacock on each side at the top, paired griffins at bottom left, paired lions bottom right.

The free-flowing, dynamic style of the lid contrasts with the static decoration of the body, where

the horsemen are locked rather uncomfortably into their medallions. The rider to the left of the central medallion – who holds his hawk behind him – is quite similar to that on the Fermo chasuble. The emphasis on horsemen in the decoration of the body mirrors that of the lid: was its patron, Sanchuelo, particularly keen on hunting? On the lid, the horsemen hunt gazelles and cheetahs – are these the first cheetahs we have seen in Andalusi art? The frontal turned-up face of the animal (another cheetah?) that attacks the horseman to the right of the central medallion on the body is reminiscent of the lions on the 'Āmirid marble basins, but is not handled particularly well. The interstices of the body's medallions show affronted pairs of griffins, lions, and, unusually, cockerels with very prominent tails, for which I have found no obvious parallels – apart, again, from Fatimid art, where the cockerel appears on lustreware.⁹⁶ Stylistically there are a number of connections with the Pamplona casket: peacocks with leaf-like tails appear on the short ends of the Pamplona casket's lid, and in the upper interstices flanking the court scene on Sanchuelo's pyxis; the concentric pattern of pinprick-like dots on the round shields held by the two horsemen to the left of the mountstrap on the pyxis lid is seen on the shield held by the left-hand horseman in the back left medallion of the Pamplona casket.

Finally, the epigraphy of Sanchuelo's pyxis lid contains some interesting characteristics. It conforms to a standard set of formulae used in other objects made for members of the 'Āmirid dynasty. In particular, the phrase *naṣr wa ta'yīd*, 'victory and support', as part of the blessing, together with the related invocation *ayyada-hu allāh*, 'may Allah support or strengthen him!', recurs on several 'Āmirid inscriptions, especially the marble

94 This concept is discussed in detail in Rosser-Owen 1999, esp. p. 25.

95 Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, inv. I 6375; *Trésors* cat. 81; Hoffman 1999.

96 For example, the famous bowl in the Keir Collection with the scene of a cockfight: see Grube 1976, 138–142, cat. 88 (plate facing p.136). Cockerels do appear in Iberian Christian art, such as the Antiphonary of León (fol. 6r), which has been dated to both the early and late tenth century (my thanks to Rose Walker for bringing this to my attention).

basins made for al-Manṣūr and ʿAbd al-Malik. As we will discuss further in Chapter 8, in the context of the semantics of ʿĀmirid epigraphy, this phrase seems to have been adopted as a deliberate pairing of words whose roots encoded the throne-names of both the caliph Hishām II and his *ḥājib* al-Manṣūr, and thus became a sort of dynastic motto. The usage of this phrase – whose ʿĀmirid significance has never been noted before – can finally lay to rest the doubts over authenticity raised by Gómez-Moreno, at least as far as the lid is concerned.

There is no obvious event that we know of from the historical sources that occurred to Sanchuelo in 999. He is named on the lid as *wazīr*, but this was an office he had held since 991, when he was only 9 years old.⁹⁷ In 999, Sanchuelo would have been about 17: perhaps he got married in that year? He is known to have left a young son, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, when he died in 1010. If so, it would be interesting to speculate that the gifting of ivory pyxides on the occasion of rites of passage was not exclusive to women; whereas, however, the ivories made for women have a predominantly vegetal decoration, referencing fertility and the female role to continue the dynastic line, the decoration of Sanchuelo's pyxis highlights the manly pursuit of hunting, as well as his familial association with the *ḥijāba*, through motifs such as the griffin.

3.2 *The Xàtiva Basin (Figures 142–143)*

Another object that has been associated with Sanchuelo is the Xàtiva basin, an object about which there has been considerable debate regarding its date and place of manufacture.⁹⁸ This basin features no inscription and can therefore only be attributed on stylistic grounds but, as various

scholars have noted, its style and unusual iconography are markedly different from other objects known to have been made in al-Andalus in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Dodds, for example, notes that 'such a lively and densely populated composition is unusual in al-Andalus', while Guardia remarks on the 'narrative and anecdotal character' of the figurative scenes, in contrast to those on the Andalusian ivories.⁹⁹ Several scholars have pointed to the art of Fatimid Egypt as a source for the style and model for the scenes: Guardia highlights the 'development of a free, narrative and naturalistic figurative language in Fatimid art', which is closely comparable to the decoration of this basin, while Fernando Valdés even suggested it could be a Fatimid import.¹⁰⁰ However, the basin is made from 'Buixarró rosa', a recrystallised limestone sourced from the quarries of the Serra del Buixarró, only 30 km from Xàtiva, and a stone that was widely used in official buildings in the Valencia region, such as the fifteenth-century Lonja de la Seda in the city of Valencia itself.¹⁰¹ This fact is the most compelling reason for accepting the basin as an Andalusian-made object, indeed produced in this precise region, though the question of when remains open for discussion.

The association with Sanchuelo is tenuous, derived from the presence of large headgear on some of the figures: Cynthia Robinson associated this with the infamous anecdote in which Sanchuelo 'obliged his ministers to wear Berber-style turbans when in his presence at court' – the so-called 'event of the turbans' of 1009 (Chapter 1).¹⁰² This can be compared with the seated figure under the lockplate on Sanchuelo's ivory pyxis (3.1, Figure 141), who also wears a turban. There are other stylistic or formal

97 HEM II:242.

98 Museo del Almodí, Xàtiva (prov. Valencia), inv. A25, dimensions: 1.69 m (L) × 67 (W) × 41.9 (H). Bibliography: Gómez-Moreno 1951, 274, figs. 329–30; Baer 1970; *Al-Andalus*, 261–3, cat. 49; *Art of Medieval Spain* 92–93, cat. 37; *Año Mil, Año Dos Mil* 215–6; Guardia 2004 (my thanks to Rose Walker for bringing this article to my attention).

99 Guardia 2004, 105.

100 Guardia 2004, 109; *Año Mil, Año Dos Mil* 215–6.

101 Guardia 2004, 100; Kröner et al, 2007.

102 Cynthia Robinson made this argument in a section that was cut from the essay that became Robinson 2007, where she cited Dickie, *El Dīwān*, 21–22; *Bayān*, III, 43–46. I am grateful to her for letting me cite this unpublished suggestion.



FIGURE 142
 Xàtiva basin, 1020–70, Buixcarró
 rosa; overall view; Museo del
 Almodí, Xàtiva, inv. A25
 © ABIGAIL KRASNER BALBALE



FIGURE 143
 Xàtiva basin, details: A. garden
 majlis scene; B. jongleurs
 © ABIGAIL KRASNER BALBALE

connections with ʿĀmirid works of art. The way in which the narrative scenes play out in friezes, interrupted occasionally by medallions, recalls the free-flowing decoration on the lid of Sanchuelo's ivory pyxis. One of the roundels contains the motif of affronted peacocks with necks entwined, which recurs on the early eleventh-century ivory casket in the V&A (4.1.2, Figure 155C). In another roundel we see the lion in combat with a gazelle, which also recurs on one of the basin's short ends: though somewhat clumsier in execution, the full-frontal face of the lion, and its use at the short end, evokes the ʿĀmirid marble basins. Next to this motif is that of affronted goats in combat, which is otherwise seen in the interstices of the al-Mughīra pyxis. At the opposite short end, on either side of a wide hole, where a metal fountain head and its pipe must originally have been attached, are seen large birds of prey attacking deer: the relative scale of the animals here recalls the way this motif is depicted on the Fermo chasuble, though the birds have scaly bodies, and are rendered in a way that recalls the central medallion on the Pamplona casket lid. The banquet scene in a garden with fruiting trees again recalls the front face of the Pamplona casket: the canopy of the tree closely resembles the flowering branch that the bearded figure holds in the front right medallion; the young men reclining under the tree, lifting to their mouths globular drinking bottles and eating fruit while being serenaded by a musician on an *ūd*, all parallel the ivories in form, even if some aspects of the style are quite different (Figure 143A). The vegetal motifs throughout, though reduced to a minimum – in contrast to the 'jungle of foliage' that Dodds says distinguishes the ivories¹⁰³ – derive from Andalusī models.

While these 'incidental' motifs might serve to confirm the basin's Andalusī production, they are nevertheless far outnumbered by the unusual features, stylistically and iconographically, of this basin's decoration. The first is the formal arrangement of the decoration in a continuous frieze that

wraps around the walls of the basin, interrupted by three 'tondi' on each side: these have been related to *clipea* on Roman sarcophagi, which as discussed in Chapter 6 were reused as fountain basins by the Umayyads, and might be a deliberate reference here. These roundels serve to break the frieze up into narrative compartments; in Guardia's interpretation, the contents of these 'tondi' synthesise and emblematises the meanings of the scenes in the frieze compartments. The four corners are bridged by an unusual motif of a figure who appears to walk around the corner, seeming to proffer an object: this figure joins with another walking in the other direction and the two bodies share a single head. Guardia relates this motif to the static figures standing guard at the corners of the Morgan casket, which she attributes to a Fatimid milieu (though a southern Italian production centre under Norman patronage is more likely). The walking figures enhance the flow of the decoration around the basin, and contribute to the same concept of 'circularity of vision' as we have seen on Sanchuelo's pyxis and lid: these might indeed be grounds for attributing both pyxis and basin to the late ʿĀmirid period. Stylistically, the very baggy style of the figures' clothing, with multiple folds of drapery, is new in Andalusī figurative representation, though it recalls the representation of clothing on the musicians capital, which might be ʿĀmirid (Figure 31, Chapter 4). The almost liquid quality of the treatment of folds on the Xàtiva basin might be the result of the carver's clumsy skill, but it seems to suggest a desire to approach verisimilitude in a way that Andalusī figurative art has not done hitherto.

Figures dominate the ensemble, and Guardia interprets most of these scenes as representing 'jongleurs' or 'amuseurs', actors in spectacles and games offered to the court (Figure 143B): their histrionic faces, exaggerated expressions and partially bald heads might suggest the actors are wearing masks. The character of these scenes is ludic rather than violent: they entertain the young men reclining under the tree, in the next compartment along, and are accompanied by music played on

¹⁰³ *Al-Andalus*, 261–3, cat. 49.

percussion and wind instruments by other figures. In one roundel we see two men pulling each other's beards; both hold in their hands a purse containing the revenues of their work, proof of the generosity of the seigneur (who is viewing the basin?). Next to it, a narrative scene shows three actors wearing tight pantaloons and short tunic with prominent bonnets on their heads; they also pull each other's beards, which are long and pointed, while they support themselves or hit each other with long batons. Guardia points out that such scenes, depicted in a similarly anecdotal style, are seen in Fatimid art, for example lustre bowls which show men pulling each other's beards and fighting with sticks, or other known court spectacles, such as cock-fighting. Such scenes are not totally new in Andalusí art: we see men wrestling in the interstices of the al-Mughīra pyxis, for example (Figure 171, lower left); while what Guardia calls a 'jousting scene' on the other side of the basin – a rather skillfully carved scene of two riders charging at each other with crossed spears – recalls the medallions on the back of the Pamplona casket, where mounted riders on horses and elephants face each other as if in a joust; the right-hand horseman spears the shield of his combatant. But unlike on the ivory, there is a sense of movement and liveliness in the Xàtiva basin's joust.

In the next compartment along from the jousting scene, five figures form a composition which suggests a procession: they wear short tunics, or a short skirt with naked torso, typical garb for servants. Three of them carry game on their shoulders, another leads more livestock to slaughter, and the last carries a basket loaded with fruit. Guardia reads this as an explicit image of offering the riches given by nature, as the result of work and human effort, though favoured by the optimal conditions of good government. The immediate destination for all this food is surely the young men reclining under the tree on the other side of the basin, watching the jongleurs and jousters. The central roundel of this side is perhaps the most enigmatic of all: it contains a breastfeeding woman, an image of maternity unusual though

not unknown in Islamic art.¹⁰⁴ Guardia reads it as alluding to the fertility of the land as represented by the offerings carried by the procession of servants and thus another instance whereby these roundels act as synecdochic emblems of the meaning of the narrative scenes. She associates the iconography of breastfeeding with Isis and argues again for Egyptian influence.

The basin's cumulative iconography thus seems to represent the entertainment of a small group of elite young men while they banquet in a garden setting, but it also implies a glorification of the natural world, in which this elite can relax and indulge themselves, while displaying their mastery over the land. The fact that these scenes decorate a basin that would have adorned the very garden settings in which such entertainments took place is nicely self-referential, and relates to the interplay between architectonic space and decoration that we have observed in 'Āmirid palatial contexts (Chapter 4). The individual motifs and narrative scenes draw on a repertoire that was present in some respects in the imagery of the Andalusí ivories, but which is perhaps responding to new stylistic and formal influences from art imported from Fatimid Egypt. The Fatimid openwork ivory panels manifest the same free-flowing frieze structure, the headgear, the servants in short tunics carrying animals to the slaughter, all set against a floral scroll suggestive of nature and abundance, while some particular genre scenes are depicted in Fatimid lustre bowls. Designs could also have been disseminated through textiles – and Fatimid imports might have introduced not only new styles but also new techniques, as may be the case with the textiles discussed above (2.4). Furthermore, Gómez-Moreno likened the basin's distinctive drapery style to Arab manuscript painting and, though all the parallels date from several centuries later,¹⁰⁵ it is also possible to consider that some of the imported models for the new style evidenced on the Xàtiva basin might have arrived in the form

104 See Gibson 2008, 44–6.

105 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 274.



FIGURE 144 Basin with same shape as the Xàtiva basin but with vegetal decoration, mid-late eleventh century, stone unknown; Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, León; inv: IIC-3-089-002-0138
© REAL COLEGIATA DE SAN ISIDORO

of illustrated books (see the discussion of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* in Chapter 8).

The Xàtiva basin was a large, expensively produced piece of furniture for a palace garden, in the manner of the basins made for al-Manṣūr and ʿAbd al-Malik. Its iconographic programme seems to respond to tenth-century models, and to cite particular symbols from that artistic repertoire – the eagles landing on their prey, a lion attacking a herbivore, peacocks with entwined necks. Guardia sees these motifs as nostalgic, attempts to recover references to caliphal art, which demonstrates the adhesion of the basin's commissioner to this tradition and as a consequence legitimises his political power. However, this artistic tradition has been 'updated' with aspects drawn from Fatimid style and iconography, deriving from artistic imports that are likely to date around the middle of the eleventh century at the earliest. Given that the basin was probably also made locally, from a distinctive and locally-available stone, this all seems to point to the Taifa period for its date of production, rather than any direct association with Sanchuelo. But given the nostalgia for the ʿĀmirid artistic and basin tradition manifested in this object, it may

very likely be associated with ʿĀmirid descendants: Sanchuelo's son ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who was Taifa ruler of Valencia from 1021 to 1060 and nostalgically took the throne-name al-Manṣūr (see Conclusion), or his two grandsons, ʿAbd al-Malik Nizām al-Dawla al-Muẓaffar and Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Manṣūr, both rulers of Valencia at the end of the eleventh century (see Genealogy in Appendix 1).

It is also not the only basin of its type: as Guardia points out, a second basin, preserved in the Panteón Real de San Isidoro de León, where it was reused as a coffin by one of the members of the royal family of Castile-León (Figure 144), has not received any attention from scholars as its decoration is entirely vegetal, consisting of a scroll that winds its way around the basin, in a similar manner to the continuous frieze structure of the Xàtiva basin. It has similar proportions and exactly the same trough-like form as the Xàtiva basin, with a receding lower part, though in the León basin this is worked with a series of mouldings. Its material is not recorded so it is not possible to say whether it was also made from Buixcarró rosa, and may thus also have come from ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's palace garden. At the very least the existence of the León basin highlights how many luxurious objects were probably made for the Taifa rulers, but which have not yet received sufficient scholarly attention to allow us to properly reconstruct the panorama of their artistic patronage. Another object in San Isidoro de León appears to demonstrate a knowledge of ʿĀmirid marble basins with lion-gazelle combat scenes, as will be discussed below (4.2.1).

4 ʿĀmirid Objects without Designated Patrons

In Chapter 6, we discussed the possibility that members of the court elite, such as some of the *fityān*, or men who held high posts in the court administration, may have been able to commission objects from the luxury arts atelier, and that these might be represented by the many 'anonymous objects' – those objects whose inscriptions

contain lists of blessings ‘for its owner’, without naming the patron. Among the ‘anonymous objects’ to survive from the late tenth/early eleventh century are a number that can be associated with the ‘Āmirid objects we have been discussing, through their stylistic and iconographical connections, or because they are dated to the ‘Āmirid period though have no named patron. In some cases, this is because the inscription is incomplete or missing entirely. As such, these may be objects that were commissioned by the *ḥujjāb* themselves but the patronage information is lost, or by their *nudamā*’ or high officials in their administration. We will explore the options for what is most likely as we discuss the objects. Other objects discussed below have been assigned to this period by previous scholars.

4.1 Ivories

4.1.1 The Doha Casket (Dated 394/1003–4, Figures 145–146, Appendix 4.16)

One important example of an anonymous object from the ‘Āmirid period is the rectangular ivory box now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, which bears the date 394/1003–4, and was thus made in the ‘Āmirid Dār al-Ṣinā‘a the year before the *tour de force* of that industry, the Pamplona casket made for ‘Abd al-Malik.¹⁰⁶ It shows that the ivory carvers of Sanchuelo’s pyxis (if its body is authentic) had mastered their craft in the intervening four years. Though the ivory from which this object was made was carbon-dated to the eighth to ninth centuries (between approximately 721 and 894), its authenticity was questioned by some when it appeared on the art market in 1998. Doubts were expressed over its unusual shape, its odd appearance – with the application of a dark red lac making it appear like ebony – and with some of its motifs and

iconography.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, as we will see, this object fits neatly into the ‘Āmirid group, and the unease about its authenticity probably derived from the fact that no clear ‘Āmirid context had ever been established in which to contextualise it, until now.

The casket is a rectangular block with square ends and may have been a ‘document holder or container for other materials’.¹⁰⁸ Though not necessarily made as a penbox, to which use it was converted in its more recent life, nevertheless comparisons have been made to other penbox forms in Islamic art, which more frequently have a long rectangular form with rounded edges, as often seen in examples from Ilkhanid and Mamluk inlaid metalwork. However, examples of straight-edged rectangular penboxes are also known in thirteenth-century metalwork, and much earlier examples of this form survive in wood from Roman Egypt. More significantly, there are close parallels for this shape in other objects from tenth- and eleventh-century al-Andalus. A ceramic example was found at Madinat al-Zahrā’, of the mid-tenth century tin-glazed type decorated in green and brown.¹⁰⁹ It is inscribed ‘al-mulk’ on its interior, and decorated on the outside with a pattern of rosettes (though very little

107 Watson 2005, 165, has demonstrated that the lac was applied only after the box had already experienced considerable wear, consistent with the age indicated in the inscription. Its brass mounts are evidently modern and probably date from its conversion into a penbox containing two inkwells – likely to have been some time in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Antonio Fernández Puertas was the most vociferous critic of the box’s authenticity, believing that it ‘... mixe[d] up the tenth, eleventh and even the early twelfth century figurative and ornamental elements – not to mention the inscription and the mistaken arrangement of all the elements on the box itself’ (email to Oliver Watson, 3 November 2003, cited in Watson 2005, n. 44).

108 Watson 2005, 166.

109 Escudero 2015, 155 (no inv. no). He associates the container with an ‘object for the dressing table or desk, intended to hold small objects’, but since ‘there are no other similar pieces in ceramic ... it is difficult to be more precise’. The object’s dimensions are H: 5, W: 8.4, L: 18.9 cm.

106 Inv. IV.04.98, dimensions: 36.7 (L) × 6.8 (W) × 4.4 (H) cm; weight 1.15 kg. Bibliography: Arts of the Islamic World sale, Sotheby’s, London, Thursday 15 October 1998, 76–82 (Lot #109); Rosser-Owen 2004, 50–53, cat. 10; Watson 2005.



FIGURE 145 Casket, 1003–4, ivory with later metal mounts; Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, inv. IV.4.1998
© THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART, DOHA



FIGURE 146 Doha casket; details: A. lion devouring man on front of casket; B. man spearing lion and griffin on back; C and D. lions attacking deer, metal inlay in eyes
© THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART, DOHA

of the exterior decoration is extant). The form is not as long and thin as our ivory example, and no lid survives. However, another example, probably dating to the eleventh century, is much more similar to the ivory box (Figure 147). Carved from alabaster – a frequently-used artistic material in the Ebro Valley – it was excavated in the area of the

Roman theatre in Zaragoza, part of the city which was built over and turned into housing during the medieval period.¹¹⁰ A long thin straight-edged

¹¹⁰ Museo del Teatro de Caesaraugusta, inv. 00134. This casket, which remains unpublished, is displayed in the museum.



FIGURE 147 Casket, eleventh century, alabaster: A. general view; B. interior showing kufic inscription inside the lid; Museo del Teatro de Caesaraugusta, Zaragoza, inv. 00134, dims 22.40 × 7.80 × 6.60 cm
© MUSEO DEL TEATRO DE CAESARAUGUSTA, AYUNTAMIENTO DE ZARAGOZA

form with a lid, the casket is decorated inside and out with friezes of pearl beading. On the outside of the lid, a large rosette form originally flanked both sides of a rectangular cartouche, containing an inscription in floriated Kufic script which reads the *basmala*. This is mirrored on the interior of the lid by a rectangular cartouche containing another inscription.¹¹¹ These inscriptions unfortunately give no clue as to the original function of this

object. Two holes pierce the lid where a handle was once attached, possibly at a later date.

Thus, looking at the contemporary and local context in which the Doha casket was created reveals close formal parallels. It should be remembered that there are other unusual forms among the Andalusí ivories, in particular the long cylindrical casket in the Museo de Bellas Artes in Burgos (Figure 99), which has been interpreted as a games or cosmetics box; despite being a unicum, its authenticity has never been doubted.¹¹² Since statistically so few of these objects survive we

111 The losses make the interior inscription difficult to read, but the museum documentation suggests a reading of 'madā min Nāfid' for the central words, implying 'completed in/by Nāfid'.

112 On which see *Al-Andalus* cat. 1; Silva Santa-Cruz 2014b, 111–2; Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015.

should be wary of judging an object's authenticity merely on the basis of form.

Its size – measuring 36.7 cm long, which compares to the length of the Pamplona casket made the following year – indicates that it must have been cut from an elephant's tusk of considerable size. Could these two ivory objects have been made from the same tusk or pair of tusks? The style of the object's decoration has close parallels to other ʿĀmirid ivories: the 'free' decoration of horsemen on the lid, not enclosed in any kind of framing structure, recalls the ivory pyxis lid made for Sanchuelo; here again, the horseman's spear points down to the lockplate (and thus inside the box), and the way in which the two men on horseback at the centre of the lid face each other draws the gaze down to the lock and encourages the viewer to open the casket. The disposition of these two figures also closely resembles those at the centre of the front of the Pamplona casket's lid. Furthermore, the pose of the right-hand horseman on the Pamplona casket lid – with his left hand lifted up behind his head, carrying a bird (presumably a trained falcon) – resembles the left-hand horseman on the Doha casket's lid, whose right arm is stretched out behind, and holds a ball-shaped object which he seems about to throw.¹¹³ Watson also draws stylistic parallels with the Pamplona casket, in particular in the physiognomy of the figures:

“the large noses, almond eyes, and bobbed haircuts; the same horses, down to the details of their trapping and the method in which the hooves are depicted; the same lions with broad faces or upturned noses, depending whether seen in full-face or profile, and the same paws with long wobbly toes; the same drooping-beaked griffons; and

the same birds with bead-covered chests and bands of beads across their wings. Similarities extend to such details as the way the spear-point is depicted entering the body of the animal, the 'cross-gaitered hose' of the footmen, and the confusion seen in the direction the palm of the hand should face when lifted to thrust a spear. On both the Doha and Pamplona boxes the hands are sometimes shown back-to-front.”¹¹⁴

Beading is used to delineate the borders which surround the inscription band and the figurative zones, and this again recalls the Pamplona casket, where beading is used, though in a much more sophisticated way (on the lettering). Such incidental details imply that the Doha box was the work of one or more of the same craftsmen as worked on the Pamplona casket. The motif of the lions attacking gazelles establishes a connection between the box and the ʿĀmirid basins, one of which (that for ʿAbd al-Malik, 2.3.1) was also being made at this time; and the style of the groups (at the front of the box) where lions devour men, and the man who spears the behind of another lion (on the back of the box) evoke the representation of similar groups on the Silos (dated 417/1026) and Palencia (dated 441/1049–1050) caskets, manufactured under Taifa patronage.¹¹⁵ This object would, then, establish a clear link between the ʿĀmirid and Taifa ivory industries (Conclusion).

As suggested in Chapter 6, craftsmen or apprentices might have been trained on these anonymous commissions. The overlaps in style and the handling of certain motifs between the Doha box and the Pamplona casket, made the following year, might suggest that craftsmen in the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Šinā'a were trying out certain elements and honing their skills.

Finally, it has recently been confirmed that several of the eye sockets of figures around the casket (at least one figure on each of its sides) are inlaid

113 Anderson 2013, 83, interprets this ball about to be thrown as representing the game of *tabtab*, 'a favourite pastime of the early Abbasid court': played on horseback, the ball was thrown and struck with a racquet or broad piece of wood.

114 Watson 2005, 167.

115 Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cats. 25, 27.



FIGURE 148
Casket, early eleventh century, ivory; Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. 81/C: front view

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 149
Bargello casket: lid

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

with a bright and soft metal that is most probably silver but could also be lead or tin.¹¹⁶ This inlay is probably original, because it fits neatly into the eye sockets; it has been covered with the brown overpaint; and is missing from most of the eye sockets – it is not plausible that the eye inlay would have been only partially restored. The

empty eye sockets are filled with overpaint. This technique of inlaying the eyes relates the casket to the fragment from al-Rummāniyya and the cyma with griffins, as well as to ivories made later in the eleventh century, in León. This may have been an aesthetic employed more widely in objects made at the Cordoban Dār al-Šinā'a.

¹¹⁶ I am grateful to Serhat Karakaya and Stefan Masarovic, conservators at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, for conducting this analysis in September 2020, and to Julia Gonnella for authorising it. It is hoped that XRF analysis will be possible in future to precisely determine the type of metal used.

4.1.2 The Bargello and V&A Caskets (Figures 148–155; Appendix 4.19)

Could any of the other anonymous ivories have been made in the 'Amirid Dār al-Šinā'a? Without dates in their inscriptions it is obviously difficult

to be categorical, but certain motifs or treatments of the decoration are suggestive. The small casket now in the Bargello has the same kind of beading surrounding the decoration as on the Doha box.¹¹⁷ It fills the eight-pointed stars that divide the decoration of the casket's lower walls; this is an unusual way of structuring the decoration but recalls the eight-lobed medallions on the Pamplona casket. While the inscription is not itself beaded, as on the Pamplona casket, there is a similarity of treatment in the heavy outlining of the letters. More telling is the presence of a small four-lobed knot motif part way up the stems of the floral motifs in between the eight-pointed stars (Figure 148), which are also seen on the Pamplona casket, most clearly in the floral interstices on either side of the central medallion at the front of the casket (Figure 125C). The animals on the lid of the Bargello casket find clear parallels in their style and carving method to those on another anonymous ivory, the large casket in the Victoria and Albert Museum whose inscription was deliberately erased, probably when the silver mounts were added in the seventeenth or eighteenth century.¹¹⁸ The animals on both caskets have the same round-bodied sculptural way of carving, and their fur is clearly indicated by short sharp marks tooled into the ivory. But the 'tells' that these caskets were probably carved by the same hand are in the way of finishing the eye with a tail trailing down at the back, and the way of defining the mouth with a small drill hole

where the edge of the lips meet the cheek (compare the animals in Figure 149 with the details in Figure 155).

The V&A casket (Figures 150–155) closely resembles the Pamplona casket both in its truncated pyramidal form, and in its style and iconography. As with ʿAbd al-Malik's casket, the decoration is enclosed within three medallions on the front and back, and two on the short sides, though they are circular rather than lobed. The decoration of the lid slopes is comparatively simpler with a large circular medallion flanked by smaller circles, rather than a series of lobed medallions on the slopes and circular roundels on the top of the lid, as on Pamplona. There is much less abundance of the tricky-to-carve foliage, which is confined to leaf canopies within the circular roundels, with the interstices instead filled with birds and animals. The iconography *per se* is probably more generic than the Pamplona casket because it was not commissioned to commemorate a specific event, as in the case of that object. There does not seem to be the suggestion of a narrative here, or the representation of particular virtues as on the Pamplona casket (Chapter 8), and the bellicose impression of the Pamplona casket's back is totally absent on the V&A casket. Here we have almost entirely peaceful scenes of paired birds and animals, very few of which are in combat. While some run after each other, they appear to be playing rather than hunting. The impression created by the representation of animals on the V&A casket is one of bucolic idyll, of nature in harmony.

Compared to the Pamplona casket, there are few human figures on this casket: mounted huntsmen occupy the roundels on the centre of the back lid slope and the right-hand lid slope, while on the front slope of the lid is a strange motif of a disembodied head, apparently with closed eyes, being transported inside a howdah on the back of what looks like a gazelle. On the front of the casket, the outer medallions feature paired figures, sitting in relaxed poses under the shade of leafy canopies. Each scene contains a musician, who in the

117 *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2 (2005), cat. 18, dates this object to the end of the tenth century, and places it between the Sanchuelo lid and Doha box, thereby assigning it to the ʿĀmirid period.

118 V&A: 10–1866, on which see Gómez-Moreno 1927, 239–40, who dated the mounts to the seventeenth century; Beckwith 1960, 29–30; Kühnel 1971, cat. 37. During the refurbishment of the V&A's Islamic Middle East Gallery in 2003–6, I examined this casket under a microscope together with Sculpture Conservator, Sofia Marques. We found a small remaining trace of carved ivory behind one of the mount attachments on the front of the casket, indicating that there had once been an inscription that had been planed off at some point.



FIGURE 150
Casket, early eleventh century, ivory: front view;
Victoria and Albert Museum, 10-1866
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FIGURE 151
Casket, early eleventh century, ivory: left side;
Victoria and Albert Museum, 10-1866
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



FIGURE 152
Casket, early eleventh century, ivory: back view;
Victoria and Albert Museum, 10-1866
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



FIGURE 153
Casket, early eleventh century, ivory: right side;
Victoria and Albert Museum, 10-1866
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



FIGURE 154 Casket, early eleventh century, ivory: lid; Victoria and Albert Museum, 10-1866
© VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



FIGURE 155

Casket, early eleventh century, ivory: grid of details; Victoria and Albert Museum, 10-1866 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London: A. Mounted huntsman, right lid slope; B. enigmatic motif of the disembodied head in a howdah, front lid slope; C. peacocks with entwined necks, front lid slope; D. paired camels in the lower panel on the left side; E. bird with scaly body, lower panel right side; F. deer biting shoot, interstices, lower left panel

left-hand roundel plays a wind instrument, and on the right an *ūd*. These musicians are accompanied by figures who hold in their hands a bottle of wine and a floral stem: while the figure on the left sniffs at a bunch of flowers, the one on the right enjoys a drink. These two activities allude to the intoxicating effect of wine and the beauty of nature on the poetic spirit, which inspires these courtiers to extemporise verses which are in turn accompanied by their musical companions (Chapter 3). Though there is always the possibility that this object was made for a named patron, since its inscription is now lost, this casket may indeed have been commissioned by one of the courtiers who joined ʿAbd al-Malik in his poetic garden soirées. If so, the depiction of one of these soirées in the front medallions would be self-referential, and would associate the casket's owner with the heart of the court in a resoundingly clear manner.

While the iconography may appear generic, in some ways the carving of this casket is more sophisticated than that of the Pamplona casket, in particular in the treatment of human faces: these are quite sculptural and naturalistic, as seen for example in the mounted horseman on the right-hand lid slope, though the carver still shows confusion about how to represent the hand that holds the spear. By comparison, the faces of the human figures on the Pamplona casket are rather naïve. Could the V&A casket have been carved by one of the apprentices who worked on the Pamplona casket, thus helping him to hone his own carving skill? Motifs on the V&A casket relate to the Pamplona casket and to other examples of ʿĀmirid art, especially those dating from the early eleventh century: the unusual motif of antlered griffins, seen in one of the roundels on the right-hand short side, are also seen on the left-hand side of the Pamplona casket, and under the heraldic eagle on the best-preserved short side of ʿAbd al-Malik's marble basin (Figure 132). The three birds that fill the upper interstices of the right-hand short side have the same heavy depiction of feathers and beaded 'collar' at the top of the tail with vertical striations below as the bird on one of the marble

fragments in Granada from another basin probably made for ʿAbd al-Malik (2.3.3, Figure 135). The motif of paired peacocks whose tails meet over their heads is not common, but is seen here on the front lid slope – it is seen later on the Xàtiva basin, where it might be referencing objects from the period of the ʿĀmirid regency, and is adopted as a motif on Almoravid textiles (Conclusion). These stylistic connections put the V&A casket firmly into the early eleventh century, perhaps after the creation of the Pamplona casket. At 27 cm in length and 21.5 cm high, it is a large and impressive object, and the panels from which its walls are constructed are thick, at approximately one centimetre, without a wooden core. Again the construction of this piece is revealing of the amount of ivory available to the ʿĀmirid industry at this date, as well as the skill of its carvers.

4.1.3 The Metropolitan Museum Panel (Figure 32)

Other ivories have been assigned to the late tenth or early eleventh century – that is, the period of the ʿĀmirid regency – because their unusual characteristics mean they do not sit easily alongside the other Andalusī ivories. One such example is the rectangular panel now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. This has frequently been considered a rather anomalous object within the Andalusī ivory group. Ernst Kühnel was not sure of its dating, placing it in the early eleventh century for reasons that are not really clear.¹¹⁹ One of these seems to have been the absence of a framework enclosing the decoration. However, while this panel does not feature the medallions that we see on many of the ivory objects, the decoration does indeed have a structured design, in the polylobed frame that surrounds the pairs of dancing figures. The less obvious framing structure,

¹¹⁹ Kühnel 1971, cat. 39. He singled out as unusual the small scale of the leaves, but this seems to me to relate it to the small casket for Wallāda in Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan (Kühnel 1971, cat. 24), indicating that the panel has an earlier rather than a later date.

however, recalls the treatment of the decoration on other 'Āmirid objects we have studied. While these paired dancers have been called a male and female couple, the fact that all of them bear short tunics and exposed legs indicates that they are probably all young men; several of them wear headgear, but these are more like flowing turbans than female head-coverings.

Anderson has suggested that the three scenes may represent the successive dance movements of one couple: 'If we view the image as we would read an Arabic text, beginning at the far right of the panel, the couple begin the dance holding hands. In the centre they have executed a complete turn, as the man and woman appear on opposite sides from their starting position at the right end of the pane. At the far left, the further movement of the dance is suggested by the figures' separation, having accomplished a second turn, their hands raised as if having only just separated. Read in this way, the composition gives an impression of lively motion, encapsulated in the figures' bent knees and raised arms, and perhaps in the folds of their garments as they appear to swing around their knees'.¹²⁰ Their happy dancing poses within a flourishing natural setting, filled with paired birds and animals which again do not indicate combat, relates the panel – like the V&A casket – to an iconography of bounty.

As suggested in Chapter 6, it is likely that this panel originally formed part of an ivory frieze inlaid into a piece of wooden furniture for a palace or *munya* interior, in a fashion similar to the minbar commissioned by al-Ḥakam II for his Cordoba Mosque extension, which had ivory panels inlaid into its marquetry. No space is left in the carving for mounts, and the decoration would originally have continued at the right and left of the panel, where today is only preserved half of the original pair of birds or animals. The tiny pieces of glass inset into the beaded bands which surround the decoration would catch the light as cupboard

doors were opened or closed, and enhance the apparent movement of the dancers.

But what makes this panel 'Āmirid? We apparently see turbans appearing on 'Āmirid objects, as on Sanchuelo's pyxis (3.1), and we also have here the motif of facing peacocks whose tails branch over their heads – though that is also seen on the Oña embroidery, which may date to the mid-tenth century. The 'hand' of the carving is rather miniature on this panel, which would suggest the work of different craftsmen from those who worked on the 'Āmirid ivories discussed above. It is really only the perception that this object does not fit easily with the other Andalusī ivories that has led to its being attributed to a period for which very little artistic framework has existed until now.

4.1.4 Ivories from San Millán de la Cogolla

One final group of ivories has been assigned tentatively to this period: these are the three surviving arms from a processional cross, and the narrow panels that adorn the sides of a portable altar, both from the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla in La Rioja. There has been, and still is, debate over the origins of these objects, which have a bearing on the origins of the ivory school that emerged in León around the middle of the eleventh century; this is when such sculptural objects, consuming thick pieces of ivory, as the casket for San Pelayo and the cross of Ferdinand and Sancha were made.¹²¹ While earlier studies believed the processional cross to be 'Mozarabic' – that is, made by Christian craftsmen skilled in Islamic traditions but produced locally in La Rioja – more recent publications accept the more likely explanation that the arms were carved in al-Andalus itself, or at least by Andalusī carvers, either as a commission or a diplomatic gift to the church of San Millán or its founders. As Rose Walker points out, 'It is difficult to identify many contexts in which such an object could have been produced or a time

120 Anderson 2018, 244–5.

121 *Art of Medieval Spain* cats. 109, 111.

when Christian patrons could have had access to so much ivory and to such accomplished artists'.¹²²

Walker notes that the cross is often linked with a possible consecration date at the church in 984, which would put its production into the ʿĀmirid period, but the document that purports to record that ceremony is problematic.¹²³ Al-Manṣūr attacked the monastery in 1002, 'destroying' it according to Fernando Valdés, so the cross could have been commissioned after that as part of the monastery's rebuilding. This would fit with the stylistic parallels that Walker adduces for the motif of beast-masks spewing foliage, seen at the lower borders of the cross's arms. She notes that these motifs appear to derive from Christian manuscript illumination, citing Anglo-Saxon and Ottonian examples. The motif of a full-frontal lion's head, however, is one we have noted repeatedly in the objects discussed here, and it was already used at the Munyat al-Rummāniyya in the 960s (Figures 29, 85). Perhaps the precise way it was represented on the ivory responded to the design input of the Christian commissioners, more familiar with the motif from book illumination. If it was commissioned from Cordoba in the aftermath of al-Manṣūr's attack, it is ironic that the monastery had to look to the place from where the destroying armies had marched, since it was the most important centre of ivory carving on the Peninsula.

An alternative theory has been advanced by Claire Anderson, which associates the commission of this processional cross with Queen Toda of Navarra (fl. 928–59), the monastery's original founder and paternal aunt of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III.¹²⁴ Following her grandson Sancho 'the Fat' being deposed as king of León in 957, Toda appealed to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān to help Sancho regain his throne, which he did in 960. Anderson points out that the closest stylistic parallels to the carving of the cross are the Cordoban ivories made in the early 960s – in particular, the cross shares an unusual border

motif of 'overlapping, semicircular scales' with the pyxis made c. 964 for al-Ḥakam II (Figure 86). The monastery was consecrated in 959, so a gift of a spectacular ivory cross, that underlined Toda's ability to source luxury objects from al-Andalus, could well have been commissioned at this time. This would appear to be the most convincing theory of the date of the cross's carving, which therefore seems likely to have predated ʿĀmirid control of the luxury arts industry.

4.2 *Stone and Marble*

Compared to the ivories that may or may not have been carved in the ʿĀmirid period, or by ʿĀmirid craftsmen in later centres, there is a much larger group of objects carved from stone and marble, the majority of them basins or fragments of basins (in addition to the capitals discussed in Chapter 4). These can be associated with the ʿĀmirids through their very close stylistic comparison to the basins made for al-Manṣūr and ʿAbd al-Malik.

4.2.1 The 'Bādīs Basin' (Figures 156–158, Appendix 4.20)

We discussed above some fragments of one or more large basins that may have been made for ʿAbd al-Malik (or his father) (2.3.2, 3). However, a complete and extremely large basin can be associated with this group, that known as the 'Bādīs basin'. This basin is unusual in that all four of its sides have been preserved, no doubt because it seems to have been the prized possession of at least three different rulers. It came into the Nasrid royal collection by the early fourteenth century and has been preserved at the Alhambra ever since.¹²⁵ We know this thanks to the information contained in the long cursive inscription, which

122 Walker 2016, 243.

123 Walker 2016, 243.

124 Anderson 2014.

125 Now in the Museo de la Alhambra in Granada, inv. 243, dimensions: 1.41 m (L) × 88 (W) × 60.5 (H) cm. Bibliography: Amador de los Ríos 1877; Lévi-Provençal 1931, 195–6 (#220); Nykl 1936–9, 185–6, n. 50; Castejón 1945, 202, 198; Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181–8, figs. 246c and 247a; *Art of Medieval Spain*, 88–90, cat. 34; Fernández-Puertas 1988, 106; *Arte Islámico en Granada* 277–280, cat. 73; Rosser-Owen 2007.

frames three sides of the decoration on one of the basin's long faces (Figure 156). This was carved in or soon after 1305 in the name of Abū 'Abd Allāh, son of the Nasrid Sultan Muḥammad III (r. 1302–9), and indicates that the Taifa ruler of Granada, Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs (r. 1038–73), brought this basin to his capital. The inscription appears to have been re-carved in place of the original border, which may itself have been re-carved with an inscription in Bādīs's name, otherwise how would Abū 'Abd Allāh have known this information? There is no trace of an inscription on the other faces of the basin. In this location on the basin's other long side (Figure 157) is a frieze of ducks, fishes and turtles, like that which occurs on the front of both the Madrid and Marrakesh basins (1.2, 2.3.1): on those basins, though, the inscription band runs above the duck/fish border. Did this basin originally have an inscription in this location which has been cut away – to make the basin fit into a new setting perhaps? If not, then, unusually, there was no clear differentiation in the design between the front and back of the basin, as the two long sides show the same scene. This makes it difficult to attempt the kind of iconographical reading that I will suggest for al-Manṣūr's and 'Abd al-Malik's basins in the next chapter. Nevertheless, rich decoration on every face of the basin implies that it was intended to be seen and appreciated equally from all four sides. It was thus probably originally located in the centre of a palace hall or garden setting – as described by al-Jazīrī and Ibn Jabīr – where it served as a water reservoir, fed by fountain heads covering the plain areas of the basin's two short sides. The side with the Nasrid inscription – which I will call the 'front' – has suffered more from weathering than the other sides, presumably because this side was most prominently displayed after the basin came into Nasrid hands, and is now particularly worn.¹²⁶

126 An engraving by Owen Jones, who would have seen this basin during his visits to the Alhambra in the 1830s, shows it serving as a water trough against a wall under an arch, though its exact location is unclear. It seems to

There has been some confusion over the interpretation of this inscription. Dodds stated that 'the reworked inscription tells us that this [object] is a direct copy of a caliphal basin'; and, later, 'the text ... clearly designates itself a copy of an earlier basin'. Her interpretation of the basin then rests on this basis: the imagery 'states Bādīs's right to rule' and 'associates him with the great Umayyad sovereigns of both al-Andalus and the Fertile Crescent'.¹²⁷ Her misunderstanding was based on Gómez-Moreno (the only reference she cites for this basin), who said that this object was 'a copy made in the middle of the eleventh century for king Bādīs, as the inscription – which was engraved by the Nasrid Muhammad III in 1305, in substitution of the original – expresses'.¹²⁸ However, the inscription, as read definitively by Lévi-Provençal and Nykl, in fact indicates that Bādīs 'brought this basin to his palace', and thus from somewhere else whose location is not known. Lévi-Provençal suggests 'sans doute Elvira', implying that Bādīs brought it from the city conquered for the Zīrids in 1012 by his great-uncle Zāwī ibn Zīrī ibn Manād. Nykl suggests instead that it came from Madīnat al-Zahrā'. But the basin's clear stylistic relationship to al-Manṣūr's and 'Abd al-Malik's basins argues for an originally 'Āmirid provenance, which is most likely to have been their own palace-city, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, or one of their *mynyas*.

The enormous size and weight of this marble basin (underlined by the phrase *al-rukhām kullīhi* in the inscription), and the effort of transporting it more than 170 km from Córdoba to Granada, suggests that Bādīs did not acquire this object out of a need for quick and easy access to building materials. Though chunks have been carved out of the marble around the top edge of the basin, no

be along the outside of the curtain wall, thus perhaps it was deliberately visible on the route up to the palaces: Owen Jones, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (London, 1842), vol. I, pl. XLVI, reproduced in Rosser-Owen 2007, fig. 1.

127 *Art of Medieval Spain*, 88–9, cat. 67.

128 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 181–8, who was following Amador de los Ríos 1877.

doubt to adapt it to receive water pipes and perhaps fountain heads (such as the rectangular section carved out of the centre of the 'back'), there is otherwise very little damage to the basin. Indeed the Nasrid appropriation of this object through recarving its inscription suggests that still in 1305 this basin was meant to be seen. Bādīs's ownership of this impressive marble object may have been a way to underline his legitimacy to be Taifa ruler of Granada. One might speculate whether he brought other marble objects to Granada at the same time. We discussed above the fragments from a second (and possibly third) ʿĀmirid basin which have been preserved in the Alhambra, and may well have had the same provenance as this one (2.3.3). It is also possible that the lobed fountain-bowl commissioned in the name of the caliph al-Ḥakam (dated 360/970–71), which was preserved in the Nasrid house of the Casa del Chapiz, also found its way to Granada by this means (see above).

The two short sides of the Bādīs basin bear the motif of the 'heraldic' eagles sheltering smaller animals that is characteristic of the large ʿĀmirid basins (Figure 158). The eagles' bodies are rather differently drawn than on the other two basins, which probably indicates a different hand involved in their carving, while their distinctive scaly bodies and the clearly delineated feathers on their wings relate them iconographically to the depiction of the eagles on the lid of the Pamplona casket. Taking the basin on its own, these eagles seem rather odd, but taken in the broader context of ʿĀmirid art, they fit stylistically. The basin's two long sides both represent the same symmetrical groups of long-maned lions who jump on top of gazelles and bite into their necks. These are the best-preserved examples of the decoration that originally also featured on al-Manṣūr's and ʿAbd al-Malik's basins (Figures 115, 129). Here, the lions' bodies are textured with what appear to be tufts of fur; on the hind- and fore-legs concentric ovals represent the animals' muscles, a device also seen on the basin fragments recovered from the Alhambra (Figure 135). The gazelles have elaborately carved antlers, which match each other on both sides of

the basin: those on the two outermost deer are tall and spiralling, while the two innermost deer have 'basket-work' antlers, deeply drilled out in the manner of capitals. These are seen again on the small deer on the short sides, where they resemble the small deer on the eagle-sides of al-Manṣūr's basin. They recall the elaborate antlers borne by the deer (also being attacked by lions) on the right-hand short side of the Pamplona casket (Figure 123). They also recall the form and carving method of some aquatic plants seen on smaller basins which can be associated with the ʿĀmirids, discussed below (4.2.3).

All the lions and deer seem to be walking on long stilts. Looking at the 'back' of the Bādīs basin one might be tempted to suggest that the stilts here imply the carving is unfinished; however, they are also seen on the 'front', where a row of small animals in flight is carved underneath the larger figures. The stilts are obviously deliberate: they may be a technique adopted by the craftsman to handle the difficult material of marble, though they also provide a 'ground' for the lions and gazelles. The use of stilts is a highly unusual feature of the Bādīs basin, though it might originally have been present in the lion-and-gazelle groups of al-Manṣūr's and ʿAbd al-Malik's basins, which do not survive clearly enough to tell. Apart from the capital with paired lions and griffins in its echinus (Figures 26–27), which also employs stilts under the animals' legs, this feature is not found on any other Andalusī examples. But strangely they are seen on a baptismal font in San Isidoro de León, which has been called 'the best example of [Leonese] sculpture of the eleventh century' (Figure 159).¹²⁹ One face of this square font depicts two affronted lions, their full-frontal heads turned towards the viewer, reaching towards each other over the top of a small figure beneath. The

129 Fernández González 2007, 21, 30–32 and plate 8. My thanks to Therese Martin for bringing this article to my attention, as well as arranging for me to visit San Isidoro and see these objects. See also Walker 2016, 297–8.



FIGURE 156

Basin mentioning Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs, in inscription recarved c. 1305; early eleventh century, marble; Museo de la Alhambra, Granada, inv. R.243

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 157

Bādīs basin: detail of lion-gazelle combat on the basin's other long side

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 158

Bādīs basin: one of the short sides with eagles

© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

right-hand lion is raised up on particularly high stilts, which are also seen on another face of the basin, under the hooves of the ass on which Christ rides into Jerusalem. Etelvina Fernández finds a Christological interpretation in the scene of the two lions: they represent Christ overcoming the devil, represented by the small figure beneath their paws. That the stilts are seen under the ass as well underlines this association with Christ. There are no parallels for these stilts in Romanesque art, indeed the only parallel Fernández could find was the Bādīs basin – though she understood this to date from Bādīs's reign, which may be the basis on which she dates the font to the second half of the eleventh century. The use of stilts may have been more widespread than these few surviving objects suggest, or there may have been a common model. On the other hand, perhaps the carver of the baptismal font had seen the Bādīs basin or another ʿĀmirid basin – as we have seen, after the Fitna, such objects were taken far from Cordoba, and perhaps this font provides evidence of another basin having been brought to the kingdom of León. Another possibility is that the craftsmen of Bādīs's basin themselves came to León and adapted themselves to local iconographic styles. This may be one reason for the 'renewal of sculpture' in León in the eleventh century, for which Fernández takes the San Isidoro font as such a key object. Perhaps it was carved by someone who had trained at the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Šinā'a.

The row of small animals in flight underneath the feet of the lions and gazelles on the 'front' of the Bādīs basin comprises long-bodied quadrupeds and hares, the two central hares turning their heads back towards the quadrupeds that chase them. A bird appears in this location on al-Manšūr's basin, and on the fragments from Granada (Figure 134). The central axis of both sides is represented by a floral element which consists of three small palmettes at the top and, below, a floral element with a pronounced groove in the central stem and four buds. This element can be related to other ʿĀmirid period pieces that contain floral decoration. This axial motif is clearest on the 'back' of the

basin since the 'front' is more worn, apparently from water erosion. Finally, in the border on the 'back', the procession of ducks, fishes and turtles is divided into two halves: these begin at each bottom corner, process up the sides of the basin, and along the top to meet in the middle.

4.2.2 Other Objects in 'the Large Basin Group'¹³⁰

Fragments of two other basins are known which, even though they have lost any inscriptions that might once have connected them to ʿĀmirid

¹³⁰ After mentioning the marble basins now in Madrid and Marrakesh, Arnold 2017, 116, tells us 'preserved is also a lion made in the same year for another fountain'. In this, he is following Arjona Castro 1995, 177, who misunderstood a description in Rafael Ramírez de Arellano's *Catálogo Monumental de la Provincia de Cordoba*, commissioned 1902–7 but only published in 1983 (edited by José Valverde as *Inventario Monumental y Artístico de la Provincia de Cordoba*, Madrid: Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros). I have not been able to consult this edited version, and it is possible that the misunderstanding may begin there. Arjona tells us 'Hay otra fuente de los leones en Priego que según Rafael Ramírez de Arellano pudiera proceder de al-Zahira. Made of white marble, it preserves only one side, which features a Kufic inscription that was translated by Rodrigo Amador de los Ríos in 1893 as saying that it was ordered by al-Manšūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir in 377/988 for the palace of al-Zāhira. The decoration features three trilobed arches with ornamented pilasters, and in the spaces are seen an eagle attacking two deer with its talons. It is clear that Arjona is confusing this fountain basin with that now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Ramírez de Arellano's manuscript is digitised and available online at https://csic-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/9p4bh5/34CSIC_ALMA_DS21120996960004201 (consulted 31/07/20). The description (at folios 1220–1) gives none of the information supposedly quoted by Arjona, instead telling us that the basin is of bluish marble with four lion heads, the fountain's pipes debouching from their mouths. Ramírez believed the lions resembled those from the Fountain of the Lions at the Alhambra, but were earlier, likening them to the tenth-century bronze aquamanile now in the Musée du Louvre (inv. 7883). However, Rafael Carmona Ávila, archaeologist and director of the Museo Histórico Municipal, Priego de Cordoba, confirms that the fountain referred to by Ramírez, located in the town's Plaza de Santa Ana, 'no es antigua o medieval. Es una fuente



FIGURE 159 Baptismal font, showing lions 'on stilts' as on the Bādīs basin
© REAL COLEGIATA DE SAN ISIDORO, LEÓN

patrons, nevertheless conform stylistically and formally to this 'large basin type'. The first, in the Cordoba Archaeological Museum (Figure 160), was published by Gómez-Moreno, who described it as 'a large chunk of a side of another analogous [basin]'.¹³¹ It was recovered from the Plaza de Valde las granas, Cordoba, and entered the museum in 1933.¹³² The fragment has a thick plain band running vertically through the centre, with

near-symmetrical groups of animals on either side of it. Of the right-hand group, we can clearly make out part of the mane and tail of a lion, and we can assume that the hooved animal on top of which the lion is standing is a deer/gazelle. The deer itself appears to be standing on the back of another animal, whose fur or ribcage is partially visible, but too little survives of this part of the fragment to make further inferences. The group seems to be repeated in mirror image on the left. Below the hooves of both deer is a flowering stem, similar to that seen on Granada fragment C (Figure 134). This might suggest that, as with that second basin from Granada, the 'Āmirid basins did not all represent heraldic eagle emblems on their short sides, but that these nevertheless usually portrayed animal combat scenes.

de pilar de la Edad Moderna (¿siglos XVI–XVII?)' (personal communication, 03/08/20).

131 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 187–8, fig. 247c. This may well be the same piece as that tantalisingly mentioned by Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 722–723, when he says that the Museo Arqueológico in Córdoba has a fragment of another similar basin, with a plain middle zone and the remains of carving on either side, with lions above hares in place of the usual eagles. He gives no further details, and does not illustrate the fragment.

132 I am grateful to Manuel Aguayo, Ayudante de Museos, Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba, for providing the

inventory information about this object (03/08/20), as Gómez-Moreno gives no other details.

The last basin fragment tells an intriguing story of multiple reuse (Figures 94–96). As outlined in the discussion of materials in Chapter 6, this basin reused a thick block of white marble that had once been a Roman official inscription erected in the name of the governor of Baetica, Aulus Caecina Tacitus; in the early fourteenth century, the sides of the basin were cut away to form a flat stele that was carved on its other face with the tombstone of the Marinid sultan of Morocco, Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf (d. 1307).¹³³ The stele's narrow sides still bear traces of the basin's decoration: though one side is badly damaged, the other shows elements that are stylistically related to the ʿĀmirid basin group. The arrangement is slightly different: rather than a single plain area (for a fountain-head) at the centre of the short ends, this basin's long side has two narrow plain areas separating three zones of decoration. At the centre, the lower bodies and legs of two back-to-back quadrupeds (presumably gazelles) can be seen prancing amid a vegetal scroll containing a long thin leaf motif, on either side of the trunk of a tree rendered with a scaly texture and thus presumably depicting a palm tree. The way the long thin leaf motif is rendered is quite similar to the basin in San Isidoro de León that has the same shape as the Xàtiva basin (3.2, Figure 144). To the left and right of this central motif is a blank section, and to either side of these is another carved section in which a small bird with scaly body sits among a background of luxurious vegetation; this appears to be repeated at the other end, where it is less well preserved. This small bird has the same kind of scaly body as seen on the ʿĀmirid basin fragments in Granada (Figure 135). What can thus be reconstructed of the original design suggests birds, deer and luxurious vegetation, without any sign of combat. This recalls the 'iconography of bounty' seen on the peaceable scenes of the V&A casket (4.1.2).

133 Now in the Musée Archéologique, Rabat, inv. 89.5.2.4, dimensions: 81 (H) × 51 (W) × 14 (D) cm. Boele 2005, 63; Rosser-Owen 2014, 193–7; *Maroc Médiéval*, 509, cat. 308.

The unusual arrangement of the decoration – in which pairs of fountain-heads were attached to the basin's long sides – may have been dictated by the reused piece of Roman marble with which the carvers were working.

We cannot know how and when this ʿĀmirid basin was brought to Rabat and thence to the Marinid necropolis at Shāla, but as discussed above (2.3.1, 2.5) other ʿĀmirid marble basins were brought to Morocco, in the tenth century or under later dynasties, along with large numbers of Umayyad architectonic elements that were deliberately reused in Almoravid and Almohad monuments.¹³⁴

4.2.3 Small Basins

The border decorations of ducks, sometimes biting at worms, fishes and turtles might be surprising on the grand basins that otherwise seem so overwhelmingly to project the power of the ʿĀmirids. In contrast to the heraldic eagles and the violent animal combat scenes, they are rather playful. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, they relate to water and thus speak to the function of these objects as fountain basins; it is perhaps significant that these motifs do not recur on the ʿĀmirid ivories, but seem restricted to the objects connected to water. They perhaps even speak to the setting in which these basins were located. One might imagine such creatures swimming within these water tanks, or in nearby pools, recalling 'the turtles that continually make sounds' that are evoked in al-Jazīrī's poem. It is also possible that these images – especially the birds and the tortoise – reference a popular story from the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, as discussed in the next chapter. If so, the designs also playfully speak to the context of the literary *majlis* which would have gathered around such basins as these.

The rather playful elements in the borders of the 'large basin group' become the main decoration on a group of smaller scale basins, and their stylistic consistency allows us to attribute these to

134 Rosser-Owen 2014.



FIGURE 160 Basin fragment, early eleventh century, marble; Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Córdoba, inv. CE006707, 50 × 40 cm
© MAECO / FOTO: ÁLVARO HOLGADO MANZANARES

the ‘Āmirid period as well. This small group comprises the following objects:

4.2.3.1 *Basin in Madrid*

A small shallow basin decorated on the interior with ducks and fishes; when first published by Gómez-Moreno it was in a private collection in Madrid, but it has since been acquired by the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Figures 161–163).¹³⁵ It is a small rectangular marble basin whose open and sloping-sided form makes it perfectly suited for decoration on its interior. It has the same shape – of the type that Gómez-Moreno calls ‘trough-like’ – as the Umayyad basin from the *Dār al-Nā‘ūrah*,¹³⁶ as well as a number of other basins with Visigothic-style carving on them. Were these Late Antique or Visigothic fonts, recarved

¹³⁵ My thanks to Isabel Arias of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional for sending me this information and for ensuring it was also uploaded onto the museum’s online catalogue. Bibliography: Gómez-Moreno 1951, 191, figs. 250b and 255; Marinetto Sánchez 1987d, mentioned briefly at 759; *Arte Islámico en Granada* 266, cat. 63.

¹³⁶ Museo de la Alhambra, inv. 4491, see Marinetto Sánchez 1987d.

and repurposed by the Umayyads and ‘Āmirids? Indeed this example seems to have been re-carved, as the flat rim of the basin has a lip, overhanging the carving on the interior by a centimetre or so.

The decoration on the interior is symmetrical, in that the short sides copy each other, as do the long sides. On the long sides, we see a pair of ducks with wings raised, on either side of two fish whose bodies are crossed over one another, their heads pointing towards the ducks’ beaks. The short sides depict a single, large water bird, its eye and feathers indicated by light incising, especially at the tail, in the process of swallowing a fish. When the basin was filled, these animals would appear to be under water, and the raised wings of the ducks evokes the way in which real ducks like to splash in water. In the centre of the basin a circular hole, since filled in, allowed the water to drain out.

On one of the exterior slopes of the basin, the silhouette of a camel (a dromedary, since it only has one hump) is carved in very light relief (Figure 163). None of the other exterior faces has any carving: indeed the stippled ground around the silhouette of the camel shows where the background has been chiselled away to leave the animal in relief. This is the same technique as used on the inside. Given the high polish of the other sides of the basin, this again suggests a possibly Roman or Late Antique basin that has been recarved. Perhaps the camel shows the first stages in working out a zoomorphic scene on the basin’s exterior, but this was abandoned for whatever reason. Its location is not particularly visible so the unfinished nature of the exterior does not mar the viewer’s appreciation of the rest of the basin. Camels are an unusual motif in Andalusi art, but they are also seen on one of the short sides of the ivory casket in the V&A (Figure 151), where they have the same single-humped and curving-necked profile as on this basin. This might serve to confirm the ‘Āmirid attribution of the V&A casket.

4.2.3.2 *Basin in Seville*

A steep-sided basin decorated with ducks, fishes, turtles and aquatic plants, made from



FIGURE 161
Small basin decorated on its interior with ducks and fishes early eleventh century, marble: interior view; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. 2012/53/1, dims. L 55 × W 40 × H 15 cm (4.2.3.1)
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 162
Basin with ducks and fishes: detail of large duck; Museo Arqueológico Nacional
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 163
Basin with ducks and fishes: detail of camel on exterior; Museo Arqueológico Nacional
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

limestone, now in the Museo Arqueológico in Seville (Figures 164–166).¹³⁷ It is perhaps significant that al-Manṣūr's basin (1.1) was also found in Seville – could these two basins have been brought from al-Madīnat al-Zāhira at the same time? The upper border depicts a procession of ducks which starts at each extreme and meet in the middle, as on the Bādīs basin. Here the two ducks nearest the centre peck at a turtle enclosed in a mandorla – perhaps suggesting the outline of a pond – underneath which are two fishes. This design is repeated on the basin's short sides. The lower zone is filled with tall aquatic plants, which seem to wave as if in the current of a stream. The shape of these aquatic plants resembles the elaborate antlers of the gazelles on the Bādīs basin. The back of the basin is uncarved, indicating that it was placed against a wall.

4.2.3.3 *Small basin in Granada*

The aquatic plants, fishes and turtle are seen again on a small basin made from sandstone, formerly in the Gómez-Moreno collection and now in the Museo de la Alhambra (Figures 167–168).¹³⁸ This tiny and very shallow basin is set on a small octagonal pedestal, through which a small channel originally filled or drained it of water. Its four corners are chamfered so as to provide extra space for decoration in addition to the low external walls. These walls bear the same antler-style swaying aquatic plants as seen on the basin in Seville, and the chamfered corners alternate between depicting a turtle (depicted splayed, perhaps to indicate swimming?) and two fish, one on top of the other and each facing in opposite directions. While these elements connect it with other 'Āmirid basins described here, its material – sandstone – further suggests an original provenance of al-Madīnat

al-Zāhira: as discussed in Chapter 4, the putative location of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira was an area rich in sandstone.

4.2.3.4 *Border fragment in Cordoba*

Finally, two fragments must come from other related basins. The first, said to be in the Museo Arqueológico in Cordoba, is the fragment of a border of another large-scale marble basin (Figure 169).¹³⁹ It shows a procession of ducks, biting down alternately on fishes and worms. If we were to turn the image 90° anticlockwise, then the ducks would be processing upwards and turning, at the corner, towards the centre of the basin's long side, presumably to meet another procession coming the other way, as in the arrangement of the duck processions on the Bādīs basin and small basin in Seville.

4.2.3.5 *Side fragment in Seville*

The second fragment seems to come from the wall of a marble basin whose decoration was disposed in horizontal bands, as on 'Abd al-Malik's basin. This innovative way of structuring the decoration is thus not unique on the basin now in Marrakesh. This fragment, now in the Archaeological Museum in Seville, was said to have been found 'somewhere in Córdoba' (Figure 170).¹⁴⁰ The decoration is divided into four horizontal zones delineated by thick borders. The outer two zones are occupied by large palmette-like buds that seem to sprout from the border. The middle two zones are occupied by the characteristic 'Āmirid duck', which rest their

137 Inv. CE6572. Dimensions: 19.5 (H) × 55 (L) × 32.5 (W) cm. Bibliography: Gómez-Moreno 1951, 191, fig. 251c; Marinetto Sánchez 1987d, 762; *Esplendor: Catálogo*, 150.

138 Inv R.3669. Dimensions: 30 (L) × 27 (W) × 8.6 (H) cm. Bibliography: *Les Andalousies* 134, cat. 134; Marinetto Sánchez 1987d; *Arte Islámico en Granada* 255–256, cat. 55; *Esplendor: Catálogo*, 149.

139 Kubisch 1994, plate 54b. Natascha Kubisch informed me in an email of 13/11/20 that she took a quick snap of the fragment at the end of a visit to the museum's store-rooms, so she did not take note of its inventory number nor use a scale in her photograph. Unfortunately, the museum was not able to identify or locate this fragment when I contacted them about illustrating it in this book.

140 Inv. CE6611, donated by Manuel Gómez-Moreno in 1950. Dimensions: 24 × 16.5 × 10 cm. Bibliography: Gómez-Moreno 1951, 185, fig. 245e; *Año Mil Año Dos Mil* 266–267; *Esplendor: Catálogo*, 150.



FIGURE 164
Basin with ducks, fishes, turtle and waterweeds, late tenth–early eleventh century, limestone: front; Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, inv. CE6572 (4.2.3.2)
© JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA. CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA Y PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO / FOTO: MANUEL CAMACHO



FIGURE 165
Basin with ducks, fishes, turtle and waterweeds: side
© JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA. CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA Y PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO / FOTO: MANUEL CAMACHO



FIGURE 166
Basin with ducks, fishes, turtle and waterweeds: detail of uncarved back
© JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA. CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA Y PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO / FOTO: CONCEPCIÓN SAN MARTÍN



FIGURE 167
Small shallow basin
with fishes, turtle and
waterweeds, late tenth–
early eleventh century,
sandstone; Museo de
la Alhambra, Granada,
inv. R.366g (4.2.3.3)
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN



FIGURE 168 Small shallow basin with fishes, turtle and waterweeds: details of chamfered corners: A. turtle; B. fish
© MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN

feet on the borders. The duck in the upper zone has a raised wing and pecks at a fish, much like the design on the interior long sides of the trough-like basin in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (4.2.3.1, Figure 161). In the lower zone, two birds have their wings folded into their bodies and their necks lowered to peck at the ground.

What was the original function of these small basins? They all have different shapes and sizes,

and in formal terms they do not really relate to other objects surviving from this period. The 'trough like' basin (4.2.3.1) shares a form with the Umayyad basin from the Dār al-Na'ūrah, and to other basins that are often assigned to the Visigothic period. But the shapes of 4.2.3.2 and 4.2.3.3 do not have formal comparisons in other surviving objects from this period, and either are innovative and experimental works of the



FIGURE 169 Fragment of the border of an ʿĀmirid basin, late tenth–early eleventh century, said to be in Museo Arqueológico y Etnológico, Córdoba (4.2.3.4)
© NATASCHA KUBISCH

ʿĀmirid craftsmen, or represent forms that were once common but have not survived. Gómez-Moreno refers to these objects as being ‘for ablutions’, which would imply a religious context for them originally. But their figurative decoration would have made them unsuitable for ablutions relating to prayer, and it can be assumed that they had a private, secular context. The iconography relating to water brings alive the physical setting in which these basins were located – they surely were originally placed in gardens, either containing or attracting wildlife. The tiny shallow basin (4.2.3.3) has the size and shape of a modern bird-bath, and it is tempting to speculate that it could have been used for a similar function. While the grand basins of huge dimensions may have been the focal points of gardens, around which ʿĀmirid *nudamā* gathered for their leisure activities, smaller basins like these may have enlivened garden paths or out-of-the-way locations, to bring surprise and pleasure to those wandering through the gardens, perhaps even suggesting themes for the improvisation of poetry.



FIGURE 170 Fragment of the side of an ʿĀmirid basin, late tenth–early eleventh century; Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, inv. CE6611 (4.2.3.5)
© JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA. CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA Y PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO / FOTO: MANUEL CAMACHO

5 The Language of ʿĀmirid Art

In referring to the art of the ʿĀmirids, previous scholars have talked of ‘clumsiness or lack of freedom in the development of the motifs’, fruitfully characterising it as a ‘shepherd’s style trying to copy a prince’s’;¹⁴¹ they have accused it of simplification, the use of ‘less noble materials’,¹⁴² a general sense of stultification as implied by the apparently disappointed responses to the ʿĀmirid extension to the Cordoba Mosque. But the fragments we have been analysing show that far from being a period in which craftsmanship declined or stultified, on the contrary, the ʿĀmirid period was a time of sophistication and innovation in Andalusi art, a context in which such *tours de force* as the Pamplona casket are entirely probable, and not accidental exceptions. The craftsmen of the ʿĀmirid Dār al-Šināʿa did not just perpetuate forms and styles inherited from the caliphal luxury arts industry, but also made significant stylistic and technical innovations. The fragmentary survivals that have been gathered here for the first time into a corpus of ʿĀmirid art start to build a more panoramic picture, especially when we add the architectural decoration discussed in Chapter 4. To draw the strands of this discussion together, it is pertinent to consider the characteristics that make ʿĀmirid art distinctive from what comes before and after: to ask, what is the *language* of ʿĀmirid art?

Taking this question literally, the first point to be made relates to the large number of pieces that have an epigraphic connection to the ʿĀmirids, either through inscriptions designating them as the patron, or through the signatures of craftsmen who styled themselves as slaves or freedmen of the ʿĀmirid family. As we will discuss in Chapter 8, the inscriptions used on these objects indicate the

development of epigraphic formulae that have a deliberate ʿĀmirid meaning – the use of particular phrases of blessing, such as *waffaqa-hu allāh*, which emphasise ʿĀmirid victories on the battlefield, and the clever encodings of al-Manšūr’s and Hishām’s *alqāb* in the phrase *naṣr wa taʿyīd*, which is consistently used on ʿĀmirid objects. In this way, the patrons were just as alert to the epigraphy on their luxury objects as bearers of meaning as al-Manšūr was in his choice of Qurʾānic inscriptions for the eastern façade of the Cordoba Mosque (Chapter 5 Part 2). This play with semantics might also indicate an increasing degree of Fatimid influence in al-Andalus suggested in Chapter 4 (4).

The matter of the epigraphic style employed at this period is not something I have discussed here, but would be worthy of further study. Ocaña was dismissive of the style of Kufic script used at this period, calling it ‘mediocre ... without any hint of originality’, believing that the designers of inscriptions working at al-Manšūr’s command were incapable of the ‘evolutionary spirit’ that had characterised epigraphy during the reign of al-Ḥakam II. Some characteristics of the epigraphy of the ʿĀmirid period that he identified are the scarce use of curved ligatures (‘*nexos curvos*’) below the line, a proportion that is fatter in relation to the height of the letters, and a decreasing use of the ‘swan-necked’ curve in letters such as *nūn* and *rāʾ*, though these are employed on al-Manšūr’s basin.¹⁴³ A close study of the epigraphic style on all the inscriptions brought together in this book would confirm whether these features identified by Ocaña – though couched in terms of political bias against the ʿĀmirid period – can indeed be taken as indicators of chronology for inscriptions that are undated or contain no historical connection to the ʿĀmirids.

The next point to be made is that the scale of ʿĀmirid works of art is *big*. This is seen clearly in the dimensions of the basins made for al-Manšūr (1.1), ʿAbd al-Malik (2.3.1), that later used by Bādīs (4.2.1), in the Pamplona casket (2.1) – the largest

141 Juan Zozaya, personal communication, November 2001. He thought this style was epitomised by the capital with lion volutes (Figure 30, discussed in Chapter 4).

142 Marinetto Sánchez 1987c, 185–6. See also the discussion of materials in Chapter 4.

143 Barcelo 2013, 170, citing Ocaña 1970, 42.

surviving ivory object from al-Andalus – and in the *Suaire de Saint Lazare* (2.4), whose medallions have an impressive diameter of more than 20 cm.

'Āmirid art also manifests an architectural aesthetic, in that the decoration on many of the objects – al-Manṣūr's basin, the basin fragments in Granada (2.3.3), the Braga pyxis (2.2) – is conceptualised as a form of miniature architecture. In all three examples, the viewer can conceive of himself as being inside a garden pavilion looking out. This could also be described as monumentality, in that the objects are conceived of as monuments in themselves – through the relief format of the inscriptions and the use of phrases like *'alayaday* which relates them to official epigraphy. Though their iconography marks them as 'private' objects, this sense of monumentality implies that they were nevertheless meant to be seen and their messages read and understood.

This architectural way of framing the decoration also relates to another tendency in 'Āmirid art, which is towards less confinement of the decoration within a rigid structure. Several examples show a free-flowing style of decoration, with no confinement at all – the lid of Sanchuelo's pyxis (3.1), the Doha box (4.1.1), the capital with the lion-headed volutes discussed in Chapter 4 (Figure 30). We do still see medallions, rounded and lobed, on some of the ivories and on the textiles, but also new ways of structuring the decoration, such as eight-pointed stars on the Bargello casket (4.1.2), or horizontal rows on 'Abd al-Malik's basin (2.3.1) and the basin fragment with ducks (4.2.3.5). In other cases there is still an underlying structure but it is much less obvious. Whereas in earlier ivories the style of the body and lid were generally consistent, this is not necessarily the case in 'Āmirid examples – the structuring of ornament on the bodies of the Braga and Sanchuelo pyxides, for example, is not carried over into their lids. This conveys a sense of undermining traditional forms, as seen also in the playful experimentation on architectonic elements.

Concomitant to this is an increasing tendency to organise the decorative programme in cunning

ways: for example, arranging the inscription on the Sanchuelo pyxis lid so that the patron's name appears exactly at the front; and placing the spears on the lids of the Sanchuelo pyxis and Doha box so that they point towards the patron's name and lockplate. The craftsmen thus create a circularity of vision, where the eye is arrested and made to follow back down towards a focal point of the decoration. This generates a playfulness, even a sense of humour (smiling worms in the echinus of capitals, for example? cf. Figures 23, 24), that is characteristic of the art of this period and seems to express the craftsmen's mastery of their skill. We also see craftsmen pushing traditional boundaries, by innovating and experimenting with inherited forms: morphing volutes into animals' heads (Figure 28), or melting the acanthus tiers of the Corinthian order into the glassy surface of a pond with waterweeds beneath (Figure 30), or adding sculptural figure groups to the echinus (Figures 26–27).

In the marble basins and architectonic ornament, this playfulness is carried beyond the physical bounds of the object to reference the world around it, and could perhaps be styled the 'phenomenological aspect' of 'Āmirid art. The images break out of the rigidity of traditional forms, and set up visual puns and metaphors between the artefact being viewed and the surroundings in which it is set. The iconography of the Pamplona and V&A caskets or, later, the Xàtiva basin (3.2) effectively raises a mirror to the Cordoban elite, showing them back to themselves, participating in the garden soirées through which they came to be members of the 'Āmirid inner circle. They watch themselves indulging in their courtly pastimes while sitting in garden settings around 'Āmirid marble basins, whose incidental details of ducks, fishes and tortoises bring alive the natural world that they are experiencing around them.

'Āmirid art manifests an increasing trend towards figurative representation. While this may be an accident of survival, it is telling that of the dispersed fragments we can associate with the 'Āmirids – compared with the very large

number of aniconic capitals, bases, pilasters and wall panels that can be associated with caliphal construction, including at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ – the majority feature figurative ornament of some kind. Furthermore, the style of this figurative iconography shows a greater sense of naturalism than that employed on caliphal objects, especially in the representations of aquatic motifs, and in the depiction of human figures and the representation of their clothing. A desire for verisimilitude is expressed in the liquid treatment of clothing on the Xàtiva basin, the use of concentric ovals to represent the musculature of animals, or the carefully delineated feathers and scaly bodies, on the Bādīs basin (4.2.1) and Pamplona casket (2.1), for example. While the surviving art of the Umayyad caliphs seems to be, for the most part, official and thus largely aniconic, this more figurative ʿĀmirid style perhaps prevailed in the private spaces of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, in garden retreats or pavilions, or in the ʿĀmirid family's *muniyas*, underscoring the objects' dynastic emblems and encoded meanings to those elite few who were admitted to these spaces.

Another significant trend is the relationship of the ornament to the imagery of contemporary poetry, especially to panegyrics composed in praise of the ʿĀmirid *ḥujjāb*. This lends some of the repetitive motifs on ʿĀmirid objects the quality of dynastic emblems. Some scenes may also evoke images from well-known literary genres. This literary aspect will be explored further in Chapter 8.

We also see the introduction of new motifs and new combinations of elements. The motif of the lion and gazelle in combat attains a new significance at this period, as we will see in Chapter 8. The standard repertoire used on many of the marble and stone objects – the compositions of ducks, fishes, turtles, worms and aquatic plants – seems to be entirely new under the ʿĀmirids. This imagery relating to water appropriately occurs on objects whose function was also associated with water, but is carried over into the decoration of ʿĀmirid architecture. Other apparently new motifs that recur in ʿĀmirid objects include the pairs of

affronted peacocks with necks entwined and leaf-like tails which meet over their heads (V&A casket), the long-horned antelope (Pamplona casket, Suaire de Saint Lazare), cheetahs (on the Suaire and Sanchuelo lid), and cockerels (Sanchuelo pyxis). The sphinx is apparently seen for the first time on the Suaire de Saint Lazare, and another fantastical animal that appears regularly in ʿĀmirid art is the griffin. This may have been introduced into Andalusī art under earlier *ḥājibs*, whether Jaʿfar al-Ṣiqlābī or al-Muṣḥafī (as discussed in Chapter 6). ʿĀmirid craftsmen introduced a new twist to the griffin motif by sometimes representing it with antlers (Pamplona casket, V&A casket, the short sides of ʿAbd al-Malik's basin). Alberto Montejo has argued that the griffin was a symbol of authority specifically associated with the Andalusī *ḥujjāb*, and its prevalence on works of art made for the ʿĀmirids might be for this reason.¹⁴⁴ From the few fragments of Buyid art that survive, it seems that both sphinxes and griffins were employed on Buyid silk textiles at around the same date as their occurrence in al-Andalus,¹⁴⁵ so could the introduction of these motifs derive from newly imported models, in particular textiles? Mackie notes that Buyid silks must have been widely exported, given the dispersal of their survival in Iran, Egypt and in European church treasuries.¹⁴⁶

Another feature of the art of the ʿĀmirid period does seem to be its responsiveness to outside influences, in particular the art of Fatimid Egypt, though if the Xàtiva basin dates from the time of al-Manṣūr's grandson, ʿAbd al-Azīz, this phenomenon might start to develop later in the eleventh century. Features such as the representation of human figures with turbans, even the freeflowing approach to decoration, might respond to Fatimid

¹⁴⁴ Montejo 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Four rampant griffins, depicted with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle, in the same way as they are in al-Andalus, can be seen circling an eight-pointed star on a Buyid silk textile attributed to the second half of the tenth/first half of the eleventh century, in Mackie 2015, 138–9 (4.6).

¹⁴⁶ Mackie 2015, 136.

art (such as the openwork ivory panels). New textile techniques – such as gold-printing, discussed at 2.4 – might have been introduced at this time, based on models imported from much further east.

Other elements show the introduction of motifs that continue in Taifa art: a diagnostic motif of the ivories made at Cuenca is the way that birds and animals bite down onto shoots,¹⁴⁷ but this seems to appear first in ʿĀmirid art. It is seen, for example, on the Pamplona casket (Figure 125E) and Braga pyxis (2.2). The animals on the lid of the Braga pyxis especially seem to prefigure the slightly more static style of, for example, the lions on the Palencia casket (dated 441/1049–1050). As noted above, on the Doha box (4.1.1) the lions devouring men (on the front) and the man who spears the behind of another lion (on the back) prefigure the treatment of these motifs on the Silos (Figure 174) and Palencia caskets. The leaves with very prominent veins on ʿAbd al-Malik's basin also seem to prefigure those of the Cuenca ivories. The continuity of these motifs and styles is logical considering that it would have been craftsmen who had operated under ʿĀmirid patronage who left Cordoba at time of the Fitna to find work at Taifa courts, including the ivory industry at Cuenca (Conclusion).

In terms of architectonic elements, especially capitals (Chapter 4), a flatter style of carving seems to predominate, in the sense that the basketwork undercutting with a drill is not much used. A number of objects – such as the capital with lion-headed volutes (Figure 30) – seem almost two-dimensional. This flatter style recalls carvings which have in the past been classed as Visigothic but which contemporary scholarship is reattributing to the tenth century: for example, a column in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, or the marble slab with lions from Chelas, now in Lisbon.¹⁴⁸ This flatter carving style could be a general

tenth-century trend. As noted in Chapter 4, similar trends have been observed in Christian Iberia, in the increasing use of figurative decoration and the undermining of traditional orders in the capitals of San Pedro de la Nave; and as noted above, the surprising relationship between the Bādīs basin and the baptismal font in San Isidoro de León may be the result of Cordoban craftsmen finding new employment in the Christian kingdoms. This may also account for the spread in the flatter carving style.

This also prefigures the developments in carving style in Taifa and later palaces, which also lose a depth of relief. The drill is still used but there is almost no undercutting. Particularly close comparisons seem to come from Toledo, and might thus be associated with al-Ma'mūn's palace, built around the mid-eleventh century: a marble capital (Figure 176), whose size and shape seems to relate to the flat relief capital with a worm in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan (Figure 24),¹⁴⁹ a marble relief with birds amid scrolls relates closely to the basin fragments in Granada (Figure 177).¹⁵⁰ These issues will be discussed further in the book's Conclusion.

At the same time, unprecedented and virtuoso creations were made, such as the double-capital signed by Faraj, Mubārak and Bāshir which probably came from al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, and the pair of double-capitals made for the ʿĀmirid 'tribune' at the Great Mosque of Cordoba. Again these creations show ʿĀmirid craftsmen innovating and playing with traditional forms.

Finally, it has been said that a characteristic of ʿĀmirid art is the use of 'poorer' materials for carving, meaning the limestone and sandstone used for some basins and capitals. As discussed in Chapter 4, the use of sandstone likely relates to the local stone quarried to build al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. It is also not the case that the Umayyad palace-city was built entirely from the 'noble' material of marble – most of the stone used for the wall

147 Marinetto Sánchez 1987a.

148 *Les Andalousies* cats. 57, 58; Walker 2016, 199. My thanks to Rose Walker for discussing these objects with me.

149 *Al-Andalus* cat. 47.

150 *Al-Andalus* cat. 48.

decorations was in fact limestone. If the capitals discussed in Chapter 4 were produced for 'Āmirid buildings, then these must in fact have consumed a lot of marble. When we think of the enormous size of the large marble basins, it is absurd to talk about 'less noble materials'. Not only that but, as we have seen, a *lot* of ivory was used to produce the objects made for 'Abd al-Malik and other patrons of the 'Āmirid period; while the Suaire de Saint Lazare represents the consumption of a large amount of silk, indigo (to dye it blue) and gold – and this was just a drop in the ocean of the textiles that were produced at this time, judging by the

numbers distributed as *khil'a* after 'Āmirid campaigns (Chapter 6). It is time to stop disparaging 'Āmirid art purely on the basis of historiographic trends and a perceived lack of interesting artistic features in the mosque extension. When we assemble and analyse the full corpus of 'Āmirid art, as I have done here for the first time, it is clear that this was a period of sophistication and innovation in art, of wealthy patronage and no shortage of precious materials. Having identified the objects that form this corpus, it is now time to consider the messages that the 'Āmirids conveyed through their iconographic and epigraphic programmes.

Poems in Stone: Imagery, Text and Meaning in ‘Āmirid Art

In the centre of the hall is a large basin
of green water
in which the turtles continually make
sounds.
The water pours from the jaws of a lion
whose mouth
could only be more terrible if it spoke.
It is of scented aloeswood and around
its neck
one sees a handsome necklace of
pearls.
Meanwhile, the jasmine watches from
its throne, as if it were a king,
When a sudden blaze of light would
have brought down the head
And narcissus, wallflowers, violets and
roses stop exhaling their perfume.
They watch languidly, and out of happi-
ness they can scarcely contain
the desire to speak to you, despite not
having tongues.
At your side you have lilies that sprout
from themselves,
The luminosity of the spring, such is
the beauty which they give out.
All of these [flowers], in their abundant
diversity, remind you
Of the victorious banners trembling on
the day of combat.
In this hall, without doubt, a king,
whose riches are without number,
has gathered all happiness[es] for his
people.
And thanks to him the West has
attained such power
That even the East feels envy because
of him.

ABŪ MARWĀN AL-JAZĪRĪ (d. 1003)¹



The patronage of the luxury arts by the ‘Āmirid *ḥujjāb* was not motivated merely by the desire to surround themselves with beautiful objects, but entailed the full-scale mobilisation of an industry that had been established by the caliphs in order to articulate their power and authority. The physical location of the Dār al-Šinā‘a, or at least a branch of it, within the ‘Āmirid power-centre and under their direct control, via their *fityān*, enabled the *ḥujjāb* to dictate their messages of self-expression, not only visually through the iconography they chose to employ, but also through their epigraphic programmes. The objects commissioned by al-Manšūr and his two sons fit squarely into the formal tradition of the luxury arts produced under their caliphal predecessors, in the sense that in the broad terms of material, shape and decorative vocabulary, ‘Āmirid art continued traditions that had been established at the caliphal Dār al-Šinā‘a. The iconography employed in Andalusī art draws on the standard repertoire of images that form the ‘princely’ or ‘courtly cycle’ – stock scenes such as the seated ruler with cup in hand, the falconer on horseback, and the paired or single animals connoting royalty (such as lions, eagles or peacocks), are as pervasive in al-Andalus as in other contemporary Islamic contexts. However, the images chosen to adorn ‘Āmirid works of art were not simply scenes selected at random from the stock repertoire, but had a particular ‘Āmirid meaning. We can elucidate this meaning by considering the iconography in direct relation to imagery that was current in the contemporary poetry likewise created for ‘Āmirid patrons. The presentation of a particular text or image on an object was a deliberate choice on the part of the patron, and as we will discuss here, the ‘Āmirids’ choice of what to

1 Contiente 1969, 131–132; Echevarría 2011, 181–2.

depict on their art shows significant variations from the caliphal norm. Understanding their iconographic and epigraphic programmes allows us to reconstruct the ways in which they wished to present themselves, to the audiences to whom their objects were displayed.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Arabic poetic imagery draws on a complex system of quotation and topoi, whose references and resonances would have been instantly recognisable to the educated audience. It was this same audience, composed of the Andalusī social elite, which patronised the luxury arts, and the imagery of Andalusī poetry can therefore not be separated from that of the surviving art. The trend towards increasing figurativism noticeable in both the luxury and literary arts under the ʿĀmirids may be a symptom of this interrelationship. As Cómez Ramos notes, images ‘passed from one medium to another, from poetry to the plastic arts and vice versa ... producing a game of allusions and references’; he describes the lion and eagle motifs which feature on the ʿĀmirid marble basins as ‘[visualisations of] the metaphors which [the] poets sang, as ‘poems in stone.’²

The use of poetic testimony thus allows us to understand the impression that an image might have conjured in the mind of a member of the Andalusī elite with a position at the ʿĀmirid court. Part 1 of this chapter will focus on elements of the ʿĀmirids’ decorative vocabulary that between them cover most of the surface area of these objects – we can surmise that these images were therefore intended to be the most striking elements of the ʿĀmirid visual programme and thus of the *ḥujjāb*’s ‘public image’. These elements comprise the motif of a lion attacking a gazelle; nature imagery; the ‘heraldic’ eagle, which has a probable visual association with the banners of the Umayyad army; and the possibility of allusions to literary illustrations, in particular the *Kalīla wa Dimna*. I will not

engage in art historical taxonomies of the origins and trajectories of these motifs, but will focus on how their meaning was understood in the specific, *local* context in which they were created and consumed – the ʿĀmirid court in al-Andalus in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The inscriptions and semantic games used on these objects will be discussed in Part 2.

1 Poetic and Visual Imagery

1.1 *The Lion and Gazelle (Figure 157)*

By far the largest surface area on objects produced under ʿĀmirid patronage is dedicated to scenes of combat between animals, or between animals and humans. The Pamplona casket (Chapter 7: 2.1) provides something of a catalogue of combat scenes, which form the decoration of eight of its nine carved plaques. These include dogs, lions, eagles and other birds of prey attacking weaker animals; tense scenes of affronted wild or mythological animals poised before combat; and hunting scenes, showing men on foot or horseback spearing leopards/cheetahs or lions, and the representation of what seems to be a joust on the back of the casket. However, the combat motif that most frequently recurs in ʿĀmirid art is that of the ‘conquering lion’, which, as Ettinghausen stated, ‘[renders] the ... concept of uncompromising rule by the paramount power.’³

The lion as a symbol of royalty and secular power is millennia-old. ‘Lion-thrones’ possibly visualised a reference to Solomon as the ideal ruler,⁴ and Islamic rulers kept physical representations of

2 Cómez Ramos 1982, 132–4. All his examples are taken from Pérès 1937, and therefore date from the Fitna and Taifa periods, since Pérès’ study did not include poetry from the caliphal or ʿĀmirid periods.

3 Ettinghausen 1964 [1984], 167.

4 Cf. Bible I Kings 10:18–20: ‘(18) Then the king [Solomon] made a great throne inlaid with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. (19) The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. (20) Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom’. On allusions to Solomon’s lion-protected throne in Islamic art, see Soucek 1976, 1993.

lions near their thrones: this may have been the function of the lion statue found at Mshatta,⁵ or the limestone footrest in the form of a double-headed lion, found in Badajoz and possibly dating from the Taifa period.⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III associated himself physically with lions in an extremely vivid manner. In addition to the lion among the fountain-heads which he commissioned to adorn his gift from the Byzantine Emperor (Chapter 2), and the massive golden lion he added as the termination of the aqueduct at the Muniyat al-Nā‘ūrah (below), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān used live lions ‘to make his punishment more terrifying’, a tactic which Ibn Ḥayyān says he imitated from ‘the tyrannic kings of the East’.⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān received lions as gifts from his Berber clients in the Maghrib,⁸ and to house them he constructed a special lion-house behind his palace at Cordoba, ‘on a bridge that was elevated over a gully ... which still today bears the name of the Bridge of Lions’.⁹ They were kept chained and attended by tamers, but on one occasion a lion is said to have broken loose and wandered into a nearby mosque where a holy man was praying. The lion sat down next to him and started roaring, but the man did not interrupt his prayer until he had finished. At that point he saw the lion, called on Allah, and cried at the lion to get far away ‘because this was not his place’. The lion turned and left the mosque, just as his guard came looking for him, and took him back to the caliphal lion-house. Though it is unlikely that this ‘miraculous story’ was true, it was no doubt related by Ibn Ḥayyān to illustrate how ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s association with lions fulfilled the qualities of the ideal (Solomonic) ruler: in the same way that the builder of Mshatta kept stone lions near his throne,

‘Abd al-Raḥmān used living lions to symbolise his royal authority.

Located in the palace gardens, not far from the *majlis*, the lions on the ‘Āmirid marble basins may have conveyed this same idea. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is also possible that al-Madīnat al-Zāhira’s precincts contained a menagerie, where al-Manṣūr housed the fierce beasts, including a tiger, which he received as part of Zīrī ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s gift – the *ḥājib* may thus have lived in physical proximity to such creatures, in the same way that the caliph had done. In art, the lion is most frequently depicted in combat with a bull, an image that originated in the Iranian world where it symbolised the astronomical conflict between Leo and Taurus.¹⁰ It is this motif that most frequently occurred in the Islamic East, where it was used, for example, on Buyid donative coinage;¹¹ it is also the lion-bull motif that features on the Cordoban ivories produced under caliphal patronage, for example on the al-Mughīra pyxis (Figure 171), or the David Collection casket.¹² However, where the lion-bull motif represents a combat between two equally strong animals, the ‘Āmirid objects feature the very different image of the unequal struggle between lion and gazelle. Indeed, as far as we can tell from the surviving objects, this motif first seems to have become popular in al-Andalus under the ‘Āmirids, beginning in 987 with al-Manṣūr’s basin (Chapter 7: 1.2).

The lion-gazelle motif has been variously interpreted as having the same cosmological and pseudo-Zoroastrian religious symbolism as the lion-bull combat,¹³ or as having no more than a

5 Now in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, inv. 1. 6171. See Annette Hagedorn, ‘Lion from the Palace of Mshatta’, in *Discover Islamic Art, Museum With No Frontiers*, http://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;de;Mus01;2;en (consulted 12 January 2020).

6 *Les Andalouses*, cat. 155.

7 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 40–42 (§§23–25).

8 Fierro 2007, 107.

9 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 40–42 (§§23–25).

10 See Hartner’s section on ‘The Lion Bull Combat, an Astronomical Symbol’, in Ettinghausen 1964 [1984], 161–164.

11 See Ilisch 1984.

12 There is an extensive bibliography on the al-Mughīra pyxis, but for basic catalogue information, see Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cat. 13; Kühnel 1971, cat. 31. On the casket acquired by the David Collection in 2002, see *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cat. 10, and the article by Kjeld von Folsach in 2/1.

13 In his discussion of the lion-bull combat, Hartner says, ‘Since the constellation of the Deer sets simultaneously



FIGURE 171 Medallion with lion-bull combat, pyxis made for al-Mughira, dated 968, ivory; Musée du Louvre, inv. OA 4068
© 2005 MUSÉE DU LOUVRE / RAPHAËL CHIPAULT

talismanic or apotropaic function.¹⁴ The ‘Āmirid use of the lion-gazelle can be compared to the mosaic in the *dīwān*/apodyterium of the Syrian Umayyad bath-complex at Khirbat al-Mafjar,¹⁵ which is perhaps the most famous example of this motif. Here the depiction of a large fruiting tree is flanked on the left by two gazelles grazing peacefully, and on the right by the motif of a lion attacking a third gazelle. This scene has likewise been interpreted in a number of ways: as symbolising the peaceful *dār al-islām* as opposed to the *dār al-ḥarb*, the realm of war outside the bounds of Islam;¹⁶ as evoking the erotic meaning of the lion-gazelle topos in love poetry;¹⁷ or as representing the ‘generosity-ruthlessness doublet’, one of the central virtues of Islamic princes as praised by their panegyrists, in which the ruler shows generosity towards his friends and ruthlessness towards his foes.¹⁸

These interpretations open up a variety of possible meanings for the use of the lion-gazelle motif in ‘Āmirid art. However, it is clear from the external evidence of the ‘poetic testimony’ that one

meaning is paramount. In the panegyric poems composed for the ‘Āmirids by Ibn Darrāj, which are exactly contemporary with the surviving ‘Āmirid objects, the lion is one of the most repetitive images, with a clear and consistent equivalence to their role as *mujāhidūn*. Significantly, this association of the lion with *mujāhid* seems to have developed under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. The language of Ibn Ḥayyān’s *Muqtabis* shows that the lion was inherent in metaphorical descriptions of the Umayyad army, in both poetry and prose, and there are numerous references to the army as ‘brave’ or ‘fierce lions’.¹⁹ The most explicit passage occurs in a letter which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān sent to his Berber allies, asking them to prepare troops for a campaign against the Fatimids. The men he wants should be

“people of pure intent, sincere will and firm courage, who will not be frightened of rivals, and a squadron of whom will not be frightened of an opposing army, like lions which advance or dragons which devour, seasoned to war and accustomed to its vicissitudes, like sons to their mother.”²⁰

As we will discuss below, like the heraldic eagle the lion was carried on banners by the Umayyad army, and in this way may have come to represent them visually and metaphorically.

However, there are few surviving instances in caliphal poetry of the lion as an explicit symbol of the caliph himself, which is how it is employed under the ‘Āmirids. Where the image occurs, its meaning is clear: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān is ‘a fierce lion which runs to the fight, or perhaps even more brave’,²¹ and in the following verses, composed on the occasion of the first blood-letting ‘Abd

with the Pleiades, the other well-known motif, the Lion-Deer combat, has to be regarded as a symbol having the same meaning as the Lion-Bull combat’: Ettinghausen 1964 [1984], 164. The often outlandish interpretations of this motif on the ‘Āmirid marble basins are outlined in Cómez Ramos 1982, 130–131. Amador de los Ríos 1877, 315–317, even believed the artist of al-Manṣūr’s basin to have been Persian, since he interpreted its iconography as representing the principles of Mazdaean dualism.

14 Gómez-Moreno 1951, 191; Cómez Ramos 1982, 133.

15 See Hamilton 1988. Khirbat al-Mafjar was probably built by al-Walīd II (r. 743–744) before he became caliph.

16 Ettinghausen 1972, 44–46.

17 Behrens-Abouseif 1997, 14–16.

18 This theory was outlined in a paper entitled “Gazelles and Lions: Political Symbols or Sex Symbols? The apse mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar revisited”, presented by Prof. Julie Scott Meisami at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, on 17 May 2002. On her concept of the ‘generosity-ruthlessness doublet’, see Meisami 2003, 183–4: *zakhm u raḥm* in Persian, ‘wounding and mercy’, ‘which are, respectively, the downfall of the ruler’s enemies and the support of the “friend”’.

19 For example, Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 149 (§124), where the Muslims set upon their enemy like ‘brave lions’; or 330 (§299) describing the Alhándega campaign (327/938–9), where the Muslim troops rushed forward onto the Christians ‘like fierce lions’.

20 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 231 (§207).

21 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 138 (§114), l. 10.

al-Raḥmān underwent after moving to al-Zahrā', the image takes on the resonance of a title:

“From him is perfumed the scent of honours and of generosity, and its fragrance reaches the most remote horizons.

The *lion of the caliphate* (*asad al-khilāfa*) dwells among his cubs, when he walks round his territory and in his dwelling,

And the perfume of his blood-letting oozes out, its aroma spreads out over the whole earth.”²²

The designation here of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān as ‘the lion of the caliphate’ recalls the epithet which the military exploits of his ancestor, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I, earned him – the ‘falcon of the Quraysh’ (*ṣaqr quraysh*).²³ However, after his defeat at the Battle of Alhándega, in 327/938–9, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III never again led an army into the field, nor did al-Ḥakam after his accession to the caliphate. This would explain the relative scarcity of lions in the poetry composed for the second caliph: a study of the twenty-six panegyrics included in al-Rāzī’s Annals, many of which are very long, reveals only four instances of lion imagery, whereas the thirty-three surviving ‘Āmirid panegyrics by Ibn Darrāj yield twenty-nine instances. Of course this kind of comparison is not an exact science, dictated as it is by issues of survival, but it is clear that in the contemporary poetic imagery, the lion was a favoured metaphor for al-Manṣūr and his sons.

Furthermore, there is always a suggestion of distance between al-Ḥakam and the lion: see, for example, these verses from a poem by al-Muḥannad, composed for the ‘Īd al-Fiṭr celebrations of 363/973–4, which fell soon after the defeat of Ḥasan ibn Qānūn, the major military victory of al-Ḥakam’s career:

“Your lions killed their lions; your strong lion-cubs [killed their] strong lion-cubs.”²⁴

These lines are significant for the way in which the lion here does not represent al-Ḥakam himself, but rather his victorious general, Ghālib. Though a number of panegyrics in honour of military victories are sung to al-Ḥakam during the course of al-Rāzī’s Annals, lion images are in general conspicuous by their absence.

In contrast, the lion is one of the most frequent images in the panegyrics composed for the ‘Āmirids by Ibn Darrāj. An interesting verse in poem 119, l. 5, quells any doubt over the meaning of this metaphor: composed as al-Manṣūr departed on campaign, the poet sings of the glories he will achieve, saying, ‘his enemies will later tell that lions are men’. Some examples of the image of al-Manṣūr as the lion of the battlefield are as follows. On the occasion of the *ḥājib*’s campaign against Zirī ibn ‘Aṭiyya, the poet warns

“Let him who wants to kill [al-Manṣūr] understand that his mother will want to bury him, because he is going to confront a strong lion.”²⁵

In similar language, on the occasion of a campaign against García Fernández of Castile, Ibn Darrāj addresses the enemy:

“Where will you be able to save yourself when the lion of the lairs, the protector al-Manṣūr, has come to you enraged?”²⁶

On the *ḥājib*’s return from a campaign against León in 995, the poet praises him,

“You are like a lion which risks its life in battle.”²⁷

22 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 46 (§28), second poem on this page, ll. 3–5.

23 *HEM* 1:133. This epithet was given to him by his sworn enemy, the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr.

24 *Anales*, §180 (l. 18 on p. 198).

25 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 1, l. 44.

26 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 106, l. 20.

27 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 111, l. 17.

His sons are also identified with lions. In a poem dedicated to al-Muzaffar, after mopping-up campaigns against García Fernández *circa* 994, at which Ibn Darrāj was himself present, his lust for the fight is described as follows (l. 23):

“The lion of the forest, who does not leave or return except in search of glory, runs at [the ranks of swords] ...”²⁸

And when Hishām granted ‘Abd al-Malik his *laqab*:

“You were called al-Muzaffar when you were triumphant,
and you had attacked your enemies like a fierce lion.”²⁹

On the occasion *circa* 997 when al-Manṣūr executed fifty Navarrese knights who had violated the peace by making incursions into al-Andalus, Sanchuelo himself, aged only fourteen, killed one of his own relatives; in his praise, Ibn Darrāj exclaims,

“the vizier was like a lion – who could be his father, except the ‘Āmirid?”

and later, in the same poem, the relative he executed was

“a lion which fell at the burn of the gaze of a lion-cub.”³⁰

Echevarría notes that the increasing reference to al-Manṣūr’s sons in the panegyric of this period, especially that associated with the Santiago campaign, began to prepare the way for the dynastic succession of the *hijāba*.³¹

By the early 990s, therefore, the equivalence between lions and the ‘Āmirid *hūjjab* was firmly

embedded in Ibn Darrāj’s poetry. But such an image would only have gained currency through the extent to which it pleased the panegyric’s addressee. Indeed, a poem which al-Manṣūr is said to have composed himself might suggest that the lion was part of the ‘Āmirids’ self-image from a slightly earlier period. It is undated, but it is tempting to relate its metaphor of construction to his architectural projects of the late 980s:

“In person, as a magnanimous nobleman should, I have faced the gravest perils, and had nothing with me but a brave heart, an excellent lance, and a sharp and polished sword.

Launching into combat troops of warriors, veritable lions which clash with other lions in their lairs, in person I have led leaders of all kinds and done battle until I found myself triumphant.

It is not a new edifice which I have constructed, but I have enlarged that which ‘Abd al-Malik and ‘Āmir built.

We [the ‘Āmirids] have by means of our exploits rejuvenated a nobility which we possess from long ago Ma‘āfir.”³²

In these verses, al-Manṣūr is concerned with establishing his right to the *hijāba*, emphasizing the noble status he inherited from his ancestors in order to justify his elevated position. The reference to Ma‘āfir here stresses the ‘Āmirids’ Arab origins and their ancestors’ participation in the original conquest of al-Andalus – Hugh Kennedy makes the interesting point that, as a result, al-Manṣūr’s ‘family could claim to have been in al-Andalus longer than the Umayyads themselves’.³³ Al-Manṣūr adduces two further points to the main argument of his nobility: his military victories, symbolised by the lion metaphor, and a tantalising reference to his architectural patronage, especially his extension to the Cordoba Mosque in the line, ‘It

28 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 126, ll. 28–29.

29 *Bayān* 111:18 [translation, 25].

30 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 116, ll. 9, 17.

31 Echevarría 2011, 175.

32 *Bayān* 11:293 [translation, 455]; *Dhikr Bilād* 1:185–186 [11:197]; Echevarría 2011, 238.

33 Kennedy 1996, 109.

is not a new edifice which I have constructed, but [one] I have enlarged ...'

These dual aspects of his 'nobility' remind us of the decoration of his marble basin, whose two long sides visualise these same sentiments. It could be said that in both the poem he composed and the object he commissioned, lions and architecture – standing for his role in jihad, and his cultural patronage – are presented as the two pillars of al-Manṣūr's particular virtues as *ḥājib*. In fact, I would argue that the iconography of 'Āmirid art is precisely concerned with representing its patrons as fulfilling the virtues of the ideal ruler – his physical courage and his courtly refinement. Because of this, the lion metaphor seems to have been deliberately emphasised, artistically and poetically, as a symbol of 'Āmirid self-expression. That the propaganda worked is clear from its contemporary reactions: compare this verse, written by al-Muṣḥafī during the period of his persecution by al-Manṣūr, which contains an interesting inversion of the lion image:

"Fortune has made me fearsome to lions themselves, but now it is I whom she makes tremble before the fox."³⁴

The force of this slander of al-Manṣūr lies in the way it questions the 'Āmirid self-image: the *ḥājib* was a fox, not a lion as he claimed, and al-Muṣḥafī should know, having encountered so many *real* lions in his career.

The natural complement to the image of the 'conquering lion' is the gazelle, precisely because of its ancient poetic relationship in the type of lyric poems that Doris Behrens-Abouseif cites in her interpretation of the Khirbat al-Maḥjar mosaic.³⁵ However, this does not imply that the pairing of the two in 'Āmirid art represents an erotic motif. Rather, the weaker animal represents the conquered enemy, who is also paraded before

us in the panegyrics sung on the occasion of the defeated foe's ceremonial visits to the 'Āmirid court. While, in the poetry, the lion frequently occurs as a single image, the weaker animals usually occur in combination with a fierce animal that terrorises them. The pairings conform to a logical pattern: fierce birds such as falcons and eagles are repeatedly combined with cranes and partridges,³⁶ whereas the lion is most usually combined with varieties of deer. Thus, al-Ḥakam's enemies

"climb to inhabit the mountains
and make themselves the neighbours of ravens
and antelopes, and declare war on [him] ...
With the fury of a lion who gathers together his
cubs, [al-Ḥakam] sends against him [Ḥasan ibn
Qānūn] one part of his troops
which, as thick as a cloud of locusts, covers the
mountains and the face of the earth ..."³⁷

By making themselves their 'neighbours', al-Ḥakam's enemies metaphorically become 'ravens and antelopes', terrorised by the lion of the caliph's fury. In the poem composed by Ibn Darrāj on the occasion of al-Manṣūr's campaign against the Christian coalition in 1000, the 'Āmirid troops are represented as lions and the conquered enemy as

"herds of wild gazelles who have turned their cheeks away from the battle, showing eyes in which can be seen their confusion and hunger."³⁸

It is also likely that the imagery of Ibn Darrāj's poems reflects the language of al-Manṣūr's own rhetoric. During this same campaign, part of the Umayyad army fled in the face of the overwhelming odds. Ana Echevarría cites a long address with which al-Manṣūr castigated them: this has

34 *Bayān* 11:291 [translation, 452].

35 Behrens-Abouseif 1997, 14–16.

36 Cf. Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 58 (§38); *Anales*, §198 (p. 226): poem by Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Malik (from 363/973–4): l. 23; Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 113 (written 993), l. 13.

37 *Anales*, §180 (p. 205): second poem by Abū Mujāhid al-Istijī, ll. 7–8, 13–14.

38 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 105, ll. 19–20.

survived in the form of a letter sent to the troops, which their generals read out to them – the text of this letter must have been recorded by Ibn Ḥayyān (whose father was present at the battle). In one part of the address, al-Manṣūr rebukes the troops:

“So you fled like a herd of gazelles before the lions of the forest and you were scared away, terrorised, like ostriches before hunters. Oh how you have covered yourselves in ignominy!”³⁹

However, the most explicit ‘image’ is provided by a living metaphor: during al-Manṣūr’s campaign against García Fernández of Castile in 995, Ṣā’id al-Baghdādī captured a gazelle and symbolically named it ‘Gharsiyya’. He brought the animal, still alive, to al-Manṣūr, along with ‘an elegant *qasīda*’ in which he expressed the wish that the same might happen to its namesake:

“O refuge of the terrified, asylum of the persecuted, comfort to the vilified!
O string of virtues and repository of every brilliant quality! Thou art the refuge of the needy.
A slave [of thine] whom thou didst take by the hand and didst raise from his station, presents thee with a stag.
I named it Gharsiyya and I sent it to thee [with a rope around its neck], that the same may happen with its namesake [the Christian king].
Shouldst thou accept [this my present], I would consider it as the greatest favour that a generous man can bestow.”⁴⁰

The living metaphor was made real when, that very day, García Fernández was captured while hunting by al-Manṣūr’s cavalry. As ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III maintained a symbolic physical association with

real lions in order to terrorise his people, so it can be said that the metaphorical ‘Āmirid lion made of his enemies real gazelles.

The ‘Āmirids’ use of the lion image signified a deliberate intensification of a standard element in the vocabulary of panegyric. The relative infrequency with which it was used under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and al-Ḥakam may be due to the fact that, after 939, neither caliph personally led an army into the field. As noted above, it was a source of pride to al-Manṣūr that his military exploits were conducted ‘in person’, and as discussed in Chapter 1, his role as *mujāhid* played a fundamental part in legitimising his position as *de facto* ruler of al-Andalus. Al-Manṣūr saw himself as the warrior *par excellence*, hence the lion *par excellence*.

It is likely that the ‘Āmirids’ use of the lion image could have evoked resonances of the first caliph, whose association with lions was made controversial by his use of live lions in punishment, and visually striking by his construction of a massive lion fountain at his Munyat al-Nā’ūrah, discussed below. As we have frequently mentioned, al-Manṣūr imitated in many respects a model of legitimation that was established by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III in the articulation of his caliphate; perhaps the ‘Āmirids adopted the lion motif precisely because it resonated of that caliph’s authority. However, by introducing the gazelle, this image differed from those the caliphs themselves used: their ivories bore the lion-bull motif. Al-Manṣūr may thus have intended the image of the lion-gazelle to serve as an ‘Āmirid symbol, as ‘a meaningful emblem of political power’.⁴¹ This would explain its repeated use on ‘Āmirid objects across different media. Its use on the ivories later made for the Dhū’l-Nūnids – such as the Silos cascket (Figure 174)⁴² – may be a deliberate evocation of this ‘Āmirid emblem, one of the ways in which they referred to Cordoba in their attempt at legitimising themselves (Conclusion).

39 Echevarría 2011, 176. Were ostriches considered a particularly ignoble animal?

40 Al-Maqqarī, 206 (Arabic text given in Gayangos, II, 484–485, n. 17); *Dhikr Bilād* 1:190–191 [11:200–201]; Molina 1981, 226.

41 Ettinghausen 1964 [1984], 166.

42 Ferrandis 1935, vol. 1, cat. 25; Kühnel 1971, cat. 40.

A final point concerns the function of the 'Āmirid marble basins as the reservoirs for fountains. In Islamic art more broadly, the iconographic association between lions and water is frequent.⁴³ We know from poetic descriptions as well as surviving examples that lions were popular as fountain heads: the murmuring noise of the water passing through its internal pipes and out through its mouth gave rise to a poetic topos of the lion roaring, as in al-Jazīrī's poem (quoted at the start of this chapter). In fact, there is a greater significance to this association between lions and water: while, again, this seems to have an ancient and possibly cosmic origin,⁴⁴ the symbolism is in fact very simple – of the ruler's generosity and ability to provide for his people. The ruler's construction of aqueducts and water infrastructure, to bring water from mountains to cities, was considered an act of great piety. It was also to the ruler whom the people looked to provide rain in times of drought: it was incumbent on him to authorise a special prayer (*istisqā'*), which was recited by his designated representative in one of the two *maṣallas* outside Cordoba.⁴⁵ This is expressed in the verses sung to al-Ḥakam by Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭubnī on the occasion of 'Īd al-Aḍḥā in 361/972:

43 Graves 2018, 199, notes that 'the lion protome' is a 'strikingly consistent feature of the *kilgas*', marble stands for earthenware waterpots made in Egypt from the twelfth century, and discusses the wider association between lions and water. More generally on the *kilgas*, see Graves 2015; 2018, 181–213.

44 Tanavoli 1985, 14, traces the relationship to the legend that the Zoroastrian goddess of water, Anahita, was made pregnant by Mithra, who was symbolized by a lion. Furthermore, if we understand the lion as symbolic of the constellation Leo, it is when the sun is in Leo that the Nile floods.

45 Cf. 'Istiskā', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition. Also, see Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 88 (§67); 159 (§132–133); 161 (§134); 190 (§165); 357–358 (§321–322). Also, *Bayān* 11:173 [translation, 276]; 204 [translation, 317–318]; 213 [translation, 330]. Bariani 2003, 157, discusses *istisqā'* ceremonies c. 988–9 to call for rain.

“On this holy day the rain comes to pay you obeisance;

Even if, instead of the rain, your generosity had watered the earth, she would have been forever safe from drought ...”⁴⁶

It is due to the ruler's capacity as bringer of rain that water also became an important topos in poetic imagery, especially in relation to what Julie Meisami has styled the 'generosity-ruthlessness doublet'. For example, Ibn Darrāj says of al-Manṣūr that 'you give more gifts than the torrential rain';⁴⁷ that 'he has irrigated those who desire his favour like an abundant rainfall';⁴⁸ and that 'the rain which you have made fall / has abundantly irrigated Islam'.⁴⁹ On the other hand, however, the ruler can turn this power against his enemies: '[al-Manṣūr] is for Islam a beneficial rainfall, and for heresy he is a destructive storm'.⁵⁰ As he provides water for his people, so he can take it from his enemies: 'He did not leave ... a single place among his enemies for them to drink'.⁵¹ Furthermore, in keeping with the increasingly martial aesthetic discernible in 'Āmirid poetry, this image can be given a macabre spin: for example, Ṣā'īd al-Baghdādī talks of al-Manṣūr 'making the countryside fertile with the deaths of polytheists';⁵² and the image of the land irrigated by enemies' blood pervades the poems of Ibn Darrāj.⁵³

The use of lions in the decoration of waterworks is therefore also symbolic of the ruler's virtues

46 *Anales*, §82 (p.118): ll. 5–6.

47 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 110, l. 16.

48 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 115, l. 28.

49 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 107, ll. 29–30.

50 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 101, l. 30.

51 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 126, l. 15.

52 *Bayān* 11:297 [translation, 460].

53 Cf. for example, Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 102, praising the successes of al-Manṣūr's two sons in mopping-up operations after the Santiago campaign, saying (l. 38), 'They have showered their hills with blood like rain which falls abundantly for the good of the faith ...' Other instances of this image are Ibn Darrāj 1969, poems 103, l. 21; 105, l. 7; 118, l. 32; 126, ll. 21–22.

as presented in the poetic imagery. A lion was among the gold statues which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III commissioned for his Byzantine fountain basin (Chapter 2), though he also constructed a much more striking visual relationship between lions and water:

“At the beginning of this year [329/940–1], al-Nāṣir finished the construction of the extraordinary man-made aqueduct that brought fresh water from the mountains to the Qaṣr al-Nā‘ūrah on the west side of Cordoba. Water flowed through fabricated channels on a fantastic arrangement of connecting arches, emptying into a large pool at the edge of which was a lion, enormous in size, unique in design, and fearful in appearance ... It was plated with gold and its eyes were two brilliantly sparkling jewels. Water entered through the rear of the lion and was spewed into the pool. It was dazzling to behold in its splendour and magnificence and its copious outpouring, and the palace’s entire range of gardens were irrigated by its juices which flowed over the grounds and the surrounding area.”⁵⁴

This massive golden lion was thus a prominent and highly-visible statement of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s royalty, his power to convert the natural landscape, and his fulfilment of the ideals of rulership, in ‘bringing’ water. However, this was not a public aqueduct – it was for his private use in the Munyat al-Nā‘ūrah. In discussing ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s pre-Madīnat al-Zahrā’ palaces, Ruggles observes that they ‘consumed a spectacular amount of water’, and that ‘the role of water in giving life to the gardens ... of the Munyat al-Nā‘ūrah was celebrated through these displays of abundance’.⁵⁵

54 Al-Maqqarī, *Analectes*, 1:371, translated in Ruggles 2000, 50; cf. also her n. 84; see also Anderson 2013, 11–3. This was a Roman aqueduct, refurbished by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III; part of it survives, still visible at Valdepuentes near Madīnat al-Zahrā’.

55 Ruggles 2000, 52.

Was it, rather, a celebration of the fact that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s power as caliph was so great that he could provide ample water for his people, and *still* abundantly irrigate his own palace and gardens? Was the golden lion from which the waters of the aqueduct debouched a visualisation of the quasi-title of the ‘lion of the caliphate’ which he had received in poetry? Though they are smaller in scale, the ‘Amirid marble basins capture something of the sentiment of this aqueduct. Al-Manṣūr, through his construction of a new cistern and ablutions pavilions at the Cordoba Mosque, demonstrated his ability to fulfil the ruler’s role in providing water for the city’s residents. The basin’s large size and impressive appearance underlines the relationship between lions and water, and possibly visualises the poetic role of the ruler as rainmaker.

This was a genuine concern at this period. Manzano discusses the ‘many episodes of drought’, whose ‘terrible effects’ were mitigated by handouts from the state.⁵⁶ As we saw in Chapter 4, al-Manṣūr had granaries and mills constructed at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, to allow the city to be self-sufficient in the supply of food during times of hardship, and as discussed in Chapter 5, he constructed an enormous new cistern at the Cordoba Mosque. Indeed, during a ‘terrible famine’ throughout al-Andalus, the Maghrib and Ifrīqiya, which began in 379/989–990 and lasted three years, ‘al-Manṣūr ordered that every day ... should be made 22,000 loaves of bread, which were distributed amongst the poor’.⁵⁷ He ‘behaved as no king before him had ever acted, and made kind gestures: he helped the Muslims, fed the weak, waived the tithes, buried the dead and succoured the living’. Significantly, the description of al-Manṣūr’s generous behaviour during this time is comparable to that of al-Ḥakam during an earlier famine, in 353/964–5, and they

56 Manzano 2019, 47–48.

57 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:153–154 [11:193]; see also Ibn Abī Zar’ 1964, 115.

are both credited with caring personally for the needy.⁵⁸ On this occasion, ‘al-Ḥakam took care of the sick and needy, whether in Cordoba, its suburbs or al-Zahrā’. He gave them nourishment and he thus saved their lives’.

This discussion raises the possibility that the use of the lion image by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, and by al-Manṣūr in combination with the gazelle, represented ‘a meaningful emblem of [their] political power’,⁵⁹ that is, it functioned as a type of dynastic, even heraldic, emblem which signified that patron. In this way, al-Nāṣir might have visualised the quasi-title the ‘lion of the caliphate’ which he had received in poetry, while the presence of the lion-gazelle ‘emblem’ identified particular objects as ‘Āmirid. The particular way in which they are consistently rendered on these basins might evoke the designs on the military banners of the Umayyad armies, an idea which will be discussed in detail below. The addition of fountain heads that were also in the form of lions underlined the lion imagery carved onto the basins, making it even more powerful.

1.2 *Nature Imagery*

While scenes of violent combat might call most attention in ‘Āmirid art, it is significant that a completely contrasting aesthetic coexists on these same objects: that is, the abundance of images of nature, which form compositions in themselves as well as the backdrop to more representational scenes. Particularly favoured are stylised representations of plants and flowers: the basins made for al-Manṣūr and ‘Abd al-Malik both dedicate one long side – over a metre of decorative surface – to floral decoration (Figures 114, 130). Certain aspects of the nature imagery from caliphal and ‘Āmirid panegyric poetry have already been mentioned, since this formed an essential element in the poetic vocabulary of the ruler’s virtues. The full spectrum of poetic nature imagery encompassed

the entire natural world, both on the earth and in the sky, and an important aspect relates to the natural universe, employing metaphors of light, the stars, planets, sun and moon to describe the ruler’s attributes. I will concentrate here on the depictions of *cultivated* nature, which can be considered as reflections of the poetic image of the fertility that the ruler’s generosity brings to the land. This includes the natural backdrop to more representational scenes, such as the garden *majlis* on the Pamplona casket.

A natural consequence of the ruler’s ability to bring water, most often in the form of rain, is that the land becomes fertile and flourishing. This is a favourite topos of Ibn Darrāj’s panegyrics to al-Manṣūr, as is its complement of the desert as symbolic of the ruler’s withdrawal of generosity. The sentiment is clearly illustrated in his line, ‘The universe is flourishing under your reign’;⁶⁰ and in the following short *nawrīyya*:

“How pleasant is the timidity of the apples,
adorned with varieties of flowers,
Surrounded by jonquils like eyes that gaze from
under the eyebrows of an awoken lover,
As if the colour these apples had blushed with
shame was like the red colour of the moon’s
dawnlight appearing bit by bit.
In the *diwan* of the king al-Manṣūr they are fresh
as if they had been nourished by his abundant
generosity.”⁶¹

Such a blossoming of the natural world, as a result of the ruler’s generosity, also gives rise to the topos that his protection is like the shade of a tree.⁶² The two are combined in the verse,

60 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 111, l. 2.

61 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 149, ll. 1–4. Does the use of ‘malik’ in this poem suggest it was written after 996, when al-Manṣūr is said to have adopted the title ‘al-malik al-karīm’? (though Bariani 2003, 173–4, is dubious about whether he ever adopted such a title).

62 For example, Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 111, ll. 2, 10–11: ‘Tender shady tree of your nobility, whose branches

58 *Bayān* 11:251 [translation, 389].

59 Ettinghausen 1964 [1984], 166.

“Without your blessings what shade will surround me, and without your gifts from which trough will I draw water?”⁶³

Elsewhere images of rain and fertility are linked to the ruler’s generosity: for example, Ibn Darrāj says, ‘You have watered my soul with the generosity of your gifts’, and later talks of ‘the fruits of the gifts which you have given me’;⁶⁴ similarly, ‘A well-timed rainfall has come to bring life to the world ... / The earth has dressed up in holiday clothes ...’.⁶⁵ In turn, the good ruler, who brings rain and allows the earth to flourish, can expect to find his way to the ultimate garden, in Paradise.⁶⁶

Such images pervade Ibn Darrāj’s poetry, though it must be noted that, unlike the poetic use of figurative motifs, this was not a new or particularly intensified phenomenon under the ‘Āmirids: metaphors of nature are probably the most abundant image in caliphal poetry, and some of the topoi we have noted here from Ibn Darrāj’s poems were obviously perpetuated from those used by caliphal panegyrists. For example, the following poems in honour of al-Ḥakam:

“Justice reigns, Islam shines, and the branch of the Empire turns green and bears its fruits ...”⁶⁷

Or,

“With his face he has made the smiling spring return before its season,

And gardens and flowers have returned to the earth, and a fertility which has completely eclipsed sterility ...”⁶⁸

Lastly,

“Do you not see that God has put him in charge of his earth, and he [Hishām] has made fertile any uncultivated land?

He fights sterility with gifts ...”⁶⁹

In general, however, these images of nature function as metaphors of generosity or other virtuous attributes of the ruler: they evoke the concerns of a people who essentially lived off the land.⁷⁰ The tenth century saw an upsurge in the construction of *munyas*, which were essentially countryside retreats surrounded by orchard gardens.⁷¹ These gardens were not necessarily cultivated so that the *munya* would be self-sufficient, but rather so that their owners could display their wealth and status by surrounding themselves with ‘organised nature’. As we saw in Chapter 3, the ideal *locus amoenus* for a wine party was an environment that evoked nature but was not “natural” nature,⁷² as better suited the tastes of the urbanised society of tenth-century Cordoba. This ‘caused the city dwellers to [rediscover] nature in much the same way that modern man goes to the countryside on weekends to avoid the maddening rush of city

reach the highest spaces / And whose shade has spread out for the security of the Muslims and its fruits for the nourishment of the people’; cf. also poems 77, l. 15; 100, l. 46; 116, l. 20.

63 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 1 *bis*, l. 18.

64 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 114, ll. 24 and 33.

65 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 108, ll. 5, 22–23.

66 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 105, l. 4.

67 *Anales*, §33 (p. 84): l. 4 of the poem composed by Muḥammad ibn al-Istijī.

68 *Anales*, §198 (pp. 225–6): ll. 7–8 of the poem by Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Malik.

69 *Anales*, §237 (pp. 273–75): ll. 4–5 of the poem by Muḥammad ibn Shukhayṣ.

70 See ‘Arīb ibn Sa’d/Pellat 1961. Six-sevenths of the revenue of al-Andalus was from agriculture: see Chalmers 1992, 750–751.

71 On agriculture in al-Andalus, see the first two chapters of Ruggles 2000, 3–32. On the phenomenon of the tenth-century Cordoban *munya* as an ‘Islamic villa’, see Anderson 2013; for a wider collection of studies on this phenomenon in the Islamic West, see Navarro Palazón and Trillo San José 2019.

72 Scheindlin 1986, 7.

life'.⁷³ The popularity of poetic images of nature therefore reflects an 'urban and cultured appreciation of the nature that could be found in the gardens and palatial residences of Cordoba'.⁷⁴ As this appreciation developed, the theme of flowers and nature accrued in cultural significance, so that poetic anthologies came to be given titles which implicitly likened the book to a garden in spring, full of blossoming flowers – that is, the floral poems within it.⁷⁵ Prose writers even gave such titles to works of history and geography, calling the chapters 'flowers'.⁷⁶

The poetic use of these natural metaphors is embodied visually in the contemporary art, in the backdrops of cultivated plants and flowers which frame the more primary scenes of animal and human figures. The use of nature as a backdrop is symbolic of all that is right in the state, since it resonates of the ruler's poetic role to make the land fertile, and also evokes the very real fertility which the object's viewer can observe in their natural surroundings. However, though nature plays an important secondary role in such scenes, the main visual message is contained in the image which the nature frames: this is perhaps most clearly exemplified in the ivory pyxides – especially the Braga pyxis (Chapter 7: 2.2, Figure 15) – whose architectonic form and vegetal background decoration evoke 'pavilions amid lush gardens'.⁷⁷ While the gardens are essential for the setting, the important thing is the pavilion.

Thus the arcade of three lobed arches is the primary message of the back of al-Manṣūr's basin, though its apparent setting in a blooming garden probably provides a significant supplementary meaning. This arcade alludes to al-Manṣūr's role

as a patron of architecture – could it represent the idealised *locus amoenus*, the physical setting of the poetic *majālis* which played such an important role in the legitimation of his rule? Or does it relate to another architectural project, which al-Manṣūr would have wanted to commemorate in perpetuity – his construction of the Cordoba Mosque extension? Though the images are (deliberately?) multivalent, I would argue for the latter as the primary meaning. Most simply, this basin was commissioned in the same year as the mosque construction began – it is the only (extant) exception to the 'rule' that the manufacture of luxury objects did not coincide with major architectural projects, and vice versa (Chapter 6). Secondly, the *fatā al-kabīr al-ʿāmīrī* who is named as the director of this commission was Khalaf or Khayrah, both of whom also worked on al-Manṣūr's mosque extension. There was very likely to have been a personnel connection between the two projects, via the workshop that produced this basin and the decoration for the mosque. In terms of the decoration itself, the lobed arches evoke those which al-Manṣūr inserted into the mosque's internal arcading as space-filling devices (Chapter 5). More particularly, though, they evoke the blind arcades of the gates which he built on the eastern façade, and the epigraphy around three sides of the basin's periphery evokes the framing inscriptions of those gates (Figures 68–74, 82). It seems highly likely, therefore, that the basin was a special commission by al-Manṣūr to commemorate his extension to the mosque, an act which was so symbolic to him that he preserved it in poetry as well (as we saw above). Lastly, the nature imagery that flourishes on this basin encapsulates al-Manṣūr's sovereign generosity at undertaking such an important and pious work for the Cordoban people – the visual embodiment, in fact, of Ibn Darrāj's verse, 'The universe is flourishing under your reign'.⁷⁸ It also evokes what Grabar has called the 'effect' of the mihrab within the mosque itself: its chamber form makes it appear as 'a gate, open towards the invisible or the unknown' – open, in fact, towards

73 Monroe 1974, 10.

74 Monroe 1971, 10.

75 For example, the lost *Kitāb al-Hadā'iq* ('Book of Gardens') by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Jayyānī, a poet of al-Ḥakam's era: see Monés 1969, 211.

76 For example, al-Maqqarī, 206, uses the fourteenth-century history by Ibn Simāk, entitled *Al-Zaharāt al-manthūra fi nukat al-akhbār al-ma'thūra*, 'The Book of Scattered Flowers or the Memorable Deeds [of al-Manṣūr]'. Cf. Ibn Simāk 1984.

77 Robinson 1995, 642.

78 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem III, l. 2.

Paradise, represented in poetry and the Qur'ān as the ultimate garden.⁷⁹

In contrast to the use on al-Manṣūr's basin of natural decoration in a significant but supplementary role, on the back of al-Muẓaffar's basin, flowers and nature comprise the *only* decoration. The decoration of these two basins thus stands in the same relation to each other as do nature metaphors to *nawriyyāt* – those short poems that embody the purest expression of nature imagery. Consisting of a few verses in description of a particular flower and ending with a verse of praise to the addressee,⁸⁰ they indulge in descriptions of nature for its own sake, rather than illustrating a larger concept, as the nature metaphors do.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the genre of floral description began to develop under al-Manṣūr, but it was a poetic form particularly favoured by al-Muẓaffar. Ibn Ḥayyān tells us that

“[he] asked his poets, in some springtimes during his reign, [that they compose] poetic fragments [on the theme of] white flowers, about *manzūr* (stocks), and about *zahra* (orange blossom) and other types of flowers. He was very fond of this [type of poetry] and continually sought out variations on this theme. [He] liked his singers to introduce [flowers] into their songs. People wrote copiously [about] them, bearing in mind the beauty and rarity of the subject. And among the [poems] that he accepted were the compositions of Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī, his drinking companion (*nadīm*) ...”⁸¹

Such poems came to be favoured as ‘vehicles of praise’, and sometimes served to introduce a longer, panegyric poem.⁸² Poets presented them as

gifts to their patron, like a bouquet of flowers.⁸³ This genre of floral poetry embodied the late tenth-century preference for ‘nature in a controlled state’: whereas ordinary speech in Arabic is *nathr*, ‘scattered words’, poetry is *naẓm*, ‘arranged words’,⁸⁴ and the words (metaphorically, flowers) of the floral poem are arranged to symbolise a carefully cultivated garden. It seems possible, then, that we can read in the structure – horizontal, like the verses of a poem? – of the four bands of flowers on al-Muẓaffar's basin the ‘petrification’ of a *nawriyya*, of verses composed in his favourite poetic genre. Such a basin would have been commissioned by him to adorn a garden in the private reaches of his palace, where he would have gathered with his *nudamā'* and listened to such floral images being conjured in their poetry. This interplay between furnishing and environment, between artistic and poetic images, is one of the noteworthy characteristics of 'Āmirid art (Chapter 7) – it would likewise have been noted and admired by al-Muẓaffar's *nudamā'*, and perhaps even served as the springboard for further literary creativity. However, the ways in which this repeats the arrangement of the decoration on al-Manṣūr's basin leads to the consideration that it signified more than that. The repetition on 'Abd al-Malik's basin of the lion-gazelle motif may well imply that this image functioned as a dynastic emblem, identifying the patron as an 'Āmirid by virtue of his military role and exploits. If this is the case, then it can be argued that the other side of the basins represented another symbolic aspect of each 'Āmirid's rule: if for al-Manṣūr it was his mosque extension, for al-Muẓaffar it may have been his love of *nawriyyāt*. These stand

79 Grabar 1988, 115–116.

80 Menocal et al 2000, 214.

81 *Apud Bayān* 111:18–21 [translation, 25–28]. He goes on to give six *nawriyyāt* by Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī and two by Ibn Darrāj, on myrtle, lemon balm, narcissus, violets, stocks, roses and lilies. The two Ibn Darrāj poems are translated and discussed in Monroe 1971, 9–10.

82 Robinson 2002, 118; Monroe 1971, 10.

83 Al-Ḥimyarī 1940, 132 (cited by Robinson 2002, 118) gives one occasion on which a poet accompanies floral-themed praises with an actual bouquet of flowers. The poem as a gift presented to the patron is a topos, and it may also be represented as a luxury object: cf. the motif in ll. 32–34 of Ibn Darrāj's first panegyric poem to Sulaymān (Ibn Darrāj 1969, 51–57 (poem 27)) where the poem is likened to a jewel. Cf. also the title of the book dedicated to al-Manṣūr by Ṣā'id al-Baghdādī – the *Kitāb al-Fuṣūṣ*, or ‘Book of Gems’.

84 Scheindlin 1986, 8–9.

for the broader cultural interests of the particular patrons: architecture for al-Manṣūr, literature for al-Muzaffar.

The primacy of literature at al-Muzaffar's court is probably also represented on another object made for the same patron: the Pamplona casket. As we have mentioned (Chapter 7), eight out of this object's nine figurative panels represent scenes of violent combat. However, they are balanced on the front of the casket by a peaceful scene of an outdoor gathering. Its three eight-lobed medallions contain "'courtly" scenes' that 'constitute segments of one larger scene', which Cynthia Robinson has read as 'a visual representation of the sensual, intimate, literary and – above all – *pleasurable* gatherings which [were] a major focus of court literature' under the 'Āmirids.⁸⁵ As discussed in Chapter 7, it is likely that here we see al-Muzaffar and his *nudamā'* gathered at a poetic *majlis* in the gardens of his palace, listening to the poetry sung by the musicians at the centre, and enjoying wine and the scent of flowers, that will no doubt lead to further poetic improvisation. This leisure activity is earned through the success of al-Muzaffar's military exploits – his legitimising role as *mujāhid* – visualised on the back of the casket in which he fends off the attack of two lions, and underscored by the scenes of human and animal combat on the casket's remaining panels.

The coexistence on 'Āmirid objects of such contrasting images – peaceful nature and belligerent combat – was a deliberate iconographic choice. Moreover, it was a choice that implied the ways in which the 'Āmirids wished to represent themselves. It has also been observed that the poetic equivalents of these images are important concepts in the vocabulary of the virtues of the ideal ruler. In fact, it is these contrasting but complementary virtues (the 'generosity-ruthlessness doublet' again) which the iconography of all these objects encapsulates: it is not quite the dichotomy

of *dār al-islām/dār al-ḥarb* that Ettinghausen read in the Khirbat al-Maḥjar mosaic, but to an extent that scene may evoke the same combination of the ruler's physical courage – which he used for the defense of Islam – and his courtly refinement, epitomised through his cultural patronage, which we see encapsulated on the 'Āmirid objects. It should be remembered that the development and maintenance of a flourishing court is only possible in an atmosphere of security – indeed, that courtliness is a luxury of peacetime. The iconography of these 'Āmirid objects thus represents two sides of the same coin, and tells us much about the ways in which the *ḥujjāb* saw themselves as fulfilling the ideals of rulership. This interpretation will be further elaborated below.

1.3 The 'Heraldic' Eagle (Figures 116, 132, 158)

In contrast to the motifs discussed above – which, though they seem to have clear meanings in this specific local context, were nevertheless quite common elements in the artistic and poetic vocabulary of rulers throughout the Islamic world – the splayed eagle, another of the prominent images on 'Āmirid objects (seen on the three large marble basins, the Pamplona casket, a version of it on the Suaire de Saint Lazare), was not. While the image of the bird of prey (whether eagle or falcon) alighting on a weaker bird or animal is relatively common in the art of al-Andalus both before and during the 'Āmirid period, there is an important formal distinction which allows the differentiation of two types: the bird alighting is usually represented with its body in profile and its wings uplifted on either side – I will call this the 'profile' pose; in contrast, the 'frontal' eagle maintains a hieratic and impossible pose, with its full-frontal body, legs and wings splayed straight out to its sides, and its head turned in profile. The two types can be compared on the lid of the Pamplona casket, where the 'profile' type fills the central medallion of the topmost plaque (Figure 124A), while two 'frontal' eagles occur at the extreme right and left sides of the back slope of the lid (Figure 124B).

85 Robinson 2007, 109. Naváscues y de Palacio 1964a, 244, describes this scene as 'an open-air fiesta'.

The visual models for this motif are not problematic to identify. If, as suggested in Chapter 6, Andalusī carvers at this period were looking to locally sourced examples of Classical and Late Antique art for their models and inspiration, there was no shortage of eagles – the quintessential Imperial emblem – to choose from in the region that had once been the capital of Roman Hispania. One such example is the late second-century marble altar dedicated to Venus Victrix from Mérida, now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid (Figure 98). Designers of ‘Āmirid objects might also have looked to textile models, and it is remarkable how similar stylistically the eagles on the basins are to contemporary Byzantine silks. Particularly close comparisons are the silks used for the shroud of Saint Germain (d. 448), from the church of Saint Eusèbe, Auxerre (Figure 87), and the chasuble of Saint Albuin (975–1006) at Brixen/Bressanone.⁸⁶ John Beckwith supposed that these silks were produced at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries, since an inventory mentions that the Auxerre shroud was donated c. 1030 by Hugues de Châlons; it also describes it as *casula ... purpurea grandes aquilas coloris coccinei intextas*, ‘a purple chasuble with large eagles woven in a red colour’. It must have been at this time that the silk was translated into the tomb of Saint Germain. However, it is certain that the eagle was being used in Byzantine textiles well before this: in 938, the Emperor Romanos Lecapenos (r. 920–944) sent to the Abbasid caliph al-Rāḍī bi-llāh (r. 934–940) a gift which included ‘seven silk carpets (*sufar dibā*) for eating off, made of silk and decorated with images of eagles in two colours.’⁸⁷ It is thus probable that the datable eagle silks from Auxerre and Brixen came from a well-established industry, rather than indicating the beginning of a tradition.

Byzantine textiles decorated with such motifs must have existed in al-Andalus: as we have seen,

Byzantine embassies came to Cordoba during the reigns of all three caliphs, and no doubt brought such imperial gifts with them. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III seems to have been in possession of at least one Byzantine imperial textile by the 930s as he redeployed it in his own gifts: the gift to Mūsā ibn Abī al-‘Āfiyya in 934 included a ‘large silver caliphal perfume chest ... whose interior was lined with purple fabric.’⁸⁸ Such silks may have been highly visible at the court: we know that the caliph displayed prestigious or meaningful gifts, such as the great pearl he had received from the Emperor Leo VI (r. 886–912) that hung in his throne hall (Chapter 2).⁸⁹ During the reception of John of Gorze in 956, the caliphal *majlis* was so completely covered with sumptuous textiles that ‘the walls and the floor seemed the same.’⁹⁰ On such an occasion, calculated as it was to overawe, it is likely that prized Byzantine textiles, received during diplomatic encounters and thus pointed indicators of the caliph’s imperial connections, would have been displayed. ‘Robes of *rūmī* brocade’ were mentioned among the textile gifts which al-Manṣūr distributed after the Santiago campaign (Chapter 6), suggesting that the ‘Āmirids also had access to Byzantine silks. However, the eagle on Byzantine imperial silks is a lone creature: it never features smaller animals grasped in its talons, which is how the design invariably occurs on ‘Āmirid objects. Perhaps this represents an Islamicising of the Byzantine image, absorbing this royal creature into the more familiar repertoire of animal combats, which also accords with the martial sense of ‘Āmirid objects. Another Islamicising feature seems to be that the eagles are rendered with pointed ears. As discussed in Chapter 7, it has been suggested that, because they have pointed ears, these large birds are not eagles at all, but instead represent frontally depicted griffins, which are represented with pointed ears on Roman sarcophagi (Figure 97). However, griffins in al-Andalus tend to be depicted with the body

86 Beckwith 1989, 45. On the Byzantine silks, see also Muthesius 1995 and 1997, and Cutler 2003.

87 Hamidullah 1960, 287.

88 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 264 (§238).

89 Ruggles 2000, 67.

90 Paz y Melia 1931, 147, chapter 133.

of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. The viewer of this motif on the basins undoubtedly sees an eagle here, and that is what matters for its interpretation.

The 'heraldic' eagle was adopted and adapted from Roman and Byzantine art as much for its striking appearance as for its connotations of imperial power. But its forceful repetition in 'Āmirid art indicates that it had a deeper significance than this. This is one motif where the poetry is not particularly helpful in elucidating its meaning, since the eagle is an uncommon poetic image. In contrast to the plethora of lion images in Ibn Darrāj, the eagle occurs only once:

"Direct [the Muslim armies] against the disordered enemy, who are like eagles and falcons that have sought refuge in the inaccessible summits of the highest mountains ..."⁹¹

On the few occasions the eagle does occur in Andalusī poetry of this time, it has a clear association with death, as for example,

"But over his head there hovered the eagles of death,
Suffocating him with their gigantic wings ..."⁹²

This is also how the image is used in some verses by Ibn Khafāja (1058–1138):

"And what is the soul of man if not the prey (*ṭarīda*) over which glides the eagle of death (*'uqāb al-ḥimām*)?"⁹³

This poetic image might suggest a meaning for the artistic representation of the eagle which traps prey in its claws, though the implication of

flight in all these verses would perhaps imply that as images they relate better to the 'profile' type. However, there is one particular poetic context in which eagles do consistently occur – in passages describing military processions, where they adorn the banners of the Umayyad army. For example, in Ibn Darrāj's description of the embassy of Ibn Gómez to Cordoba c. 995 (Chapter 2),

"The [Christians] walked in the shadows of the banners which reminded them of the days when eagles and birds of prey beset them
And they had to take care of the blazons of each victor which, at times, attacked the wind and, at others, devoured the danger,
And every eagle wishes to devour the livers of their enemies with the tip of its sharp beak
And a dangerous serpent snakes about the heads of the dead enemies to devour them
The lions roar, and the banners wave as if they were [fluttering] hearts
And the cavalry is lined up one next to the other in a formation which no-one could attack ..."⁹⁴

Likewise, on the occasion of Sancho Abarca's visit to Cordoba in 992, the striking images on the banners are implicated in his terror of the army and of al-Manṣūr's mercy:

"Awe of the army frightened him so that he drew back in terror ...
He didn't blink an eye, unless a lion should attack another out of terror of the lances,
And a snake, which the air attacked in alarm, lay in wait one black night for another snake,
And eagles of the mountains, who seemed to [Sancho] at war [with each other], continually swirled around his cadaver ..."⁹⁵

91 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 78, l. 55.

92 *Anales*, §180 (p. 202): poem by 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Husayn al-Qarawī, l. 4, talking of Ḥasan ibn Kānūn.

93 Pérès 1990, 471, quoted by Cómez Ramos 1982, 132.

94 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 109, ll. 19–24.

95 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 107, ll. 36–39.

These verses play with the poetic conceit that an image seems so real that it might come alive, a sensation which must have been enhanced in real life by the movement of the banners in the wind. They conjure a picture of so many banners that they clash together, suggesting that their designs of seemingly-real animals are trying to attack each other. These verses imply, further, that the banners were clustered together according to designs (so that lions attack lions, eagles eagles etc), which could suggest that these three animals – lions, snakes, and eagles – identified particular divisions within the Andalusi army.

To confirm that these poetic passages do accurately describe the kinds of banners that the Umayyad army carried, we can refer to the textual descriptions of two similar military processions (*burūz*) during al-Ḥakam's reign. In the year 360/971, a major ceremony was arranged to receive the brothers Ja'far and Yaḥya ibn 'Alī al-Andalusī, two men who had previously been high members of the Fatimid administration in North Africa but who sought allegiance with the Umayyads at this time.⁹⁶ Their visit to Cordoba was escorted by Ibn Abī 'Āmir. They

“passed before a formation of banner-bearers, who held aloft admirable flags of extraordinary kinds and workmanship, a hundred in number, with terrible images, such as lions with their jaws open, terrifying leopards, eagles swooping on their prey and horrible dragons ...”⁹⁷

There is an almost identical passage in the description of Ghālib's triumphal procession in 364/975, after his defeat of Ḥasan ibn Qānūn:

“Then they passed ... between two ranks of men holding banners and standards of rich textiles and surprising forms, together with other flags on

which were represented the figures of lions, tigers, dragons, eagles and other terrible images ...”⁹⁸

The mention of ‘lions with their jaws open’ and ‘eagles swooping on their prey’ once again evokes the decoration of the 'Āmirid basins. This description also indicates that the eagles on the banners had prey, as they do on the 'Āmirid objects (indeed as they are also represented in the few poetic citations mentioned above). The word translated by Emilio García Gómez as ‘dragons’ (*tha'bān*, ثعبان) could equally imply ‘griffins’, another motif that was emerging in Andalusi art at this time.⁹⁹

1.3.1 Banners

“One of the emblems of royal authority is the display of banners and flags and the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets and drums.”

IBN KHALDŪN¹⁰⁰

We know very little about the banners of the Umayyad army, or indeed about banners from the early Islamic period in general. As discussed in Chapter 5, from the ‘religious ceremony’ of the knotting of the banners before the Andalusi army departed on campaign, we know the names of ‘three of the most esteemed banners’: al-'Uqda, al-'Ālam and al-Shaṭranj.¹⁰¹ The latter seems to

96 Manzano 2019, 173–4; Bennisson 2007a, 75.

97 *Anales*, §26 (p. 68); see also García Gómez 1967, 168–169.

98 *Anales*, §203 (pp. 237–238); cf. García Gómez 1967, 168–169.

99 I would like to thank Xavier Ballestín for confirming this. In an anecdote (related in *Bayān* 111:114 [translation, 103–104]), the Zanāta chieftain of the Banū Bīrẓāl reproaches the Umayyad caliph Sulaymān for having appointed a Shī'ī, 'Alī ibn Ḥammūd, as governor of Ceuta. 'Abd Allāh al-Bīrẓālī comments, ‘You have made him a dragon/griffin/monster snake (*tha'bān*) when he was only a snake (*aḥnāsh*)’. This political error came home to roost when a short time later 'Alī ibn Ḥammūd overthrew and killed Sulaymān.

100 Ibn Khaldūn 1969, 214–5, cited in Alexander 2000, 229.

101 *Anales*, §9 (pp. 48–50); cf. García Gómez 1967, 168–169; Manzano 2019, 292–5.

have been the most important of the three, as it is mentioned in other processions as well: when al-Ḥakam II left Madīnat al-Zahrā' in 971 he was 'proceeded by different classes of banners and ensigns, amongst which, for the special honour with which his lord distinguishes it, was the lofty Shaṭranj'; on another occasion, Ghālib sent a military detachment to Cordoba 'in perfect formation with parade ornaments including the Shaṭranj'.¹⁰² This was probably so-called because it had a design like a chess board; as David Nicolle notes, this 'checky' pattern is the oldest in northern European heraldry¹⁰³ – could it have been influenced by this Umayyad caliphal ensign? As we have seen, other banners borne by the Andalusi army had figures, described in al-Rāzī's Annals as *rāyāt muṣawwara* (§203). As such the Andalusi Umayyads seem to have been unusual in employing such a range of figurative motifs, though the Fatimids used lion-shaped windsocks in their ceremonial processions, as discussed below.

As Andrew Marsham notes, banners already played an important role in 'rituals of Islamic monarchy' during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, and there are many references to banners in the historical tradition: 'Possession of a banner tied by the Prophet was a mark of authority and honour: the names of those given banners by the Prophet before raids were remembered; which banners subsequently took part in important battles were also remembered. When the Prophet delegated military command to a tribal envoy, he is often said to have "tied a banner for him over his people" (*'aqada lahu liwā'an 'alā qawmihi*) ... The banner was the pre-eminent symbol of a "co-liable-group" in assembly for war, and in battle itself'.¹⁰⁴

However, the historical texts preserve very little information about what military banners actually looked like. The earliest available visual evidence, for the Islamic West or East, are the illustrations in Castilian manuscripts such as the *Cantigas de*

Santa María or Islamic manuscripts such as the *Maqāmāt*, dating from the thirteenth century, while the earliest surviving objects that can definitely be identified as banners are Marinid, from around the middle of the fourteenth century (Figure 172).¹⁰⁵ These examples are all epigraphic, with bold Qur'ānic quotations or religious slogans. A rare depiction from the tenth century, on an Abbasid lustre bowl, likewise shows an epigraphic banner.¹⁰⁶

As early as the Battle of Şiffin in 37/657, Islamic tribal groupings on each side bore distinctive emblems on their military banners (Ar. *rāya*, *liwā'*, or *'alam*), which served to identify them as members of a kinship group, and even their status within that group: the *liwā'* probably signified military command, while *rāyāt* were the emblems of a kinship group, or in some cases a personal emblem.¹⁰⁷ The two sides could be distinguished

105 The so-called 'Pendón de las Navas de Tolosa' (*Al-Andalus* cat. 92, *Maroc Médiéval* 98–9) has been uncritically accepted as a banner seized by Alfonso VIII of Castile in his resounding defeat of the Almohads in 1212; however, more recent studies place its technique and decoration in the fourteenth century, and associate it with surviving Marinid banners, made in Fez: see Ali-de-Unzaga 2006, Ali-de-Unzaga 2007, *Maroc Médiéval* 542–7, cat. 330. The silk fragment tapestry-woven with epigraphic bands in gold thread found at the church of Colls in Huesca is often described as a banner, following a suggestion made by Cristina Partearroyo, but this is much more likely to be a *ṭirāz*, with its mirror image inscriptions (only the *basmala* is preserved) on either side of a decorative band: *Al-Andalus*, cat. 22. Very few surviving textiles can be definitively identified as banners, though it seems that a textile in the Newberry Collection (Ashmolean Museum, inv. 1984.137), featuring a white appliqué lion on a blue cotton ground, may have been. The textile has been carbon dated to 980–1100, so it was certainly Fatimid-era. It was published by Suleman 2011, 223–225, fig. 86, who says that, rather than a banner carried in court processions, this 'may have functioned as one of the decorative textiles described by mediaeval historians that were used by the residents and shopkeepers of Fatimid Cairo to adorn their homes and shop-fronts during public holidays and court processions'.

106 Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. MAO 23.

107 Hinds 1996, 104 ff; see also Kennedy 2001, 99.

102 Nicolle 2001, 13–14.

103 Nicolle 2001, 14.

104 Marsham 2009, 64–66.



FIGURE 172 Banner made for the Marinid Sultan Abū'l-Ḥasan, 1339–40, silk with tapestry decoration in silk and gold thread; Toledo Cathedral
 © CABILDO PRIMADO, TOLEDO

from one another,¹⁰⁸ and while these emblems were mainly non-representational – their distinguishing characteristics based rather on varying colours, patterns or religious inscriptions – others were figurative, such as the *rāya* of the Banū Ghānī and Bāhila, which featured lions.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, though it probably did not represent this visually, the black *rāya* of the Prophet Muḥammad was known as ‘al-‘Uqāb’, ‘the Eagle’.¹¹⁰

As Hugh Kennedy describes, Islamic armies were conventionally drawn up for battle in lines; every officer (*qā'id*) should know his men and ‘each man must know his position in the line (*markaz*) and the banners and flags (*bunūd*, *a'lām*, *rāyāt*) under which he serves’.¹¹¹ Banner-holders had an important role as the banners were ‘a key element in maintaining cohesion and morale in the confusion of a closely fought conflict’.¹¹² In the civil war between the sons of Hārūn al-Rashīd – al-Ma'mūn and al-Amīn (between 811 and 819) – al-Amīn’s general, ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsa ibn Mahan, arranged his 40,000 strong army into groups of 1000, each with a banner.¹¹³ These could vary greatly in size: al-Ṭabarī, for example, records that the Abbasid general, al-Afshīn, ‘used to carry twelve huge black banners ... and about 500 small banners’.¹¹⁴ For the Marinid period, in particular between 1250 and 1350, Amira Bennison comments that ‘frustratingly, flags and standards are rarely described in any detail and we are left to ponder what, if any, the difference was between *rāyāt*, *a'lām* or *bunūd*. In general, however, *bunūd* and *a'lām* are used in the plural to indicate the massed banners of the army while *rāya* is used for the royal standard of the sultan himself or his representative’.¹¹⁵ The

Marinids used banners on the battlefield to identify the ruler and individual military tribal contingents, and to facilitate order.¹¹⁶

In more ceremonial contexts, ‘the only distinction between the cavalcade of an official and that of the caliph was the number of flags, or the use of particular colours for the caliph’s flag’.¹¹⁷ In the description of a particularly elaborate New Year procession from towards the end of the Fatimid period, the vizier – who played the same role as the *ḥājib* in al-Andalus – was distinguished by his own insignia: ‘he received two standards on long lances, which were carried immediately in front of him, and in addition to these, he received ten banners (*bunūd*), which were larger than the standards (*līvā'*) and made of embroidered *dabīqī* linen in various colours’.¹¹⁸ Here the material is probably significant in distinguishing the vizier from the caliph, who was always surrounded by silk. At the same New Year procession, the caliph was accompanied by two ‘standards of praise’ (*līvā'ay al-ḥamd*), ‘made of white silk embroidered in gold [and] attached to two long lances’; and by 21 fine banners (*rāyāt liṭāf*), each carried by one of the caliph’s mounted escort, ‘embroidered with silk in contrasting colours and bearing the Fatimid slogan, *naṣr min allāh wa fath qarīb*, “Victory from God and speedy triumph”. They were attached to lances and each had three *ṭirāz* bands. Behind these banners came about 3000 cavalry’.¹¹⁹ Fatimid processional banners were thus predominantly epigraphic, bearing the dynasty’s propagandistic slogans. But there is also one interesting use of a figurative banner. Closest to the caliph and carried by two members of his

108 Hinds 1996, 105.

109 Hinds 1996, 108, and fig. 28.

110 Hinds 1996, fig. 4; and ‘Ukāb’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

111 Kennedy 2001, 23.

112 Kennedy 2001, 29.

113 Kennedy 2001, 108.

114 Alexander 2000, 228. I would like to thank Stéphane Pradines for bringing this article to my attention.

115 Bennison 2014, 269–70.

116 Bennison 2014, 273.

117 Alexander 2000, 229.

118 Sanders 1994, 89. Sanders reconstructs the New Year procession at pp. 87–94, following the eye-witness description of Ibn al-Ṭuwayr, which ‘dates in all probability from the last three decades of Fatimid rule’ (i.e. approx. 1140–70). See also the mentions of banners in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, see al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī 1996, 157–158, and 231–232 on the *khazā'in al-bunūd*.

119 Sanders 1994, 89, 93.

elite bodyguard (*ṣibyān al-khāṣṣ*) were ‘two lances with crescents of solid gold (*dhahab ṣāmiṭa*), each with a yellow or red brocade lion ... The mouths of the lions were round disks, which the wind entered to puff up the figure’.¹²⁰ This description makes it clear that the lion banners in the Fatimid procession were windsocks. Could that also have been the case with the figurative banners borne by the Andalusī Umayyad army? This would have given them a more three-dimensional quality and perhaps made them move more vigorously in the wind. Unfortunately there is no indication of this in the texts.

The Fatimid context is the only other context I have found which mentions figurative banners, and even so this is restricted to the image of the lion which, in the Ismaʿīlī context, probably symbolises ʿĀlī, as Fahmida Suleman has argued.¹²¹ Returning to the Andalusī context, and to the specific motif of the eagle, it is ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III who can be credited with introducing the eagle onto the banners of the Umayyad army. In 322/933–4, just a few years after proclaiming his caliphate, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān set off on campaign against Osmā, preceded by a magnificent and luxurious military *burūz*. After describing the caliph’s appearance, his mount, and the formation of troops around him, Ibn Ḥayyān continues:

“So as to make the display more spectacular [al-Nāṣir] increased the types of military equipment used and the formidable, beautiful and important insignias of the different types of banners and standards, and on this occasion the eagle appeared among the banners, which [al-Nāṣir] had invented, since no ruler before him had had it, and the people gazed at it with curiosity and delight, and it was the subject of endless conversations ... [Afterwards] the poets mentioned in many and excellent poems the magnificence of

the parade and departure of al-Nāṣir on this expedition, the majesty of his banners, the great number of his soldiers, his impressive attire and the brilliance of his entourage, and greatly praised the recent and ingenious adoption of eagles onto the banners ...”¹²²

As was noted above, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān created a striking visual association between himself and the lion. It seems he did something similar with its counterpart, ‘the lion of the air’,¹²³ introducing it onto military banners in this highly conspicuous manner. The eagle’s poetic association with death would make it an appropriate image for a banner carried into battle (signifying the imminence of the enemy’s death). However, it is also probable that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān intended to draw a visual parallel between himself and the Byzantine Emperors who used this image, especially if the representation of the eagles on the banners was based on Imperial silks that the caliph had received through diplomatic exchanges. It therefore became a striking emblem of power, inextricably associated in the minds of the Andalusī poets and people with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. Was he also making a link to his ancestor, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I, who had been known as the ‘falcon of the Quraysh’ (*ṣaqr quraysh*)? Was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III laying claim to be the ‘eagle of the Quraysh’, as well as the ‘lion of the caliphate’? He may also have perceived a connection between his adoption of the eagle onto his banners, and the fact that the Prophet Muḥammad’s *rāya* was named ‘the Eagle’ (al-ʿUqāb). As mentioned, this *rāya* was probably aniconic, however the tradition of its name must have been well-known to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān as an Islamic ruler and warrior who claimed descent from the Banū Quraysh, and who claimed to be the Prophet’s legitimate successor (*khalīfa*).

While the adoption of the eagle banners was still brand new, later the same year ʿAbd al-Raḥmān included other banners with figurative designs,

120 Sanders 1994, 89, 93, discussed at p. 96: ‘The colors red and yellow were associated directly with the caliph and also appeared in the banners with the lions’.

121 Suleman 2011.

122 Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 250–251 (§§224–225).

123 “Ukāb”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

including an eagle, in his extensive diplomatic gift to Mūsā ibn Abī al-Āfiyya:

“This gift had, among the curiosities of weapons, four banners (*bunūd*). The first banner had the image of a varicoloured eagle. It had a silver head, with gilded inscriptions; two red eyes; and in the middle of its forehead, a green stone. A second banner had the image of a lion that was also decorated. It had a silver head and sky-blue eyes. A third banner was of a large white horse sewn in gold with writing covering a wide area on its three sides. A fourth banner was red. Sewn in silver on its three sides was writing covering a wide area.”¹²⁴

Thus, by 934, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s banners already included other figurative emblems in addition to the eagle. Since the eagle is the only one highlighted in Ibn Ḥayyān’s description of the *burūz* before the campaign against Osma, it is likely that the other motifs – the lion and the white horse – were already in use. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān clearly also made use of epigraphic banners, and the text indicates that these inscriptions were ‘written’ (*maktūb*) in contrasting colours – silver on a red ground in the last case. These inscriptions ‘cover[ed] a wide area on its three sides’: as such it calls to mind the way the inscription is organised around three sides of the back of al-Manṣūr’s marble basin. Finally, the colour combinations of each banner are carefully noted – as mentioned above, the use of different colours might distinguish different individuals within a procession or on the battlefield, so their colourways are significant.

The intention of including these banners in Mūsā’s gift was obviously that he should display them and thereby display his allegiance to the Umayyads. It is clear from other passages in the *Muqtabis* that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s Berber allies publicised their Umayyad allegiance through the

hoisting of banners, and their rejection of the Fatimids by refusing to hoist theirs: for example, Idrīs al-Ḥasanī, lord of the Rashgūn, sent ‘Abd al-Raḥmān two letters in consecutive years, in both of which he pleaded, ‘I swear by my relationship with the Prophet that I never accepted the [Fatimids’] pretensions, nor did I raise their banner.’¹²⁵ Similarly, after the victory over the Ḥafṣūnids and the conquest of Bobastro, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s appointed representatives entered the city, ‘taking possession of it for the *sultān* and hoisting his banners on the walls.’¹²⁶ These passages and others indicate that the raising of banners represented an important display of Umayyad allegiance; it follows that these banners must somehow have been recognisably Umayyad, and recognisably *not* Fatimid.

Michael Brett has recently described the insignia that accompanied the *sijillāt* (diplomatic correspondence) sent by the Fatimids to the Zīrids in Ifrīqiya in the 1020s, in the context of waning allegiance on the part of the latter. Brett notes that ‘such insignia ... undoubtedly served as the outward signs of ... conferment, and in that capacity were ... indispensable to the public display which may have been the essential proof of the transaction. Presumably for that reason the insignia described in the sources were most conspicuously flags.’¹²⁷ Two flags sent in 414/1023–4 were called *manjūq*, ‘evidently sumptuous banners of gold and silver brocade, in addition to the more numerous *bunūd* or *alwiya* that came with every delegation, some fifteen or twenty at a time, embroidered with gold. All were immediately displayed to the populace in spectacular cavalcades.’¹²⁸ Interestingly, in 411/1020, the Zīrid ruler al-Mu‘izz sent a letter to the Fatimid al-Hākim (r. 996–1021), ‘reporting the demise of the rival Umayyad caliphate at Cordoba’; in response, the ‘message from

¹²⁴ Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 265 (§239); this translation was prepared by Stuart Sears for Anderson and Rosser-Owen 2015.

¹²⁵ Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 200 (§§174–175).

¹²⁶ Ibn Ḥayyān 1981, 164 (§137).

¹²⁷ Brett 2015, 153.

¹²⁸ Brett 2015, 153–4.

Cairo [was] one of congratulation, accompanied by the presentation ... of fifteen gold-embroidered flags, whose arrival was the occasion for a celebratory parade.¹²⁹ Since the texts give no indication of figurative designs, it seems likely that the many gold-embroidered banners sent to the Zīrids were epigraphic, probably displaying the Fatimid slogan (*naṣr min allāh wa fath qarīb*) or other Ismaʿīlī religious formulae.

Might this fundamental consideration have been another concern behind ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s introduction of the eagle onto his banners since, unlike the lion, it was not an image the Fatimids used? When Ibn Ḥayyān says that ‘no ruler before [al-Nāṣir] had had [the eagle]’ as a symbol, he obviously means ‘no *Muslim* ruler’. The evidence we have for the Fatimid use of such emblems all post-dates this period: the earliest examples of the Fatimid depiction of an ‘imperial’ eagle are the lustre bowls signed by Muslim (Figure 119), which date from the late tenth century at the very earliest, and probably the early eleventh.¹³⁰ Do these Fatimid eagles reference Andalusī models? The lion-shaped windsocks mentioned above date from the second half of the twelfth century.

Adopting the eagle into his military art, where it probably joined a menagerie of other fierce animals – a menagerie which seems only to have expanded during al-Ḥakam’s reign, judging by the descriptions in al-Rāzī’s Annals – was a significant move in terms of the articulation and legitimation of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s caliphate. The eagle seems to have become a recognisably Umayyad emblem – the fact that it was singled out by Ibn Ḥayyān in discussing its adoption onto the banners would indicate that. Its appearance inside several of the medallions on the Oña silk (Figure 137C) may be a good reason for associating that embroidery with a caliphal production under ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, as

Casamar and Zozaya did.¹³¹ This might invite the consideration that other motifs contained within the medallions of that embroidery were also used on the banners – for example, the enigmatic motif of the bird riding on the back of a horse: as we saw above, one of the banners sent to Mūsā was adorned with a ‘large white horse’. If, as suggested in Chapter 7, textiles such as the Oña embroidery served as hangings in campaign tents, or even within palace halls, the encapsulation of motifs from the military banners would surround ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and his courtiers with an iconography of war.

Before the ʿĀmirid period, the heraldic eagle appears very infrequently in Andalusī art and, apart from this embroidery, the only other extant object to employ it is the small ivory pyxis made for al-Ḥakam (Figure 86): the sole decoration of this openwork container, apart from minimal vegetal motifs and its inscription in simple Kufic, are the four heraldic eagles on the lid, enclosed within four-lobed medallions. Significantly, this pyxis may have been commissioned for al-Ḥakam to celebrate the birth of his son, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān – the identical phrasing of its inscription to that made for his consort Ṣubḥ in 964, and the fact that they both appear to preserve their original mounts, made in an identical style and technique, indicates that they were made as a pair.¹³² Al-Ḥakam was around 50 years old by that date, and one of the main concerns of the period had been the need for an heir to continue the Umayyad caliphate into the next generation. The eagles on his

129 Brett 2015, 155.

130 Jenkins 1968.

131 Casamar and Zozaya 1991, 56–57, who argue for a very precise dating of the embroidery to the early 930s precisely because of the introduction of the eagle to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān’s banners. More recently, see Ali-de-Unzaga 2012a, 2012b.

132 For al-Ḥakam’s pyxis, see Ferrandis, 1935, vol. 1, cat. 5; Kühnel 1971, cat. 27. For the ‘Zamora pyxis’, made for Ṣubḥ (which has generated a long bibliography), Ferrandis, 1935, vol. 1, cat. 4; Kühnel 1971, cat. 22; for a discussion of them as a pair, based on the close similarity of their mounts, see Rosser-Owen 2012, 309.

pyxis might triumphalise the fact that this longed-for Umayyad heir had finally arrived.

It seems highly probable, then, that by the time al-Manṣūr ordered four heraldic eagles to be carved on to the short ends of his marble basin (Figure 116), the ‘frontal’ type had become a recognisable emblem of the Umayyad caliphate in al-Andalus. The ‘Āmirids’ highly visible employment of this emblem in their artistic vocabulary may thus have been intended to display their *own* allegiance to the Umayyads – just as the caliphate’s Berber clients did by publicly displaying the banners which bore this image. This implies that the ‘petrification’ on the basins of the banners which the Umayyad troops, led by their ‘Āmirid generals, carried into battle, was intended to underline the ‘Āmirids’ control of the army and their role as *mujāhidūn*. But the motif on the basins has a twist. The eagles on both the Oña silk and al-Ḥakam’s pyxis are depicted in very similar fashion to the Byzantine imperial textiles, in that they do not have pointed ears nor clutch prey in their talons. This might be a symptom of the relatively recent introduction of the motif, implying that artisans were still looking to the original model of Byzantine silks and had not yet ‘naturalised’ this image. On the other hand, these elements, which are so consistently used on the ‘Āmirid objects, could have been a deliberate ‘Āmirid innovation: indeed, was this the way the emblem appeared on the ‘Āmirids’ own military banners?

In al-Manṣūr’s and ‘Abd al-Malik’s basins, the eagles grip gazelles in their talons, and support small lions on their ‘shoulders’; small griffins are under the eagles’ feet. If the griffin motif stands for the office of the *ḥājib*, as Montejo has suggested (Chapter 6), this placement and relative scale is significant. The large bold eagle, which stands for the Umayyad army and by extension the caliphate, is supported by small griffins, representing the ‘Āmirid *ḥujjāb*, who support the caliph by standing in for him in battle, since Hishām was not capable of leading the Umayyad armies into the field himself; the griffins are also *under the feet* of the Umayyad emblem, showing the ‘Āmirids’ subservience to the caliphate. The

prey – gazelles – grasped in the eagle’s talons represent the enemies of the Umayyad state and the fate that will befall them in battle, while the small lions also stand for the ‘Āmirids, an association underlined by its metaphorical repetition in panegyric poetry. Perhaps the pointed ears were adopted to make the eagles look even more fierce. This then becomes a new emblem. Its use on the basins, disposed so insistently as symmetrical pairs at each short end, thus ‘petrifies’ the designs of the banners which the ‘Āmirids themselves carried into battle; it speaks to the way in which they identified themselves through their role as leaders of the Andalusī armies, whose victories enhanced the power and prestige of the Umayyad state, but also as servants and supporters of the caliph, and actors in his name.

Given the numbers of campaigns in which al-Manṣūr engaged throughout his *ḥijāba*, military banners and their devices likely played an important role in ‘Āmirid visual identity. As discussed in Chapter 4, al-Madīnat al-Zāhira was located next to a military camp, whose forces could be called on to defend the city at any time; it may also have been sited in geographical proximity to the Faḥṣ al-Surādiq, the army’s mustering ground (Figure 17). The vista which al-Zāhira presented may thus have been one in which the banners of the different regiments were constantly fluttering. Both Ibn ‘Idhārī’s statement, that ‘from [al-Zāhira] the standards marched direct to certain victory’, and the metaphor of flowers evoking ‘victorious banners trembling on the day of combat’, in al-Jazīrī’s description of the ‘Āmirid palace in the poem quoted at the start of this chapter, seem to contain a memory of this visual association between banners and the palace-city.¹³³ Furthermore, the ceremony of knotting the banners was a key moment in the ritual of preparing for campaign, and under the ‘Āmirids this may have taken place in the new tribune constructed within the Cordoba Mosque by al-Manṣūr (Chapter 5). Not only would these banners have been carried in their hundreds by the Umayyad

133 Bariani 2002a, 328, citing *Bayān* 11:277.

troops when marching in procession or onto the battlefield, but al-Manṣūr himself – ‘at their centre in the most protected position’¹³⁴ – would surely be visibly identified by banners of particular designs, colours and quantities, in a similar way to the use of banners by the Abbasids, Fatimids and Marinids, as outlined above. Was the motif of the eagle with its prey supported by griffins the particular emblem that surrounded al-Manṣūr when he rode with his troops?

The descriptions cited above of the banners displayed at al-Ḥakam’s *burūz* mention not just eagles but also lions with their jaws open, terrifying leopards, tigers (which might be the same as the leopards), horrible dragons (probably griffins), and ‘other terrible images’; this suggests at least four motifs of animals who instill terror in their prey (lions, leopards, griffins, eagles). Ibn Darrāj’s poems repeatedly mention three: lions, eagles and birds of prey, and snakes (‘dangerous serpents’). These might be the three motifs most closely associated with al-Manṣūr, displayed in terrifying force on the occasion of the two Christian rulers’ visits to Cordoba. This might imply, further, that the particular way in which the lion-gazelle motif is depicted in ‘Āmirid art ‘petrifies’ another of the emblems with which al-Manṣūr was visibly associated in his role as general of the Umayyad armies. All the poetic connotations of that image, discussed above, would still be in play, rendering this motif a particularly aggressive statement of the fate of the Umayyads’ enemies. From the surviving evidence, the snake does not become a common motif in ‘Āmirid art – perhaps, outside of the material context of the banner, which is itself fearsome, it is difficult to render this successfully as a fierce creature, though there does seem to be a suggestion of a snake’s body on the basin fragments in Granada (Figure 134 L&M). The recurrence of the worm or watersnake in the border motifs of the large ‘Āmirid basins and on many of the small basins does not perhaps relate

to the banners, but possibly to a different context entirely, as we will discuss next.

1.4 *The Tale of the Tortoise and Two Ducks*

The motif that inhabits the borders of the large basin group and comprises the main decoration on the small basins shows ducks pecking variously at worms, fishes, and turtles (Figures 117A, 157). As we have seen, these rather unusual motifs relate to the water which the basins contained, to the ‘natural’ setting of the ‘Āmirid palace gardens in which the basins were located, possibly even to the live ducks, fishes and turtles that swam inside the basins, as al-Jazīrī’s poem indicates. On the small basins in Seville and Granada (Chapter 7: 4.2.3.2 and 3, Figures 164–168) the turtle is singled out for a particularly prominent role: on the Granada basin, it occupies two of the chamfered corners of the basin (alternating with paired fishes on the other corners); while on the Seville basin, it forms the central focus of a scene that is repeated on all three of its decorated sides, in which ducks appear to bear down on a tortoise whose legs are splayed as if swimming (or flying?). It seems to be framed by a circular device that suggests a lily-pad or perhaps a pond, and two fishes underneath enhance the association with water. The motif as depicted on the Seville basin bears a striking resemblance to the way in which the ‘tale of the tortoise and two ducks’ is represented in illustrated versions of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* (Figure 173).¹³⁵ Is this pure coincidence?

The *Kalīla wa Dimna* was a ‘mirror for princes’, told through animal fables, in which the eponymous characters are two jackals at the court of

¹³⁵ I owe this idea to José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, who presented the Seville basin alongside an illustration of this scene from the copy of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (MS Arabe 3465, folio 67r, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84229611> [consulted 12 January 2020]), in a lecture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, “Qurtuba/Cordoba: Monumentality and artistic sensibility in al-Andalus”, on 19 June 2014. I am grateful to Prof. Puerta Vilchez for discussing this idea with me further by email (27 June 2014).

¹³⁴ Echevarría 2011, 160.



FIGURE 173 *Kalila wa Dimna*, illustration of the story of the ducks and turtle: Paris, Bib. Nat., MS Arabe 3465, fol. 67r; Syria, about 1200–1220

the lion. Dimna aspires to a higher rank at court, and helps the lion to overcome his fear of the ox, who eventually becomes the lion's boon companion; Dimna is jealous of this friendship, finding his influence with the lion replaced by that of the ox, and resorts to treachery, telling each that the other is about to kill him. Through parables and tales within tales, the different characters teach lessons in morality and wise conduct.¹³⁶ The original fable was written in ancient India and translated into Pahlavi for the Sasanian court in the sixth century, then into Arabic by Ibn al-Muqaffa' around 750 – though this simple summary belies the multiple origins of many of the fables, including the Panchatantra and the Mahabharata.¹³⁷ The earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts in Arabic do not date from before the early thirteenth century, so there is no direct evidence that earlier versions were illustrated, though Ibn al-Muqaffa' himself refers to illustration in his own introduction to the book: 'the depiction of animal images in a variety of colours and pigments, so that they delight the hearts of kings; and their enjoyment is increased by the pleasure to be had from these illustrations (*ṣuwar*)'.¹³⁸ Ṭabarī's history refers to an illustrated copy of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* in Samarra in 841, while in his introduction to the *Shahnama*, Firdausi mentions that the Samanid sultan Naṣr II ibn Aḥmad (r. 913–42) commissioned a translation into Persian from the poet Rudagi (d. 916), when 'many paintings were added to illustrate the text'.¹³⁹ Raby 'safely concludes' that there was a continuing tradition of illustrated *Kalīla wa Dimna* manuscripts between its creation in the eighth century, and the first surviving examples of the thirteenth.¹⁴⁰

The consistent way in which certain episodes are illustrated across time has convinced scholars that these 'core-images' were 'hardly ever altered'.¹⁴¹ Ernst Grube pinpoints the tale of the tortoise and

two ducks as one of the most memorable: 'Nobody who has ever seriously looked at an illustrated copy of the tales known as *Kalīla wa Dimna* ... will have missed – and once seen, forgotten – the extraordinary image of the "flying tortoise" ... It is an image that was clearly devised for a particular effect: leading him who peruses the manuscript directly into the text'.¹⁴² This story appears in nearly all the early surviving manuscripts of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, and Grube comments that 'it is very likely that this image, and others like it, had been consciously created at the time these stories were first formulated, for they appear in renderings that predate the surviving manuscript illustrations of the *Kalīla wa Dimna*'.¹⁴³ He shows two examples of Indian stone sculpture, of which one – a relief of two men killing the tortoise, made in Mathura in the third century – shows the tortoise rendered in a remarkably similar way to the 'Āmirid marble basins'.¹⁴⁴

The tale tells of a tortoise, who lived in a pond with two ducks, 'joined by the strong ties of friendship'.¹⁴⁵ There came a time when the water in the pond was greatly reduced, and the ducks decided that they had to leave and travel to other places. The tortoise begged them to take her with them, saying 'only people like me suffer when the water runs out, because I cannot live if I am not near it'. The ducks offer to carry the tortoise by each grabbing one end of a stick in their beaks, onto which she can fasten herself by firmly biting it. But, they advise, she must under no circumstances respond to any of the people who will see them along the way. The tortoise agrees, and the ducks take off; the astonished people below, seeing such a spectacle, exclaim to each other, 'Look! How extraordinary! Two ducks carrying a tortoise through the air!' The tortoise, forgetting the ducks'

136 AtI 1981, 80.

137 AtI 1981, 55–60; Raby 1987–8.

138 Raby 1987–8, 386.

139 AtI 1981, 61; Raby 1987–8, 386.

140 Raby 1987–8, 390.

141 Grube 1991, 36.

142 Grube 1991, 36.

143 Grube 1991, 36.

144 Grube 1991, figs 23 and 22 (relief on a stone pillar in Bodh-Gaya, sixth century).

145 This is based on the synopsis provided by Grube 1991, 155 (D2), with adaptations based on the Spanish translation kindly sent me by José Miguel Puerta Vilchez.

advice and 'believing herself strong', opens her mouth to respond; she thus loses her grip on the stick and falls to her death. As Esin Atıl puts it, the 'tortoise did not profit from wise counsel'.¹⁴⁶

The depiction of the tortoise and ducks on the Seville basin lacks an essential element of the story, that is, the stick which the tortoise bites on in order to fly. This suggests that the scenes on the basin are not intended as a direct representation of this tale, but may still evoke it – even if the primary message was the natural aesthetic of the Āmirid palace garden, the way in which these motifs were represented may still have been informed by an illustrated version of this tale from the *Kalīla wa Dimna*. Could this have been another literary work available at the Umayyad court, providing an iconographical source for the depiction of certain artistic images? As Francisco Prado-Vilar has argued, the existence of an illustrated copy of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* in al-Andalus at this time is highly likely. This book 'stood out as one of the most renowned best-sellers',¹⁴⁷ while Atıl calls it 'the most popularly copied and translated book in Islamic literature'.¹⁴⁸ Given what we know of al-Ḥakam's obsessive acquisitiveness, it is extremely likely that he could have done what he could to obtain a copy for his library. We may recall that he 'sent 10,000 dinars of pure gold to buy the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* from Abū'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, who sent him a copy ... even before it saw the light in his native Iraq'.¹⁴⁹ Perhaps other wealthy men of the Cordoban court also had copies of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* in their private libraries. As Jonathan Bloom says, these tales were 'unusually popular in the Middle Ages'.¹⁵⁰ Translations into medieval Hebrew and Latin are known, and a fragment of an illustrated Greek version, copied on parchment, has been attributed to southern Italy

between 980 and 1050.¹⁵¹ Its illustrations bear similarities to those in the later Arabic and Persian manuscripts, which has prompted scholars to suggest that all the extant illustrated versions descend from a common but lost Arabic manuscript dating as early as the tenth century – could this hypothetical illustrated copy of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* have come from al-Andalus?

Prado-Vilar argues that *Kalīla wa Dimna* was a major source for the Andalusī 'mirror for princes', *al-Iqd al-farīd*, compiled by Ibn 'Abd Rabbihī during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III; indeed, that *al-Iqd* was 'likely one of the resources used for the instruction of the caliph's sons, namely the future al-Ḥakam II and al-Mughīra'.¹⁵² He argues that these sources translated into the distinctive and enigmatic iconography of the ivory pyxis made for al-Mughīra in 968 (Figures 3, 171). He has called attention to the resemblances between certain images on the pyxis and illustrations of the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, as if 'the images on the pyxis serve as visual tokens to recall specific episodes'.¹⁵³ Familiar with the illustrations of *Kalīla wa Dimna* as al-Mughīra could thus have been, the motifs of lion-bull combat, affronted goats, parrots and falconer, which we see on the ivory, would have called to mind the relevant episodes from the text. Further, in proposing that Ibn Abī 'Āmir was the 'creative force behind the al-Mughīra pyxis', Prado-Vilar argues that he himself would have known the illustrations of the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, being 'profoundly learned, interested in poetry ... and intimately acquainted with the literary productions of the East'.¹⁵⁴ Leaving aside the question of whether or not Ibn Abī 'Āmir conceived the decorative programme of the al-Mughīra pyxis, it seems plausible that, if illustrated versions of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* were circulating in al-Andalus in the late tenth century, al-Manṣūr and his boon

146 Atıl 1981, 23, 80.

147 Prado-Vilar 2005, 154.

148 Atıl 1981, 61.

149 Puerta Vilchez 2013a, 76 (English version p. 63).

150 Bloom 2001, 166–7.

151 Raby 1987–8, 382–6. The manuscript is Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS 397.

152 Prado-Vilar 2005, 143.

153 Prado-Vilar 2005, 143.

154 Prado-Vilar 2005, 154.

companions from the state elite would have been familiar with the stories, as well as the ways in which they were visualised.

Could the ducks and tortoises on the 'Āmirid basins be referencing such visualisations of the 'tale of the tortoise and two ducks'? As Grube notes, "These animal fables used images to communicate clearly and instantly "political" or "didactic" points. If one knows the text or the story, one instantly recognises a pictorial interpretation of a given story, the image becoming a symbol rather than being a mere illustration."¹⁵⁵ Beyond the witty allusion to the natural environment in which the basins and their viewers sat, this visual reference could have been recognised, admired and appreciated for the way in which it conjured a literary image, perhaps at the same time providing a starting place for further poetic inspiration and improvisation. While pondering this scene with which his basins were adorned, al-Manṣūr would call to mind the story of the tortoise who came to a bad end because she did not understand or respect the rules of good and intelligent conduct. Surrounded by the boon companions who supported and advised him, he would be constantly reminded of the importance of remembering wise counsel.

In sum, the iconography of the 'Āmirid marble basins, which was carried over into other objects made for the 'Āmirids, encapsulated their role as *mujāhidūn* for the Umayyad state. This was the fundamental tool by which their role as *ḥujjāb* was legitimised, since the caliph was not able to lead the armies himself. The lion-gazelle motif emblematised the 'Āmirids' physical courage, which they used for the defence of Islam in their always-victorious military encounters. The incorporation of the eagle emblem from the Andalusī military banners also made an explicit statement of allegiance to the Umayyads, in whose name they always acted, and without whom they would not be in office. Both images acted as 'emblems' in that they may 'petrify' the devices used on the 'Āmirids' personal banners. The other scenes on

the basins allude to their cultural patronage – their love of architecture, poetry on the themes of flowers and nature, literary genres such as the moralising fables of the *Kalīla wa Dimna*. As such, the decoration of the basins evoked the full gamut of princely virtues. These messages were underlined by the inscriptions on these objects – their employment of particular epigraphic formulae, and the deliberate relationships between text and image.

2 Text and Image in 'Āmirid Art

Under the 'Āmirids we see a number of interesting changes in the standard formulae of blessings used in the inscriptions on objects. Art historians usually search for an object's messages in its iconography, since it is reasonably assumed that a patron's choice of certain scenes on an object reflects the ways in which he wished to represent himself. However, where an inscription is an integral part of the decorative programme – as it is on the objects we are studying here – this text is no less the result of deliberate choices on the part of the patron, and thus the messages *it* might contain should not be ignored.

In the objects manufactured in al-Andalus at this period, the inscription was fundamental. The epigraphic space was integral to the overall conception, since the inscription was carefully designed to fit the available space, and care was taken over its decorative appearance: seen, for example, in the floriated terminations of many letters, or the floral space-fillers and beaded decoration of the letters themselves on the Pamplona casket (Figure 120). The inscription was also integral to the decoration in that it directed the order in which the scenes should be read – not just from right to left, but also where the iconography begins. Moreover, the placement of key words in direct relation to the iconography was a carefully considered feature of certain inscriptions: for example, the organisation of the decoration at the front of Sanchuelo's pyxis lid (Figures 140) concentrates

¹⁵⁵ Grube 1991, 36.

the gaze on the patron's name.¹⁵⁶ This was noted in Chapter 7 as an innovative characteristic of the 'language' of 'Āmirid art, and an attention to the relationship between inscription and iconography can be seen in other objects too.

As with architectural inscriptions, it is usually the historical information provided – the names of patrons, dates and occasionally places of manufacture – that is the most considered feature. But this is not the sum of what these inscriptions tell us. While the 'historical' formulae remain more or less constant, varying only in the substitution of differing names and dates, the words and phrases of blessing (*ad'īya*, sing. *du'ā'*) vary from object to object. As with the Qur'ānic inscriptions studied in Chapter 5, the particular *ad'īya* employed have been an unjustly neglected element of these objects' inscriptions, and they repay a more detailed analysis.

It should be emphasised that these *ad'īya* are drawn from a standard repertoire that is not unique to al-Andalus. In this respect, the blessings used in inscriptions can be seen as the equivalent of the stock repertoire of images that form the 'princely cycle'. Nevertheless, in both cases, a patron's choice of a particular text or image to adorn his commission has implications for the interpretation of that object's meaning, and for the message the patron wished to project about himself. In the case of the 'Āmirid objects, the relationship between poetic text and image certainly aids the understanding of their meaning, as we have explored above. But what do their inscriptions tell us?

A survey of published inscriptions on the extant luxury objects and architectonic elements produced in al-Andalus between 318/929–30 and 441/1049–50 indicates that four phases are discernible in the phraseology of *ad'īya*, which broadly coincide with the reigns of the first two caliphs, the 'Āmirid *hujjāb*, and the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn in Taifa-period Toledo. I will not discuss the first or last of these phases. From the surviving evidence,

the use of *ad'īya* in al-Andalus seems to have been standardised under the patronage of al-Ḥakam, and the full range of blessings begins in al-Andalus *circa* 966. There is some degree of experimentation with the words used: for example, the adjective *tāmma* ('complete', 'perfect', used with 'baraka'), is used for only two years,¹⁵⁷ and *salāma*, *raf'a* and *karāma* all occur once only.¹⁵⁸ The blessings which become most frequent are *surūr* ('joy, happiness, pleasure'), *'izz* ('strength, might, honour'), *'āfiya* ('health, well-being, vigour'), *ni'ma* ('blessing, grace, favour') and *yumn* ('good fortune, prosperity'). The most significant aspect of the *ad'īya* used in the pre-'Āmirid phase is that they are all simple wishes for health, happiness and well-being, which can be considered appropriate for luxury objects made to be given as gifts.

This characteristic changes under the 'Āmirids. In general there is a high degree of continuity from the previous phases (in the use of 'royal' phrases such as *aṭāla allāh baqā'a-hu*, 'May Allah prolong his life!', and *fa-tamma bi-'awn allāh*, 'completed with the help of Allah'); there is more experimentation (*dawām*, 'perpetuity', for example, occurs once only, on the Hishām *ṭirāz*, see Figure 9, though in the previous phase *dā'im* was frequently used as an adjective), and also some interesting revivals from 'Abd al-Raḥmān's phase (such as *a'azza-hu allāh*, 'May Allah esteem him' or 'make him mighty'). However, the defining characteristic of the 'Āmirid phase is the introduction of *new* formulae, which have significant implications for the interpretation of the objects on which they occur. These new formulae reflect the 'Āmirids' military role as defenders of the faith and the

156 Rosser-Owen 1999, 24–25, and discussion in Chapter 7 (3.1).

157 See Ocaña 1941: this word occurs on capitals produced in al-Ḥakam's name between 363/973–4 and 364/974–5 (his #3 and #6).

158 *Salāma* ('blamelessness, well-being') occurs in the inscription of the ivory casket in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs (dated 355/966), which was made for an unspecified patron, 'li-ṣāhibi-hi': Kühnel 1971, 25. *Raf'a* ('exalted status') and *karāma* ('nobility, esteem') both occur on the fountain basin made for al-Ḥakam (dated 360/970–971): Cabanelas 1980–81.

state: this is most blatant on 'Abd al-Malik's marble basin (Appendix 4.13), which describes him as *sayf al-dawla nāṣir al-dīn wa qāmi' al-mushrikīn* ('Sword of the State, Defender of the Faith and Tamer of Polytheists'), and the Pamplona casket (Appendix 4.11), which wishes him the 'fulfilment of hopes through good (or pious) works' (*bulūghu amali fī ṣālīhi 'amalin* – which could refer to his continued campaigns against the Christians). This also seems to be the sense of a new 'Āmirid formula, *waffaqa-hu(m) allāh*, 'May Allah bring him (them) complete success'.¹⁵⁹ Another phrase used by the 'Āmirids is *ayyada-hu allāh*, 'May Allah strengthen him', which revives a formula experimented with briefly by 'Abd al-Raḥmān.¹⁶⁰ This phrase and the related noun *ta'yīd*, 'support, endorsement', now become standard 'Āmirid formulae; significantly, *ta'yīd* is invariably paired with *naṣr*, 'victory', which also becomes standard under the 'Āmirids. Both *ta'yīd* and *naṣr* had each occurred once only under the caliphs, and in both cases in military contexts,¹⁶¹ which indicates that jihad was implicit in the sense of both words. Of course, since the 960s, the Fatimids had employed the word *naṣr* in their dynastic slogan – *naṣr min allāh wa fath qarīb*, 'Victory from God and speedy triumph' – which was explicitly related to jihad.¹⁶² As observed in the discussion of the

naming of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira's main gate, at the end of Chapter 4, the deliberate use of semantics by al-Manṣūr may have had a Fatimid influence. Thus, in contrast to the gentle tone of the phrases employed in the previous (caliphal) phases, which wished the ruler a long life or general well-being, the new 'Āmirid formulae adopted a martial tone, reflecting the trends in poetry and in artistic iconography that we observed above.

It is perhaps significant that *naṣr* and *ta'yīd* had first seen use under the first two Umayyad caliphs. But given the consistency with which they are paired on 'Āmirid objects, there is more to the choice of these words than a deliberate association with the caliphs or the reflection of an increasingly militaristic state. This pairing now becomes a standard epigraphic formula: in chronological order of the objects' creation, the phrase *naṣr wa ta'yīd* occurs on al-Manṣūr's basin (987, Appendix 4.7); then on Sanchuelo's pyxis lid (999, Appendix 4.10), which also features *ayyada-hu allāh* after the patron's name, giving extra emphasis to the new formula; then on 'Abd al-Malik's basin (1004–7, Appendix 4.13). The formula does not feature on the Pamplona casket but in general that inscription features non-standard phrases which also convey martial messages (Appendix 4.11).

It is no accident that *ta'yīd* and *ayyada-hu* share a root with the *laqab* taken by Hishām II, 'al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh', 'He who is supported/endorsed by Allah'. It is a significantly weaker title than those of his father (al-Mustanṣir, 'he who is made victorious by Allah') and grandfather (al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh, 'champion for the religion of Allah'), both deriving from the root *n-ṣ-r*. The phrase *ayyada-hu allāh* may have been revived precisely because of its semantic association with the new caliph. However, it becomes even less of a coincidence when we consider that 'al-Manṣūr', 'he who is (made) victorious [understood: by Allāh]', also derives from the root *n-ṣ-r*.

159 Lévi-Provençal 1931, 189 (#204), translates this phrase more neutrally, as 'may Allah assist him (them)', but the verb *waffaqa* only has the sense of 'assist' in form v, and it is form II that is used in the 'Āmirid inscriptions.

160 He had used *ayyada-hu allāh* in the foundation inscription of the arsenal he built at Tortosa in 333/944–5: cf. Lévi-Provençal 1931, 83–84 (#86).

161 The inscription from the arsenal at Tortosa contains the phrase *fa-tamma bi-'awn allāh wa naṣri-hi*, cf. Lévi-Provençal, 1931, 83–84; and a *burj* built by al-Ḥakam at Baños de la Encina (Jaén), dated 357/968, contains the phrase *fa-tamma wa kamala bi-ḥawl allāh wa ta'yīdi-hi*: Lévi-Provençal 1931, 134–135 (#150). This pairing of *ta'yīd* with *ḥawl* conveys a clear sense of Allah's *power*, which would be an appropriate concept for a military installation.

162 Bloom 1985, 31; Bloom 2011, 144. He notes that this phrase (Qur'ān 61:13) is particularly used on objects made soon before the Fatimids' conquest of Egypt

(such as the ivory casket made for al-Mu'izz, now in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid), and not afterwards.

The consistent pairing of the two words *naṣr wa ta'yīd* in the 'Āmirid inscriptions is not just an anodyne request for favour from God; instead, it encodes the throne-names of both the caliph and his *ḥājib*. The ordering of the words may also be significant – 'al-Manṣūr' always comes first – and since the phrase follows immediately from *baraka min allāh*, the implication is that it is also from Allah that *naṣr* and *ta'yīd* derive. This construction thereby proclaims that *both* men drew their power from God, and thus seems to have been a subtle yet intentional legitimising device on the part of the 'Āmirid patrons.

This encoded epigraphic pairing of Umayyad and 'Āmirid mirrors the visual pairing seen in the iconography of the marble basins, in particular in the eagle emblems that may have adorned the 'Āmirids' banners. It is clear that through this combination of epigraphy and iconography, the 'Āmirid patrons aimed to convey a message about the nature of their power, and from where it derived. In this regard it is probably significant that the inscriptions on most of the 'Āmirid objects (al-Manṣūr's basin, the Pamplona casket, the Braga pyxis, 'Abd al-Malik's basin) state that 'this is what [the 'Āmirid patron] ordered to be made for *himself*', *mimma amara bi-'amalihi* (Appendix 4.7, 11, 12, 13). (The Sanchuelo pyxis merely lists the blessings *for (li-)* the young vizier, possibly implying that someone else – his father? – commissioned the object for him: Appendix 4.10.) From what we have discussed of the Dār al-Ṣinā'a under the 'Āmirids, it is clear that they could direct the creation of these works, as well as the invention of a new set of visual motifs and invocation formulae. Moreover, when we examine the placement of these key words in relation to the images beneath, the messages conveyed in the inscriptions can shed light on the meaning of the objects' visual programme.

As we have noted, in Islamic art, an object's inscription and its decoration cannot be considered separately, since the order in which the decoration should be read naturally follows the direction of the inscription. The owner of one

of the ivory pyxides – which are small and light enough to be handled and whose circular shape invites them to be turned in the hand – could cast his or her eye with ease between the messages of both inscription and iconography. Likewise, the fact that the 'Āmirid basins are decorated on all four sides implies that they were located in a setting where the viewer could walk around them to read their messages. The visual images presented there were likely to be familiar to the viewer from poetry or other contexts, and he may immediately have recognised their individual meanings. Nevertheless we should not neglect the importance of the inscriptions in conveying to that viewer an overall message which the decorative motifs illustrated.

It has been observed (Chapter 7) that a characteristic of 'Āmirid art was a carefully-disposed relationship between text and image, which is most obvious in the great care that was taken over the placement of – even emphasis on – the patron's name. Sanchuelo's name on his pyxis lid is highlighted by the disposition of the decoration immediately above it (3.1), and a similar 'signposting' device is used on both the front and back of the Pamplona casket (2.1, Figure 124), where paired medallions on both sides of the lid contain horsemen who direct our gaze down to the decoration on the box below; the device is especially reminiscent of Sanchuelo's pyxis lid at the front of the casket, where the spear plunging into the animal's body points towards the lockplate and by extension the text and image below it. The wishes for *ghibṭa wa surūr* ('prosperity and happiness') in that part of the inscription fit appropriately with the peaceful scene of a garden *majlis* below it. This signposting can also be noted on the Doha box, though there we do not have a named patron (4.1.1).

It is therefore clear that the 'Āmirids thought carefully about the messages they wished to convey in their art, and about the way in which those messages should be conveyed. The new formulae which the 'Āmirids introduced to the standard blessings and phrases of invocation on objects carried a martial message that reflects

their self-identity as *mujāhidūn*, in contrast to the gentle wishes of long life and well-being employed under al-Ḥakam's patronage. Though the inscriptions on neither al-Manṣūr's nor al-Muẓaffar's basins survive in their entirety, it is clear from both that they began on the long sides decorated with the lion-gazelle motif (Figures 115, 129). On both objects, then, this motif was what the viewer was intended to consider first. Significantly, on both objects, it is also on this side that the phrase *naṣr wa ta'yīd* occurs, thus the concept of 'victory and support' – coming, it must be remembered, from Allah – is linked to the visual image of lions attacking gazelles. On al-Muẓaffar's basin, the inscription continues with the phrase *sayf al-dawla nāṣir al-dīn wa qāmi' al-mushrikīn*, and would have had an unmistakable relation to the combat scenes below. This relationship of text and image indicates definitively that, rather than having an astronomical or erotic connotation, the lion-gazelle combat scenes visualised the victories of the 'Āmirid *mujāhidūn* over their foes (*mushrikūn*), be they Christians or heretics (Masarrīs or Fatimids).

Furthermore, these inscriptions inextricably linked this visualisation of military victory to the name of the object's patron, since they continued with the construction *lī'l-ḥājib* – or *lī'l-wazīr* in the case of Sanchuelo's pyxis lid – followed by his full name including titles. On both basins, the name starts at the end of the side with the lion-gazelle motif and continues round the corner, onto the first short side with eagles: this unites the two images, as well as establishing a clear visual association between the heraldic eagle symbol and the 'Āmirids' dynastic name (*ibn abī 'āmir*) (Figure 117B&C). The martial associations of this image, which may 'petrify' the 'Āmirids' personal military emblems, imply that the eagles on al-Manṣūr's basin symbolised those victories celebrated by and encapsulated in his *laqab*, inscribed on this side of the basin. Similarly, on the Pamplona casket, the phrase *waffāqa-hu allāh*, 'may Allah bring him success', finishes at the exact centre of the inscription on the back of the casket (Figure 122): its placement immediately above

the medallion containing a man (undoubtedly al-Muẓaffar) fighting two lions suggests that the 'scenes of war' that comprise the decoration of this side of the casket were intended to visualise the victories which the *ḥājib* was manifestly achieving, and would continue to achieve, as a result of Allah granting him success (*tawfīq*), victory (*naṣr*) and support (*ta'yīd*).

2.1 *Visualising the Ideal Ruler*

This careful placement of the inscriptions to encapsulate and in places elucidate an object's iconography indicates that the 'Āmirids sought to convey particular messages in their art; furthermore, that they esteemed the luxury arts as vehicles of self-expression, and had a particular audience in mind – their *nudamā'*, with whom they relaxed in private and who consisted of powerful members of the Cordoban elite, whose support and advice legitimised the 'Āmirid *ḥijāba*. The 'Āmirid patrons filled their objects with images that were highly symbolic of their status as quasi-caliphs, and which in combination made a strong statement that the 'Āmirids were fulfilling the virtues of the ideal ruler.

Fortunately, we possess some contemporary testimony regarding what the 'Āmirids considered these virtues to be: it was observed above that the poem which al-Manṣūr composed about himself presented lions and architecture as twin aspects of his 'nobility'. Since, in that poem, proving his nobility seems to have been an important step in legitimising his role as *ḥājib*, it can be argued that al-Manṣūr perceived his military victories and cultural patronage (most especially in the form of the Cordoba mosque extension) as his most important 'virtues'. Another indication of al-Manṣūr's self-perception is contained in a passage that concludes al-Ḥijārī's anecdotes about Hishām 11, which Bariani has used to conclude that the caliph was not in full possession of his mental faculties (Chapter 1, 'Rupture'):

"I brought myself to Ibn Abī 'Āmir who, informed of Hishām's stroke of genius, knelt down

repeating, “God be praised, God be praised!” Finally al-Manṣūr said to me, ‘Do you not realize that in Hishām’s very conduct, of which you disapprove, lies the salvation of the Muslims? There can be only two types of Sulṭān who are most beneficial for their subjects: the conquering, judicious and independent ruler, who knows what will happen and when is the time to withdraw himself; and the ruler like Hishām, who needs someone to govern in his name. And the one who takes care of his power need not fear misfortune.’”¹⁶³

It would appear from this passage that al-Manṣūr considered himself a ruler of the first type: a ‘conquering, judicious and independent ruler’, fulfilling the ideal of kingship since Hishām himself was not capable of doing so.

These ideals sit well with the main themes around which the salaried poets, the *shu‘arā’ āmiriyyīn* (Chapter 3) composed their panegyrics. If we recall the passage in which Ibn Ḥayyān described the exodus of the ‘Āmirid poets from Cordoba as a result of al-Musta‘īn’s neglect of his patronage duty, we remember that they ‘composed in his praise good poems in which they appealed to religion (*dīn*) and manly virtue (*murū‘a*), and most of them recited them openly in his public audience’.¹⁶⁴ It can be assumed that these poets continued to celebrate the themes which had earned them success at the ‘Āmirid court. However, the English does not fully convey the range of meanings implied by the Arabic terms *dīn* and *murū‘a*, both of which encompass extremely complex concepts. *Dīn*, for example, ‘covers three things: *Islām* in its five elements...; *Īmān*, Faith; *Iḥsān*, Rightdoing’;¹⁶⁵ and has also been taken to encompass (Islamic) ‘civilisation’ (*tamaddun*), the *madīna* being the place where that ‘civilisation’ is propagated. It might thus be generally translated as the pious deeds and lifestyle by which a Muslim

contributes to the security and civilisation of his environment. *Murū‘a*, deriving from the basic word meaning ‘man’ or ‘human being’ (*mar*), ‘means the embodiment of those qualities which make up a man’, and includes ‘generosity’, ‘sense of honour’, ‘valour’, ‘chivalry’, ‘manliness’, ‘comprising all knightly virtues’.¹⁶⁶ It also has a significance in terms of Muslim ethics and morals, ‘covering a number of qualities, especially those of kings and lords’, and ‘in Muslim Spain ... it meant politeness and civility’.¹⁶⁷

In combination, then, in *dīn* and *murū‘a* – those concepts that earned favour in the poems recited by al-Manṣūr’s court poets – we can interpret the contrasting but complementary virtues of the ideal ruler: his physical courage, which he used for the defence of Islam, and his courtly refinement. The use of such concepts as the fundamental themes of ‘Āmirid panegyric recalls the literary genre known as ‘mirrors for princes’, of which the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, discussed above, was a prime example. These were ‘manuals of statecraft’, which ‘testified to the widespread interest not only in establishing the practical ethics of kingly conduct, but in defining the nature of kingship and the qualifications of the ideal sovereign’.¹⁶⁸ Such works would include chapters on the ‘Conduct of Jihad’, the ‘Conduct of Kings’, the ‘Character of the Pious’, the ‘Virtue of the Imāms’, the ‘Etiquette of Islam’, and the ‘Lawful and Unlawful’.¹⁶⁹ Such important ethical matters also recurred in panegyric poetry, though ‘the ethical dimension of court poetry has received little serious attention ... despite abundant evidence ... for the view that an important function of poetry is moral instruction by example’.¹⁷⁰

Did ‘Āmirid poetry have such a didactic purpose? It seems, rather, that it was entirely adulatory,

163 Bariani 1998, 101; Bariani 2001, 420.

164 Ibn Hayyan, *apud* Ibn Bassām 1989, 1:150. Cf. Blachère 1933, 108, n. 3, 109; Stetkevych 1997, 11.

165 ‘Dīn’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

166 ‘Murū‘a’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition; definitions given by Hans Wehr’s Arabic-English dictionary.

167 ‘Murū‘a’, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition.

168 Meisami 1987, 5, 180.

169 These titles come from the *Baḥr al-Fawā’id*, a mid-twelfth-century ‘mirror’, on which see Meisami 1991.

170 Meisami 1987, 11–12.

singing frequently of the 'Āmirids' virtues in glowing terms. For example, al-Manṣūr was the

“son of noble kings, whose descent from Ḥimyar
has occupied the summit of every genealogy,
Quintessence of their glories, pupil of their eyes,
moon of their nights, and sun of their days,
The most worthy of their honour, the most victori-
ous, the most generous, the most courageous on
the day of battles, you are their knight,
Heir of the power of kings and receiver of their glory
and greatness, born to lead knights in honour,
he *inherited the booty of kings*.
Men of power and of virtues, whose crowns are
worthy and proud of them.”¹⁷¹

Explicit in these verses is the notion that al-Manṣūr was the *heir* to the Umayyads, a concept which is rendered even more explicit in a poem by Ibrāhīm ibn Idrīs, who addresses al-Manṣūr as the ‘son of Umayya’.¹⁷² Other occurrences of such sentiments in Ibn Darrāj’s *dīwān* can be found at poem 99, ll. 19–20: ‘Those who reign in the name of God ... / ... for them there are dwellings built in Paradise’; poem 100, l. 43, where al-Manṣūr is praised as a ‘man of letters, of glory, lord of the stars and of the Arabs’; poem 115, ll. 12 and 31, ‘the virtues, the generosity, the courage have made appear in him a noble king’; poem 119, ll. 10 and 13, ‘your virtues have shone out in the midday brightness, and comparisons and metaphors are incapable of capturing their sense’; and poem 126, l. 13, which is dedicated to al-Muẓaffar. Though al-Manṣūr did not – ultimately – attempt to rise to the caliphate itself, we have seen throughout this study that in his cultural and architectural patronage, he stated clearly that he saw himself as fulfilling the caliph’s role. This statement is arguably most explicit in his artistic patronage – in the very visible use of symbols which had come to be associated with the

office of the caliphate, due to their adoption by the first Andalusī caliph and perhaps the fact that they emblematised the Umayyad army. In the ‘Āmirids’ self-perception, they had just claim to use these images, since they possessed in abundance the appropriate kingly virtues. Their employment of such symbols was an important means by which the ‘Āmirids could demonstrate that they were the right men for the job, and thereby enhance the legitimacy of their rule.

While the resonant emblems of the lion-gazelle and heraldic eagle and the martial tone of the epigraphy symbolised the ‘Āmirids’ military role, the artistic allusions to their architectural and literary patronage, and the prominence of imagery of flowers and nature, evoked the full gamut of princely virtues, in particular their construction of pious works. Al-Manṣūr had accomplished this most strikingly through the construction of Cordoba iv and the associated water infrastructure, of ablutions pavilion and cistern, but we can now see that the luxury arts were also implicated in the legitimisation of the dynasty. The ‘Āmirids used their art as the vehicles to project their ‘public image’ as fulfilling the virtues of the ideal ruler. The messages on these objects would have been displayed in private contexts, within the ‘Āmirid palaces and gardens, where the regents relaxed in poetic soirées with the members of the Córdoba elite who comprised their court. These intimate gatherings enabled the ‘Āmirids to build personal relationships with those noble families whose support they required to legitimise their *de facto* rule. In addition, this audience was well versed in the imagery of contemporary poetry, especially that sung in praise of the ‘Āmirids by their *dīwān* of poets. They would have understood the mutuality of the literary and artistic imagery, all the better to understand that the marble basins encapsulated – petrified even – the poetic language of the rulers’ virtues, as praised in panegyric in terms of the ‘generosity-ruthlessness doublet’.

171 Ibn Darrāj 1969, poem 3, ll. 47–52.

172 *Bayān* 11:302 [translation, 468].

Conclusion

Later, when Hishām entered Seville, Ibn ‘Abbād lodged him in his palace, saluted him with the title of caliph (*bi’l-khilāfa*) and made himself *ḥājib* like al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir, and his son Ismā‘īl ‘Imād al-Dawla occupied the post of al-Muẓaffar ‘Abd al-Malik, son of al-Manṣūr.

Crónica Anónima de los Reyes de Taifas
1991, 73



The Hishām in this passage refers to the ‘counterfeit caliph’ who was installed with great ceremony in 1035–6 by the first Taifa ruler of Seville, Abū’l-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn ‘Abbād (r. 1023–1041), who proclaimed him as Hishām al-Mu’ayyad, lost and then found again after 25 years of Fitna.¹ This was the Hishām for whom Shalem theorises that the magnificent gold and silk embroidery that was later turned into the Fermo chasuble (Figure 138) was produced, as a ‘canopy, tent or pavilion created for the inauguration ceremony of Hishām’s reappearance’, made within ‘Abbādid Seville or at one of the other Taifa courts which recognised ‘Abbādid authority and which maintained production centres for luxurious textiles.² In reality, this ‘Hishām’ was probably a man of ‘obscure and undistinguished origins’, identified by Ibn Ḥazm as one Khalaf al-Ḥuṣrī.³ A number of other Taifa states recognised him as caliph, naming him in the *khutbas* of their mosques, and even minting his name on their coins.⁴ Ultimately, these states were

being pragmatic, recognising that the ‘Abbādid’s greater power gave them a claim to authority over the other Taifa states. But the ‘Abbādid’s still hoped to make that claim legitimately, and it is significant that the way in which they chose to manufacture this legitimacy was by inventing a Hishām in order that Ibn ‘Abbād and his son could cast themselves in the roles of the ‘Āmirid *ḥujjāb*. Despite the fall of the ‘Āmirid dynasty, the model of rule and legitimation that had been established and carefully shaped by al-Manṣūr was seen by his ‘Abbādid successors to have been effective.

The persistence of some form of ‘Āmirid legacy into the post-Fitna period was inevitable, due to the fact that more than half of the earliest Taifa states were ruled by ‘people who belonged to what may be termed the ‘Āmirid elite’. More specifically, ‘twenty-one of the first thirty-six political entities ... had as their first rulers after the death of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī ‘Āmir people who seem to have stood quite high in the ‘Āmirid elite of the end of the fourth/tenth century’.⁵ These 21 ‘post-‘Āmirid’ Taifa states were Algeciras, Almería, Arcos, Badajoz, Calatrava, Carmona, Ceuta, Denia and the Balearic islands, Granada, Jaén, Mallorca, Málaga, Mertola, Morón, Murcia, Niebla and Gibralforte, Ronda, Silves, Toledo, Tortosa, and Valencia.⁶ A number of these men spawned their own dynasties, perpetuating the ‘Āmirid connection for several generations to come.

The first rulers of these states were, for the most part, men who had been appointed to posts in the provinces of al-Andalus during the ‘Āmirid *hijāba*. As Ibn al-Kardabūs relates,

1 Wasserstein 1985, 119–122; Wasserstein 1993a, 102–109.

2 Shalem 2017, 95, “The textile contextualized”.

3 Wasserstein 1985, 119–122; Wasserstein 1993a, 102–109.

4 For a list, see Wasserstein 1985, 120–121; Wasserstein 1993a, 103 ff; Wasserstein 1993c, 94–95.

5 Wasserstein 1985, 100.

6 For details of the rulers of these states, see Wasserstein 1985, 83–98. Ibn al-Kardabūs 1986, 90–91 (§§67–69) adds the Hūdids of Zaragoza to this list, though they did not become rulers of this Taifa state until 1039.

“when [the] news arrived [of Sanchuelo’s death and al-Mahdī’s uprising], the military leaders (*umarā*) rose up with the troops under their control, each one of them in their own region ... Each *qādī*, each provincial governor (*āmil*), each man who wielded any force, rose up in his own place ...”⁷

The ways in which al-Manṣūr strove to form such an ‘Āmirid elite’, and the nature of this elite’s relationship with the *ḥujjāb*, was examined in particular in Chapter 3, where it was argued that bonds of personal loyalty were carefully forged by the ‘Āmirids with those whose support they required to legitimise their *ḥijāba*. For example, it is probable that the Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-‘Āmirī named as the *fatā al-kabīr* in the inscription on the Pamplona casket and possibly the Braga pyxis (Appendix 4.11, 4.12) was the same man who was governor of Jaén, Baeza and Calatrava, and who later became the Taifa ruler of Almería.⁸ Furthermore, as can be seen from the genealogy of the Banū Abī ‘Āmir (Appendix 1), some of these relationships extended to the familial: for example, Sanchuelo’s son, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, and his descendants ruled Valencia between 1021 and 1085; Mujāhid, the Ṣiqlābī ruler of Denia and the Balearics from 1012 to 1044, was an ‘Āmirid *mawlā* whose son was married to a granddaughter of al-Manṣūr; and Abū ‘Āmir ibn al-Muẓaffar, briefly ruler of Jaén (1021–1028), was an ‘intimate’ of Ibn Ḥazm. Some of these men appear to have collected physical mementoes of the ‘Āmirid *ḥujjāb*: for example, Mujāhid may have taken with him to the Balearics a marble capital signed by Faṭḥ, from where it was looted by the Pisans in the early twelfth century, along with the more famous ‘Pisa Griffin’.⁹ Examples such as this led to the widespread dispersal of objects and architectural ornament from the Cordoba area throughout the rest of the Iberian Peninsula.

As Wasserstein has noted, there seems to be no sense in which these ‘post-‘Āmirid’ states were conscious of forming an ‘Āmirid ‘party’, in that they do not seem to have remained loyal to an ‘Āmirid ideology or to each other.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the ‘Āmirid formula of rulership was seen to be tried and tested, and these states do seem to have deliberately adopted some of the strategies the ‘Āmirids had employed to articulate their own legitimacy.

Most obvious among these strategies is the titlature adopted by some Taifa rulers. In Valencia, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz continued the family tradition by calling himself ‘al-Manṣūr’, and his son – whose name was ‘Abd al-Malik – took the title ‘al-Muẓaffar’.¹¹ Silves was ruled by an ‘al-Muẓaffar’ between 1048 and 1053; and Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān ibn Hūd, who ruled Lérida from 1046 as a satellite of the Taifa of Zaragoza, also took ‘al-Muẓaffar’, though he had not been a member of the ‘Āmirid elite: Yūsuf was the founder of Castell Formós in Balaguer, from which some of the earliest datable architectural decoration of the Taifa period has been excavated (see below). Some of these al-Muẓaffars are candidates for the ownership of the Suaire de Saint Lazare, as Miriam Ali-de-Unzaga points out.¹² Further, a number of Taifa rulers adopted the title *ḥājib*, ‘with its evocation of al-Manṣūr, who had been the greatest to use the title in the peninsula’.¹³ As mentioned above, the first ‘Abbādid ruler of Seville attempted the deliberate revival of the ‘Āmirid meaning of this title – ‘for whom, it might be argued, were such rulers *ḥājibs* if not for the absent Umayyads?’¹⁴ – in order to appropriate the authority delegated by the institution of an invented caliph. It is surely telling that many of the Taifa states who minted coins in the name of the ‘counterfeit caliph’ were ‘post-‘Āmirids’. The Berber

⁷ Ibn al-Kardabūs 1986, 90–91 (§§67–69).

⁸ Navásques y de Palacio 1964a, 241–242; Wasserstein 1993a, 129–145.

⁹ Contadini 2018, 238.

¹⁰ Wasserstein 1985, 101.

¹¹ Wasserstein 1985, 97. On the use of ‘al-Manṣūr’ as a Taifa title, see Guichard 1995, 51 n. 2.

¹² Ali-de-Unzaga 2017, 119.

¹³ Wasserstein 1985, 123. For a list of these, see 123–124 n. 19.

¹⁴ Wasserstein 1985, 123.

Banū Dhū al-Nūn, who took power in Toledo, inscribed this title on the ivory objects which they commissioned: both the Palencia casket and the Narbonne pyxis are inscribed *l'ḥ-ḥājib*,¹⁵ and in this way they underscored their own attempts to legitimise their rule. The adoption of such inflated pseudo-caliphal titles by such small political entities caused one contemporary poet to remark that they were 'names of royalty out of place, like a cat which speaks in a puffed up way like a lion'.¹⁶ However, it is clear that the Taifa rulers drew heavily upon the 'Āmirid model of rulership, in which the adoption of titles had been one important strategy.

A further strategy adopted by the Taifa rulers in imitation of caliphal and 'Āmirid models was to employ artistic and cultural patronage as a means of political expression. As discussed in Chapter 3, Ibn Ḥayyān credited the flourishing of literature at Taifa courts to the fact that al-Mustā'in drove the *shu'arā' āmiriyyīn* from Cordoba, by neglecting to engage sufficiently in his duties as their patron. These poets migrated to new centres of patronage – Ibn Darrāj, for example, pursued his career at the Tujībid court of Zaragoza.¹⁷ Al-Lughawī (d. 423/1032), the 'Āmirids' 'official chronicler' and librarian, found protection with Mujāhid al-Ṣiqlābī, the 'Āmirid *fatā* who became a Taifa ruler, and lived at his court in the Balearic islands until his death. Mujāhid is known to have sponsored his own literary circle.¹⁸ Such literary patronage was undoubtedly one of the most significant – and best attested – ways in which the Taifa rulers sought to recreate in microcosm the high cultural sophistication of the pre-Fitna courts, and their nostalgia for caliphal/'Āmirid Cordoba is reflected as much in the *ubi sunt?* genre which

developed at their courts as it is in the titulature they adopted.¹⁹

As the 'Āmirid court poets sought out new patronage in Taifa centres, so too did the artisans of the 'Āmirid Dār al-Ṣinā'a: the iconographic and epigraphic similarities between 'Āmirid and the earliest Taifa-period luxury objects certainly suggests that its craftsmen found new sources of patronage. The association of ivory manufacture with royalty and rule was understood and exploited by the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn, who established an ivory-carving industry in the 'eagles' nest' of Cuenca, more than 900 metres above sea level (Figure 174).²⁰ Although nearly 200 km from Toledo, their capital from around 1030, Cuenca had been their main settlement since the time of the Islamic conquest of al-Andalus, and dominated the eastern region of which the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn had been masters since the ninth century. It seems they chose to have their ivories produced in the ancestral lands that symbolised their dominance over the east of the Peninsula.²¹

The small size of the extant objects, such as the tiny pyxides in the David Collection (datable first half eleventh century) and in Narbonne Cathedral (c. 1040–50), and the techniques adopted to maximise the available material – such as the use of small, openwork ivory plaques fixed to a wooden core, on the Palencia casket (dated 411/1049–50) – indicate that ivory as a raw material was in scarce supply.²² The Taifa regimes did not have the same level of control over the trans-Saharan trade routes as the Umayyad and 'Āmirid rulers had been able to maintain, so it is unlikely that new supplies of ivory entered al-Andalus at this time. It is highly likely that the Cuenca industry was stimulated by

15 Makariou 1999; *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cats. 28, 29.

16 Cited in Ibn al-Khaṭīb 1956, 144; cf. also Pérès 1990, 114, and Wasserstein 1985, 124.

17 See Makkī 1963–1964, 86–104, and Viguera 1983.

18 Al-'Abbādī 1953, 15–24; Sarnelli Cerqua 1964.

19 Robinson 1998; Robinson 2002.

20 Makariou 1999, 133.

21 I would like to thank Xavier Ballestín for these observations. On the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn and Cuenca, see Guichard 1977, 316, 321.

22 *Journal of the David Collection* 2/2, cats. 26 (David collection pyxis), 28 (Narbonne pyxis), 29 (Palencia casket).



FIGURE 174 Silos casket, made by Muḥammad ibn Zayyān, Cuenca, dated 1026–7, ivory; Museo de Bellas Artes, Burgos
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access to one or two tusks that had been stockpiled in the ‘Āmirid Khizānah (see Chapter 6).

Could these tusks have even been carried to Cuenca by an enterprising ivory-carver from the ‘Āmirid Dār al-Ṣinā’a? Perhaps this was even Muḥammad ibn Zayyān himself, who signed and dated the Silos casket, made in 417/1026.²³ Close stylistic connections between the ‘Āmirid ivories and the early products of the Taifa industry indicate that the same craftsmen or designers were involved, or at the very least they had seen ‘Āmirid ivories, which became their models. As discussed in Chapter 7, a diagnostic motif of the ivories made at Cuenca is the way that birds and animals bite down onto shoots, but this appears first in ‘Āmirid art. It is seen, for example, on the Pamplona casket (Figure 125E) and Braga pyxis (Chapter 7: 2.2). The animals on the lid of the Braga pyxis, especially, seem to prefigure the slightly more static style of, for example, the lions on the Palencia casket. The box in Doha, dated 1003–4 (4.1.1), features lions devouring men (on the front) and a man who

spears the behind of another lion (on the back), images which prefigure the treatment of these motifs on the Silos and Palencia caskets. The leaves with very prominent veins on ‘Abd al-Malik’s basin (2.3.1) also seem to prefigure those of the Cuenca ivories. The combination – in particular on the Silos casket – of the lion-gazelle combat motif, that distinctively ‘Āmirid emblem as discussed in Chapter 8, with the title of ‘hājib’ indicates deliberate references to their ‘Āmirid predecessors on the part of the Banū Dhū’l-Nūn. Whether the industry came into being under the dynasty’s founder,²⁴ his son al-Ma’mūn (r. 1043–75),²⁵ or

24 See Makariou 1999, 131–133, who believes the tiny Narbonne pyxis to have been made for the founder of the dynasty, Ismā’il ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Dhū’l-Nūn (r. 1018–1043).

25 As Cynthia Robinson 1995, 485–496, believes, who says (p. 490): ‘the commission of [the Palencia casket] by al-Ma’mūn ... supposes a significant ... public gesture, one charged with meaning and which, I believe, may be seen as part of a programme of royal propaganda closely tied to this king’s ambitions *vis-à-vis* the former Umawi (*sic*) capital of Cordoba’. However, this object’s inscription clearly states that it was commissioned by

grandson Ismā'īl,²⁶ they undoubtedly attempted to evoke the 'Āmirid, and before that caliphal, connotations of this craft, and thereby to visualise the legitimacy of their rule.

Could another ivory-carver have carried another tusk, or several, to another centre of potential new patronage, this time under Christian rule, in the kingdom of León? By the 1060s, an ivory carving industry was flourishing in León under the patronage of Fernando I (r. 1037–65).²⁷ Though this industry was contemporary with Taifa production, the Leonese objects indicate a much greater supply of raw material; there was enough, for example, to allow the creation of highly three-dimensional sculptural objects such as the crucifix commissioned as part of the foundational gift to the royal monastery of San Isidoro in León, or the 'Carrizo christ'.²⁸ Was the arrival of ivory from Cordoba commemorated in the depiction of a huge tusk ceremonially carried by four men, one of whom is on horseback, on one of the plaques (sadly now lost) from the San Millán casket?²⁹ If tusks were stockpiled in the Cordoban Dār al-Šinā'a, they could have found their way – through diplomatic gifts, trade or booty – to Christian centres in northern Iberia: they may have travelled with craftsmen who left Andalusi centres to seek new patronage,

or who might have been captured in Christian incursions into Taifa lands.

Rose Walker argues that the close relationship between Alfonso VI and al-Ma'mūn of Toledo could have led to the exchange (whether voluntary or involuntary) of craftsmen skilled in the designs and techniques of Andalusi carving, and that these craftsmen were involved in the commission of early stone capitals produced under Alfonso's patronage at several Castilian sites, including Santiago de Compostela and San Isidoro de León.³⁰ In Chapter 7, we also encountered two stone basins in San Isidoro that owe stylistic and technical debts to Andalusi models of carving: one, with entirely vegetal carving (Figure 144), relates to the Xátiva basin and could have been brought to León from a Taifa centre; the other (Figure 159) appears to have been made in León, but with an awareness of the style of the 'Āmirid marble basins. Perhaps the carver had been trained in an Andalusi tradition indebted to the 'Āmirid Dār al-Šinā'a, a tradition that had been maintained at one of the Taifa centres in the intervening decades.

Turning to architecture, what remains of the palaces of the earliest Taifa rulers probably provides the closest surviving guide to the appearance of the 'Āmirid palace-city, al-Madinat al-Zāhira. As discussed in Chapter 4, this seems to have still been standing, albeit in a ruinous state, until the late twelfth century, and as Cynthia Robinson noted, 'the Taifa kings would surely have responded to it'.³¹ The problem is the state of preservation or excavation of these palaces, though there has been a remarkable increase in archaeological finds over the last two decades. Palaces like the Alcázar at Seville or the Aljafería in Zaragoza have remained seats of government until today, with additions and interventions by every major regime that has inhabited them, which limits the possibilities for fully understanding the archaeology of their Taifa phases. Nevertheless, remains of the decoration of three of the earliest palaces, all built by the middle

al-Ma'mūn's son, Ismā'īl. It is possible that the Silos casket was commissioned for al-Ma'mūn, though the relevant section of its inscription is missing.

26 Of the nine ivories that can be associated with the Taifa-period industry, four of them are inscribed, three mentioning an Ismā'īl (the fourth is the Silos casket). The Palencia and Bienaventuranzas caskets both clearly name Ismā'īl ibn al-Ma'mūn as patron, and since we therefore know this member of the dynasty patronised the ivory industry, there seems no reason to doubt that the Ismā'īl mentioned on the Narbonne pyxis is anyone but al-Ma'mūn's son: cf. Lévi-Provençal 1931, 190–191 (#206–#209).

27 *Art of Medieval Spain*, cats. 109, 111–117; Álvarez da Silva 2014; Martín 2019.

28 *Art of Medieval Spain*, cats. 111, 114.

29 This plaque, formerly in the Bode Museum in Berlin (inv. 3008), was destroyed during the Second World War: Goldschmidt 1914–26, vol. 4, cat. 87.

30 Walker 2015.

31 Robinson 1992, 51.

of the eleventh century, start to give tangible clues to the appearance of Taifa art as it emerged from the Fitna years and the debt these might owe to the lost ʿĀmirid palaces.

The first of these is a restored triple arcade opening onto an open pavilion preserved at the heart of the Alcazaba at Málaga, one of the ‘post-ʿĀmirid’ states, possibly built as early as the reign of Yaḥyā ibn Ḥammūd (r. 1026–35) (Figure 175).³² While this small palace has long been likened to the buildings of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, a number of important differences can be noted: for example, in the method of construction employed in its intersecting arches, as well as in the functional shift from the arches having an entirely structural purpose to being essentially decorative. Furthermore, by the time of this palace’s construction, ‘architectural decoration [had] also evolved’: the plaster reliefs are flatter and more uniform in texture, and the vegetal motifs are less varied – ‘the pulpy stems, fruits and leaves of the caliphal stuccowork have been transformed into delicate, attenuated, elaborately curved leaves and stems’.³³ The flatter style of the leaf forms at Málaga recalls those carved in ivory on the Palencia casket (dated 1049–50). These ‘clear stylistic differences’ certainly represent the ‘early intimations of a new Taifa aesthetic, that was to evolve more fully in later buildings in Zaragoza and elsewhere’.³⁴ Had these stylistic evolutions begun earlier, under the ʿĀmirids?

One characteristic of the ʿĀmirid architectural style, discussed in Chapter 7, was an increasingly flat relief in carving technique. This seems to prefigure the style of carving employed in the Alcazaba at Málaga, and in the decoration of al-Maʾmūn’s palace in Toledo, built around the mid-eleventh century, and partially preserved in the Convento de Santa Fe.³⁵ A group of spectacular marble capitals and bases, found in the nearby church of Santo Tomé, shows heavy use of the



FIGURE 175 Arcade in the Taifa palace, Alcazaba, Málaga
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drill but almost no undercutting (Figure 176);³⁶ the size and shape of the capitals relate closely to the flat relief capital with a worm in the Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan (Figure 24), which I have suggested is ʿĀmirid. The birds amid scrolling foliage on an elegant marble relief (Figure 177), which closely relates to the style of Taifa ivory carving, have parallels with the ʿĀmirid marble basin fragments in Granada (compare Chapter 7: 2.3.3).³⁷ The eye-witness accounts of al-Maʾmūn’s palace

32 Ewert 1966; Robinson 1992, 52–55.

33 Robinson 1992, 53.

34 Robinson 1992, 55.

35 Calvo 2002.

36 *Al-Andalus* cat. 47.

37 *Al-Andalus* cat. 48. In the case of both this relief and the capital just mentioned, Robinson argues for the likely influence of artistic developments under the Banū Hūd at Zaragoza, who were beginning the construction of the Aljafería during the reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 1049–82).



FIGURE 176 Capital, probably from al-Ma'mūn's palace, Toledo, mid-eleventh century, marble; Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, inv. D01272
© ROSE WALKER / PHOTO: JOHN BATTEN PHOTOGRAPHY

in Toledo, such as the description of the fountain basins by Ibn Jabīr which was quoted in Chapter 3, indicate that al-Ma'mūn might have been following an Āmirid model in the layout and decoration of his palace and in the public/private staging of his court activity.

In 1999, the remains of the decoration of an arcade of three horseshoe arches were excavated in the Convento de Santa Fe, opposite the Capilla de Belén, a domed hall that was also originally part of al-Ma'mūn's palace (Figure 178).³⁸ The decoration of these arches indicates new developments in the art of al-Andalus, above all in the decorative use of carved plaster. Both faces of the arcade feature figurative scenes against a blue background



FIGURE 177 Decorative wall panel, probably from al-Ma'mūn's palace, Toledo, mid-eleventh century, marble; Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo, inv. CE400
© MUSEO DE SANTA CRUZ

38 Calvo 2002; Monzón Moya and Martín Morales 2006; Monzón Moya 2011; Calvo 2011, 77–8; Rabasco García 2019, 487–494. For a digital recreation of the arcade's original appearance, see <https://parpatrimoniotechnology.wordpress.com/2019/04/19/el-conjunto-monumental-de-santa-fe-de-toledo-iv-la-arqueria-taifa/> (accessed 9 February 2020).

deriving from lapis lazuli, though there is also evidence of other colours (black, orange and green), with outlining in red and enhancements in gold. On the south side of the arcade, facing into the garden which separated this structure from the



FIGURE 178 Decorative arch from al-Ma'mūn's palace, Toledo, mid-eleventh century, plaster, glass; Convento de Santa Fe, Toledo
© VÍCTOR RABASCO GARCÍA



FIGURE 179 Decorative arch from al-Ma'mūn's palace: details; A. harpy B: sphinx
© VÍCTOR RABASCO GARCÍA

qubba opposite, are hunting scenes, with men on horseback carrying falcons in the mode of the *Suaire de Saint Lazare* or several of the 'Āmirid ivories. On the north side, facing the interior of the hall for which this was the entrance, are mythical creatures such as harpies and sphinxes, distinctively represented with haloes (Figure 179). The compositions are symmetrical and surrounded by floral motifs. The intrados of the arches features

a network of hexagonal compartments, again in carved plaster, containing affronted birds and animals, including birds whose tails join over their heads like the peacocks on the Pamplona casket, and upright winged lions, which recall a common motif on later textiles. The background to these compartments is formed from flat coloured panes of glass, which reflect the light and give an extremely rich overall effect. This technique is so



FIGURE 180
Harpy from Castell Formós, Balaguer, mid-eleventh century, plaster; Museu Noguera, Balaguer
© ROSE WALKER / PHOTO:
JOHNBATTENPHOTOGRAPHY

far unprecedented in al-Andalus and does not seem to be repeated, though Calvo notes that it was known in Mamluk Egypt.³⁹

Rabasco García likens the layout of the decoration on these arcades to luxury textiles that would have been in use at al-Ma'mūn's court – he cites another passage from the eye witness account by Ibn Jabir of the circumcision ceremony of his heir, which describes how the palace was bedecked with soft furnishings.⁴⁰ Further, he associates the motifs themselves with parallels in textile, in particular the nimbed harpies whose tails look distinctly like those of a cockerel: this depiction is very different from the other eleventh-century harpy carved in

plaster, that from the Castell Formós in Balaguer, which has the classical form of a woman's head on a bird's body (Figure 180). Instead, Rabasco likens the motif to the harpies on the embroidery from Oña, discussed in Chapter 7, and on earlier textiles from much further east – he illustrates a fragment of a silk samite from Tang China, which features paired cockerels or pheasants with accentuated plumage in their tails and also with haloes.⁴¹ Does this parallel have relevance for the otherwise unusual presence of cockerels on the ivory pyxis associated with Sanchuelo (3.1)? The textile parallel also evokes the presence of sphinxes on the Suaire de Saint Lazare (2.4), possibly the first appearance of this motif in al-Andalus, and the overall blue-and-gold colour scheme of the arcade's design also recalls this embroidery. If the Suaire de Saint

39 Calvo 2011, 77, citing an article by Stefano Carboni on the painted glass decoration of the mausoleum of Aḥmad ibn Sulayman al-Rifā'ī in Cairo, built 1291.

40 Rabasco García 2019, 486–7.

41 Rabasco García 2019, 490–1.

Lazare is an example of ʿĀmirid textile production, these aspects might provide further evidence of continuity into the Taifa period, or of deliberate visual referencing of ʿĀmirid art.

Also unusual is the use of carved plaster as a material for architectural decoration. Calvo comments that its use in al-Maʿmūn's palace seems to evidence a 'mature technique'.⁴² She notes that plaster was used to create the scallop shell dome above the mihrab at the Great Mosque of Córdoba and the frieze of lobed arches around its base,⁴³ so it was present in caliphal Córdoba as a material of architectural decoration. On the other hand, decoration in carved plaster is a feature of the Islamic architecture of North Africa: in Chapter 7, we discussed the carved plaster ornament of houses beneath the Almoravid extension of the Qarawiyyīn mosque in Fez. Other significant examples have been excavated at Sedrata in Algeria (dating imprecise, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries),⁴⁴ Ajdābiya and Surt (mid-tenth century, associated with the Fatimids in Ifrīqiya),⁴⁵ and, most famously, the substantial finds of 3000 fragments at Sabra-Mansuriyya, which Barrucand and Rammah have dated to different phases within the Zirid period.⁴⁶ The first Zirid palace was built there in 986, exactly contemporary with al-Manṣūr's construction of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira. As at al-Maʿmūn's palace, the plaster decoration is set against a blue background, derived from lapis lazuli.

The use of carved plaster becomes widespread in the palaces built by Taifa rulers. Another early Taifa palace was that built at Castell Formós in Balaguer, near Lérida, whose construction can be credited to the Taifa ruler Yūsuf al-Muẓaffar: Christian Ewert wanted to date it as early as 1046, the year Yūsuf came to power.⁴⁷ While the decoration is predominantly vegetal, with a flat leaf style similar

to that used at Málaga and on the contemporary Dhū'l-Nūnid ivories, the presence of a harpy amid scrollwork suggests that the decoration of this palace was at least partially figurative (Figure 180). It seems to have made use of complex arch forms as well, judging by other remains. The apotheosis of these trends – complex arch profiles, and elaborate decoration in plaster – occurs at the Aljafería in Zaragoza, initiated by the Hūdid ruler al-Muqtadir (r. 1046–1081) after 1065 when he took his regnal title (Figure 14).⁴⁸ By this point, it is unlikely that there any direct influences from ʿĀmirid architecture though, as noted in Chapter 4, the Aljafería is the only other building where doubled capitals and columns are widely used: however, these are twinned capitals, as used in the *maqṣūra* at the Cordoba Mosque, not the highly sophisticated, fully integrated double-capital carved by Faraj, Bāshir and Mubārak probably for one of the palaces at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira (Figures 37–38), or those which adorned the ʿĀmirid 'tribune' in the Cordoba Mosque (Figures 39–40).

Without wanting to diminish the inventiveness of Taifa patrons and architects, might the fact that elaborate decoration in plaster became part of the shared visual language of Taifa art have derived from the same original source – the lost palaces of the ʿĀmirids? Could al-Manṣūr have responded to trends in North African architecture, which he knew well from his time stationed in the Maghrib, introducing new materials for architectural decoration at his court? No surviving evidence has yet surfaced that could be identified as an ʿĀmirid use of carved plaster. Another explanation for the widespread adoption of plaster as a decorative material around the middle of the eleventh century might be a more general trend towards the use of more regionally-available materials, such as alabaster in the Aljafería, or the local Valencian stone Buixarró rosa for the Xàtiva basin.

It is to be expected that the ʿĀmirid *mawālī* who came to form Taifa states during and after the Fitna should have taken away from Cordoba

42 Calvo 2011, 91.

43 Calvo 2011, 75.

44 Cressier and Gilotte 2013.

45 Bongianino 2015.

46 Barrucand and Rammah 2009.

47 Ewert 1979.

48 Cabañero Subiza 2007.

a sense of the cultural and artistic aesthetics that had defined the 'Āmirid court, and the all-too-brief survey of the extant evidence presented here suggests that this was indeed the case. Although these 'Āmirid cultural connections seem to have done little to promote a sense of political unity or mutual loyalty between the 'post-'Āmirid' Taifa states, they nevertheless facilitated the transmission of the high culture and tastes of the 'Āmirid court to all the regions of al-Andalus, as well as beyond its borders into the Maghrib and Christian Iberia.

The art of the Taifa period is being reappraised, as continued archaeological investigation all over Spain provides more primary material that deepens our knowledge of this period and reveals the cultural wealth of these small kingdoms. For example, the extremely significant find of excavated fragments of lustre dishes made in Seville for the 'Abbādid rulers al-Mu'tadid (r. 1042–69) and al-Mu'tamid (r. 1069–1091), reveal the beginnings of a ceramic technology for which Spain came to be famous in the later medieval period, as well showing the attraction of Fatimid art and the possible involvement of Fatimid potters in this production.⁴⁹ The recent re-examination of the 'Pisa Griffin' within the context of Mediterranean metalwork appears to confirm the creation of this fantastic beast in Taifa al-Andalus towards the end of the eleventh century, and its likely presence in Mallorca by the early twelfth century, when it was seized in one of the regular Pisan raids.⁵⁰ Though the Balearics were no longer under the control of Mujāhid or his son 'Alī, who succeeded him in 1044, the islands had flourished under their rule, becoming an important centre for Mediterranean trade and a threat to Pisan hegemony. Mayurqa was one of the eight largest cities of al-Andalus. Their ships sailed to Egypt, Syria and other eastern ports, and on more than one occasion 'Alī ibn Mujāhid sent provisions and gifts to the Fatimid rulers, during

a time of famine and plague in Egypt.⁵¹ Famously, Denia is where a hoard of eastern Mediterranean metalwork has been recovered.⁵² Such close contact with the Fatimids and with the Islamic East led to new materials, techniques and decorative motifs entering the art of al-Andalus – though, as we discussed in Chapter 7, this process was beginning during the 'Āmirid period.

This chapter cannot provide a full survey of Taifa art – which, in any case, will not be fully understood until many more excavations have happened – but, in evaluating the Taifa contribution to Andalusī society, art and culture, it is important to bear in mind the arguably seminal influences of the 'Āmirids on the political and cultural developments of the early Taifa period. It has previously been difficult to gauge the manner or likely extent of these influences, in the absence of a framework for the study of 'Āmirid culture in its own right. This book suggests some ways in which to pursue this relationship.

This book has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in order to evaluate the full spectrum of 'Āmirid artistic and cultural patronage, and has encompassed discussions of 'Āmirid domestic and foreign policies, the 'Āmirid court and its literary patronage, the grand-scale architectural projects sponsored by al-Manṣūr, and the 'Āmirids' use of the luxury arts industry. Between them, these fields of enquiry provide ample evidence for the study of 'Āmirid patronage, though the difficulties presented by the evidence, and the wide range of different methodologies and skills required to evaluate it properly, have meant that such a study has never previously been undertaken. The recent historiographical reevaluation of the 'Āmirid period has provided an historical framework within which this dynasty's patronage can be better contextualised. It can be shown that the main issue dominating the 'Āmirid *hijāba* was

49 Barceló and Heidenreich 2014.

50 Contadini 2018, especially sections 3.3 and 3.7.

51 Calvo 2011, 88. Julian Raby in Contadini 2018, section 3.7 discusses the importance of Mallorca in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, especially pp. 318–22.

52 Azuar Ruiz 2012.

that of establishing its legitimacy – this was not a simplistic example of the usurpation of caliphal prerogatives. Neither al-Manṣūr nor his sons were unwilling patrons, as has been implied by those art historians who relate the construction of his extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba to his desire to placate the Maliki *fuqahā*. Nevertheless, appropriation undoubtedly featured among the ways in which the ‘Āmirids articulated their rule, since in many respects al-Manṣūr imitated a model of legitimation that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III had codified in order to underscore his pretensions to be the rightful caliph of Sunni Islam.

Al-Manṣūr’s adoption of caliphal-style titu- lature; his appropriation of caliphal court cer- emonial; his strategic, even dynastic, marriage alliances; his perpetuation and intensification of diplomatic relations with the Umayyads’ cli- ent states; his regular military campaigning in which he personally led his army into the field; his extension to the symbol *par excellence* of the Umayyads’ temporal and religious rule in al- Andalus, the Great Mosque of Cordoba; his con- struction of a palace-city in a recognisably ‘royal’ architectural form; his patronage of the luxury arts industry, and the deployment of its products as *khila*’ – each of these elements made essentially the same statement: that the ‘Āmirid *ḥujjāb* were fulfilling the traditional duties of the caliph. Their authority was legally delegated from the caliph, who seems – due to health or mental health rea- sons – to have been incapable of effective rule. The central concern of the ‘Āmirid regime therefore became the *ḥājibs*’ need to continually justify and legitimise their stewardship of royal power. Thus, al-Manṣūr deliberately articulated his *ḥijāba* as if it were a caliphate, and sought to legitimise his position by engaging in the types of cultural and artistic patronage that had traditionally been the preserve of caliphs.

The messages that al-Manṣūr sought to articu- late by means of his cultural patronage were prob- ably clearest to contemporaries in his massive extension to the Cordoba Mosque. Here his archi- tects went to great pains to imitate the previous

Umayyad phases, especially that of al-Ḥakam, completed only twelve years before. Here also, the words with which al-Manṣūr inscribed the gates of his extension literally stated his intention to con- tinue the Umayyads’ suppression of heterodoxy, and hence to preserve the stability of the state and the unity of the *umma*. The subtext of these inscriptions was, however, that now the effective power to champion Maliki orthodoxy no longer lay with the Umayyads, but instead with the ‘Āmirids. In this, as in his pursuit of twice-yearly campaigns against the Christians and the Fatimids’ Berber allies, al-Manṣūr – and, later, his sons – laid claim to be the real defender of the faith. The two-sided coin of his military successes and his construction of pious works provided a fundamental basis for the legitimacy of the ‘Āmirid *ḥijāba*.

Lastly, the ‘Āmirids employed their patronage of the luxury arts industry as a means of visualising these same claims to legitimacy, and in particular to project their self-image as embodying the vir- tues of the ideal ruler. The images they used were the same as those employed in the poetry they commissioned, that was sung in their praise by the panegyrists of the ‘Āmirid court. Such a cultural- political project surely demanded production on an intensive scale, as may be judged by the many objects and fragments that still survive. By these means, ‘Āmirid patronage gave rise to a charac- teristic and definable style, which – as argued above – likely influenced the art of the emerging Taifa rulers.

The ‘Āmirid period’ can thus be recognised in its own right as a time of stability and prosper- ity within the borders of al-Andalus, when high culture flourished under active and discerning patrons. Rather than merely a transitional phase between the caliphal and Taifa periods, it was an interregnum, with its own defining political con- cerns, cultural priorities, and its own artistic style. Though today they are better remembered for their roles as warriors of Islam, for the ‘Āmirids themselves, an equally important role in the artic- ulation of their *ḥijāba* was played by their artistic and cultural patronage.

Genealogy of the Banū Abī ‘Āmir, 711–1085

Most of the information about the family relationships of the Banū Abī ‘Āmir is compiled from the biographical information given in the main historical sources for this period:

Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Al-Bayān al-Mughrib*, 11: 273–274, 293–294 [Fagnan’s translation 424–427, 455–456], and 111: 3–74 [Salgado’s translation, 11–74]

Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus 1:175 [2: 186, §147–148]

Al-Maqqarī, *Nafh al-Ṭib min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb*, Gayangos’ translation pp. 178–179

The other major source which has provided additional information is Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, 1953 translation, as follows: p. 22: on Wāhid, the gardener’s (or cheesemonger’s) daughter; pp. 43, 50, 143: on Abū ‘Āmir Muḥammad (ibn al-Muẓaffar); pp. 127–128: on Burayha’s aunt (the necrophiliac!); p. 217: on al-Muẓaffar’s daughter, Ḍanā.

Al-Ḍalfā’ is only mentioned during the accounts of the destruction of al-Zāhira in *Bayān* 111 (see

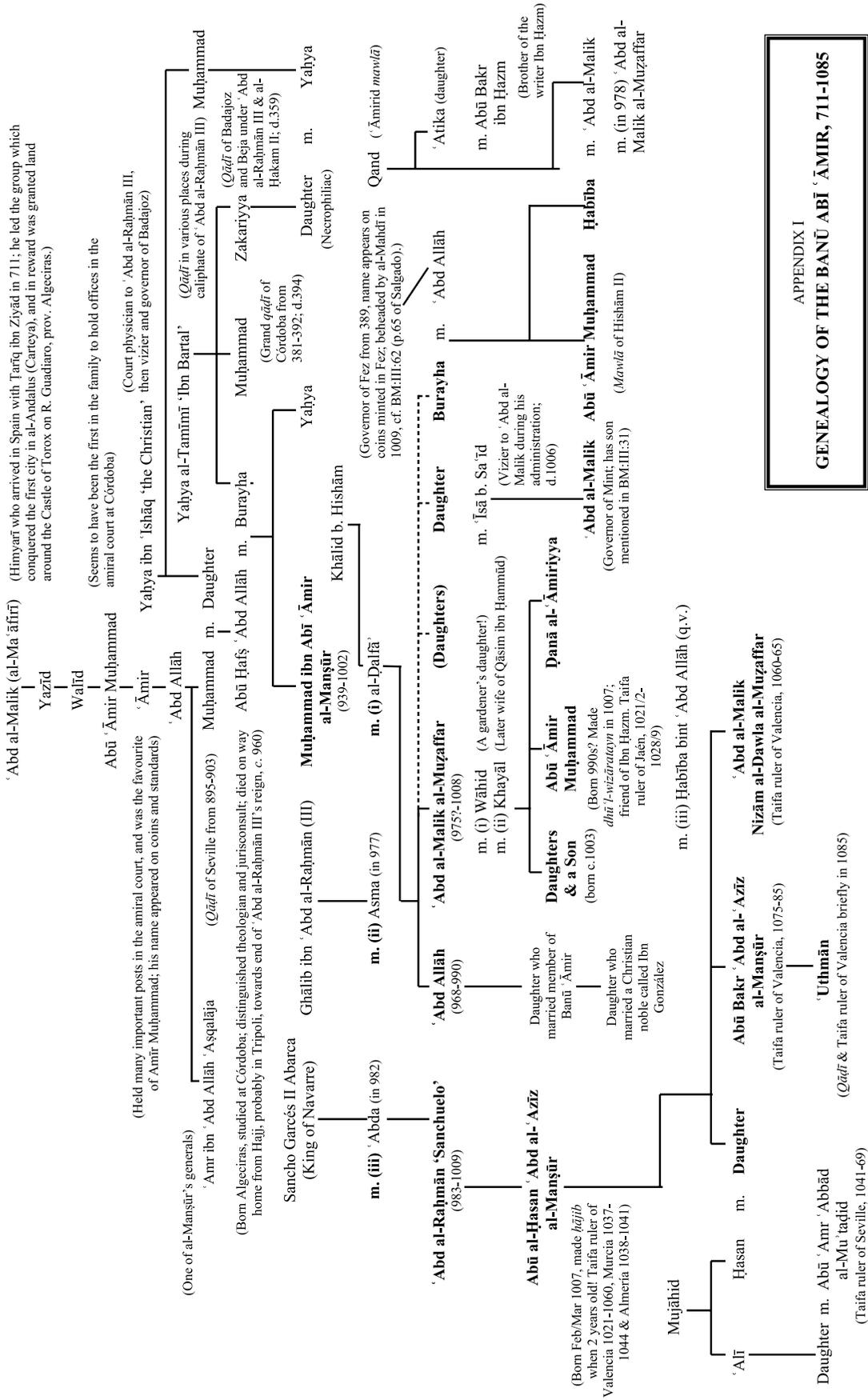
Chapter 4). Her father Khālīd ibn Hishām, is mentioned at *Dhikr Bilād* 1:148 [11:186–7]. The grand-daughter of Mujāhid who was the favoured wife of Abū ‘Āmir ‘Abbād al-Mu’taḍid (Taifa ruler of Seville, 1041–69), is mentioned at *Bayān* 111:208 [translation, 175].

Information on those grandsons of al-Manṣūr, and their offspring, who became Taifa rulers, is taken from Wasserstein 1985, 83–98.

Other non-textual evidence has also been drawn on: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yaḥya ibn Abī ‘Āmir, al-Manṣūr’s nephew, succeeded Wāḍiḥ as governor of Fez, and his name appears on coins issued at Madīnat Fās in the years 389 and 390: cf. Miles 1950, 70.

Abū ‘Āmir Muḥammad, *mawlā* (?) of Hishām 11, as the son of Burayha (grandson of al-Manṣūr) is mentioned in an inscription given in Lévi-Provençal 1931 (#190), n. 2.

Biographical information for al-Manṣūr is also provided by De la Puente 1997; Viguera 1999; Bariani 2003, 52–55; Ballestín 2004a; Fierro 2008; and Echevarría 2011, 33–43.



Timeline of al-Manṣūr's Main Campaigns and Offices Held

After Ibáñez Izquierdo 1990, taken from sources in al-'Udhri's *Tarṣīf al-Akhhbār*; and the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus*.

Year (AD)	Year (AH)	Campaign Number	Campaign name/Office held	Dates	Modern toponymy	Consequences
966	355		<i>Kātib</i> , working for <i>qāḍī</i> Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn al-Salīm			
967 (22 Feb)	356 (9 Rabī' 1)		Steward (<i>wakīl</i>) to <i>walī al-'ahd</i> , 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam II (d. 359/970)			
			Steward to Ṣubḥ			
967 (21 Sept)	356 (13 Shawwal)		Governor of the Mint (<i>ṣāḥib al-sikka</i>) for first time			
968 (1 Dec)	357 (7 Muḥarram)		Secretary of the Treasury			
			Head of Office of Inheritance (<i>ṣāḥib al-mawārīt</i>)			
969 (27 Oct)	359 (12 Dhū al-hijja)		<i>Qāḍī</i> of Seville, Niebla and dependent districts; embellishes the city			
970 (11 July)	360 (4 Ramaḍān)		Steward (<i>wakīl</i>) to Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam II, now <i>walī al-'ahd</i>			
971 Sept			Given the order to go to Bezmiliana (<i>kūra</i> of Rayya) to collect Ja'far ibn 'Alī al-Andalusī and his family who had recently deserted the Fatimids			
972	361		Quits office of <i>ṣāḥib al-sikka</i>			
Mar/Apr	Jumāda II		<i>Ṣāḥib al-shurṭa al-wuṣṭa</i>			
			September quits office of <i>Qāḍī</i> of Seville			
July 973			<i>Qāḍī al-quḍāt</i> for western Maghrib; distributes <i>khil'ā</i>			
974 (4 July)	363 (10 Shawwal)		Reappointed <i>ṣāḥib al-sikka</i>			
Nov/Dec	Rabī' 1		Functions as <i>ḥājib</i> in state ceremonial			
976 (5 Feb)	365 (1 Jumāda II)		In charge of distributing document of oath of allegiance to Hishām throughout provinces of al-Andalus			
7 Oct	10 Ṣafar		<i>Wazīr</i>			
			General of soldiers based in capital			
977	366		<i>Ṣāḥib al-madīna</i> for Cordoba (Ziyād ibn Aflaḥ is <i>ṣāḥib al-madīna</i> of Madīnat al-Zahrā')			
977		1	Al-Hamma	24 Feb–17 April	Baños de Ledesma	Seized the suburb
		2	Quwilar	23 May–26 June	Cuéllar	Campaigned with Ghālib. Town destroyed.
		3	Salmantiqa	18 Sep–20 Oct	Revenga?-Salamanca	Campaigned with Ghālib.
	367		<i>Dhū al-wizāratayn</i>			

(cont.)

Year (AD)	Year (AH)	Campaign Number	Campaign name/Office held	Dates	Modern toponymy	Consequences
978		4	Alfabra	31 May–6 Aug	Pamplona, Plain of Barcelona, Al-Faro?	Defeat of Count Borrell
		5	Latisma (1)	4 Oct–5 Nov	Ledesma	Cannot have fallen
978	368 (1 Muḥarram)		Assumes title <i>Ḥājib</i> Begins construction of al-Madīnat al-Zāhira			
979		6	Latisma (2)	1–28 May	Zamora- Ledesma	Fell
		7	Santbulbiqa	28 Jul–31 Aug	Sepúlveda	Did not fall
		8	Algeciras	End September	Sent troops to North Africa	
980	370	9	'Treason'	2 Apr–27 May	Atienza- Castilla- Medinaceli	Seizure of Medinaceli
		10	Almunia	30 Sep–20 Oct	Armuñá de Tajuña	Seized it
			Transfers residence and institutions to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira Adopts <i>laqab</i> 'al-Manṣūr'			
981	371	11	Qunyalis	9 Feb–8 March	Canillas	Seized it
		12	'Dissolution of the Ma'āfirīs'	31 March–11 April	Near Torrevicente	Defeat of al-Manṣūr
		13	'Victory'	11 May–27 July	Torrevicente	Defeat of Ghālib
		14	Samura	24 Aug–17 Sep	Zamora	Was not taken
		15	Taranckunya	29 Oct–22 Nov	Tarancueña	Was not taken
982		16	'Three Nations'	1 June–4 August	Against alliance of Navarra, Castille & Gerona	Defeat of alliance
		17	Luyun	20 Sep–27 Oct	Toro-León	Seized Toro
983		18	Santmancka	16 June–17 July	Rueda- Simancas	Battle at Rueda. Seizure of Simancas
		19	Salamanca	1–29 September	Salamanca	City surrendered
		20	Sacramenia	2 Nov–8 Dec	Sacramenia	Seized it

(cont.)

Year (AD)	Year (AH)	Campaign Number	Campaign name/Office held	Dates	Modern toponymy	Consequences
984		21	Zamora	18 Feb–11 Mar	Zamora	Inhabitants bought freedom
		22	Sant Baliq	25 June–8 September	Sepúlveda – Plain of Barcelona	Seized Sepúlveda
985		23	Barcelona	5 May–23 July	Barcelona	Seized it
		24	Algeciras	August	Sent troops to	North Africa
986		25	'Of the Cities'	19 June–1 August	Salamanca-Alba de Tormes-León-Sahagún-Zamora	Total destruction
		26	Qundayya	11 Sep–15 Oct	Condeixa-Coimbra	Seizure of Condeixa
987	377	27	Qulumbriya (1)	4 Marc–8 April?	Coimbra	Nothing destroyed
		28	Qulumbriya (2)	June	Coimbra	Seized it
		29	Burbil	?	Portillo?	Seized it
			Begins construction of the 'Āmirid extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba			
988		30	Zamora & Toro	April–August	Zamora-Toro	Seized both cities
		31	Astorga	August	Astorga	Seized it
989		32	Burtıl	End of June	S. Esteban de Gormaz – Burtıl	Portillo [?] capitulated
		33	Toro	?	Toro	Massacre carried out
990		34	Osma-Alcubilla	Summer–Autumn	Osma-Alcubilla-Alava?	Seizure of Osma & Alcubilla
		35	Montemayor	December	Montemayor-Viseu	Montemayor capitulated & Viseu destroyed
991	381		Abdicates all his titles to his son 'Abd al-Malik, and is now simply 'al-Manşūr'; makes his second son, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, <i>wazīr</i> (aged 9)			

(cont.)

Year (AD)	Year (AH)	Campaign Number	Campaign name/Office held	Dates	Modern toponymy	Consequences
991		36	Buns-Tayira- Qusayro – Qastiliya	March 991 to March 992	Briñas – Nájera – Alcocero	Seizure of Briñas
992		37	Basque country – Galis	Before September	Basque country – Galis (France?)	Left garrison in Galis
993		38	Al-Maharib	?	Navega?	Naval battle?
		39	San Esteban	?	S.Esteban de Gormaz	Seized the suburbs
		40	Al-Agar	?	Castille or León	Pitched battle?
994		41	S. Esteban- Pamplona- Clunia	June	S. Esteban- Pamplona- Clunia- Barbadillo	Seized all of them
		42	Astorga-León Construction of the 'Āmirid extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba completed	December?	Astorga-León	
995		43	Qastiliya	Start of year	Castille	Gathered booty
		44	Tierra de Campos	?	Sta. María (Carrión de los Condes)	Seized it
		45	San Román	November	S. Román de Horniga	Seized it
		46	Aguilar	December?	Aguilar de Sousa	Seized it
996	386		Assumes title <i>al-malik al-karīm</i> and is now addressed as <i>sayyid</i>			
997		47	Astorga	?	Astorga	Destroyed it
		48	Santiago de Compostela	3 July–October	Lamego- Alcocer do Sal-Oporto- Padrón- Santiago- Lamego	Seized them all
998		49	Algeciras	2 August–?		Sent troops to North Africa

(cont.)

Year (AD)	Year (AH)	Campaign Number	Campaign name/Office held	Dates	Modern toponymy	Consequences
999		50	Pallars	April	Pamplona- Aragón- Sobrarbe- Ribagorza- Pallars	Pamplona cannot have been taken
1000		51	Pamplona	?	Pamplona	Seized it
		52	Cervera	21 Jun–7 Oct	Medinaceli- Cervera- Burgos- Navarra-Rioja	Battle at Cervera. Seizure of the city
1001		53	Montemayor	?	Montemayor	Massacre
		54	Pamplona	?	Pamplona	Seized it
1002		55	Bab.s	?	Baños del Río Tobia	Seized it
		56	B.T.ryus	?–9 Aug	Canales – San Millán de la Cogolla	Seized them
Death of al-Manşūr						

Qur'ānic Inscriptions inside the Cordoba Mosque

Compiled from Amador de los Ríos 1879 [AR]; page references to his volume are given in square brackets. The Qur'ānic passages have been verified against the text in Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'ān, with the help of Kassis 1983; the English translations are his. On these inscriptions, see also Khoury 1996, and Calvo 2000 and 2008.

Reference	Translation	Sūra	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
1:1–5 (<i>fatiha</i>) [AR 213]	“(1) In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. (2) Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; (3) the Compassionate, the Merciful; (4) Master of the Day of Judgment. (5) Thee do we worship, and Thine aid do we seek.”		(1) بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (2) الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (3) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (4) مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (5) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ	Round top of wall on outside of aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa	lost inscription on qibla wall of Damascus Mosque (Flood 2001, appendix); also on qibla wall of Prophet's mosque in Madina
2:68 (<i>baqara</i>) [AR 209]	“They said: ‘Beseech on our behalf Thy Lord to make plain to use what (heifer) it is!’. He (Moses) said: ‘He says: the heifer should be neither too old nor too young, but of middling age: now do what ye are commanded!’”		قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: Arch 4 [& 5?] (L)	

(cont.)

Reference	Translation	Sūra	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
2:164 [AR 210]	“Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the Night and the Day; in the sailing of the ships through the Ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which God sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth – (here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise.”		<p>إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفَلَكَ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ</p>	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: Arch 7 (L)	
2:238 [AR 229–31]	“Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers, especially the Middle Prayer; and stand before God in a devout (frame of mind).”		<p>حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوَسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ</p>	Another frieze inside mihrab chamber	
2:286 [AR 235]	“Lord, do not be angry with us if we forget or lapse into error. Lord, do not lay on us the burden You laid on those before us. Lord, do not charge us with more than we can bear. Pardon us, forgive us our sins, and have mercy upon us. You alone are our Protector. Give us victory over the Unbelievers.”		<p>رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ</p>	Mosaics round innermost band of Bāb al-Sābāṭ	

(cont.)

Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
3:1–2 (<i>al-Imrān</i>) [AR 214]	“(1) Alif-Lām-Mīm. (2) God! There is no God but Him, the Living, the Ever-existent One.”	(1) اَلَمْ (2) اَللّٰهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ	Round top of wall on outside of aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa	
3:4 & 3:8 [AR 208]	(4) “Then those who reject Faith in the Signs of God will suffer the severest Penalty, and God is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution.” (8) “Lord, do not cause our hearts to go astray after You have guided us. Grant us Your own mercy; You are the munificent Giver.”	(4) اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ وَاللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ ذُوْ اِنْتِقَامٍ (8) رَبَّنَا لَا تُغِثْ قُلُوْبَنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de la Villaviciosa: arch 2 (L)	Gate 3 on the eastern façade
3:8 [AR 235]	As above.		Mosaics round innermost band of Bāb al-Sābāṭ	
3:18–19 [AR 206]	“(18) There is no god but He: that is the witness of God, His angels, and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm on justice. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise. (19) The Religion before God is Islam ...”	(18) شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَاُولُوْا الْعِلْمِ قَآئِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ (19) اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْاِسْلَامُ	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de la Villaviciosa: arch 1 (L)	3:18–19 on Gate 2 of East façade, <i>q.v.</i>
3:19	“[... nor did the People of the] Book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them.”	وَمَا اَخْتَلَفَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوْا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ	Gate 3 of al-Ḥakam’s original East façade (now inside mosque: see Figures 61, 63)	

(cont.)

Reference	Translation	Sūra	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
3:102–103 [AR 223]	“(102) O ye who believe! Fear God as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam. (103) And hold fast all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude God’s favour on you, for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren; and ye were on the brink of the Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth God make His Signs clear to you: that ye may be guided.”		<p>(102) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ</p> <p>(103) وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ</p>	Frieze which runs below shell in mihrab chamber	
3:133–134 [AR 210]	“(133) Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a Garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous – (134) Those who spend (freely) whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger and pardon (all) men; for God loves those who do good ...”		<p>(133) وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ</p> <p>(134) الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكٰظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ</p>	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: arch 6 (L)	

(cont.)

Reference	Sūra	Location	Comparative Occurrences	
Translation	Arabic			
3:191–193 [AR 211–3]	<p>“(191) Men who celebrate the praises of God, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): ‘Our Lord! Not for naught hast thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire. (192) Our Lord! Any whom Thou dost admit to the Fire, truly Thou coverest with shame and never will wrong-doers find any helpers! Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (Us) to the Faith, “Believe ye in the Lord”, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous”.</p>	<p>(191) الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (192) رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ مَنْ تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ اَخْرَيْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْصَارٍ (193) رَبَّنَا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْاِيْمٰنِ اَنْ ءَامِنُوْا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاٰمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَا وَكْفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْاَبْرَارِ</p>	<p>Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: arch 2R–7R (though inscription above arch 7 does not survive)</p>	<p>3:191–192, on Gate 7 on East façade, q.v.</p>
5:6 (māida) [AR 227–8]	<p>“O ye who believe! When ye prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands (and arms) to the elbows; rub your heads (with water); and (wash) your feet to the ankles. If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body. But if ye are ill. Or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with</p>	<p>يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اِذَا قُمْتُمْ اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ فَاغْسِلُوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَاَيْدِيَكُمْ اِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوْا بِرُءُوْسِكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ اِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوْا وَاِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضٰى اَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ اَوْ جَاءَ اَحَدٌ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ اَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوْا صَعِيْدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوْا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَاَيْدِيَكُمْ مِّنْهُ مَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيَجْعَلَ</p>	<p>Marble frieze inside mihrab chamber</p>	

(cont.)

Reference	Translation	Sūra	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
	women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands. God doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete His favour to you, that ye may be grateful."		عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيْمَنَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ		
6:101-102 (<i>anām</i>) [AR 234]	"(101) He is the Creator of the the heavens and the earth. How should he have a son when He had no consort? He created all things, and has knowledge of all things. (102) Such is God, your Lord. There is no god but Him, the Creator of all things. Therefore serve Him. He is the guardian of all things."		بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (102) ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ	Window-grille near Bāb al-Sābāt; three sides have inscription	
7: 43 (<i>a'rāf</i>) [AR 222]	"And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury; beneath them will be rivers flowing. And they shall say: 'Praise be to God, who hath guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance (<i>hudā</i>), had it not been for the guidance of God: indeed it was the truth (<i>al-haqq</i>) that the Apostles of our Lord brought unto us."		وَرَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍ مَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنَّ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ	RH impost in entrance to mihrab chamber	

(cont.)

Reference	Sūra	Translation	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
10:106–107 (<i>Yūnus</i>)		“(106) ‘Nor call on any other than God – such will neither profit thee nor hurt thee: if thou dost, behold! Thou shalt certainly be of those who do wrong. (107) If God do touch thee with hurt, there is none can remove it but He; if He do design some benefit for thee.’”	(106) وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (107) وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ	Painted inscription on the West end of transverse arcade parallel to the qibla wall	
16:90 (<i>nahl</i>)		“God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you that ye may receive admonition.”	إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ	Gate 1 of al-Ḥakam's original East façade (now inside mosque, see Figures 52, 61)	
18:19 (<i>kahf</i>) [AR 217]		“Such (being their state), we raised them up (from sleep), that they might question each other. Said one of them, ‘How long have ye stayed (here)?’ They said, ‘We have stayed (perhaps) a day, or part of a day.’ (At length) they (all) said, ‘God (alone) knows best how lone ye have stayed here ... Now send ye then one of you with this money of yours to the town: let him find out which is the best food (to be had) and bring some to you, that (ye may) satisfy your hunger therewith: and let him behave with care and courtesy, and let him not inform any one about you’”	وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِئْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِئْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِئْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا	Column base 2 in mihrab vestibule	

(cont.)

Reference	Sūra Translation	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
19:35 (<i>Maryam</i>) [AR 237–8]	“It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When he determines a matter, He only says to it ‘Be’, and it is.”	مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ	Appears on Puerta del Chocolate, Gate 1 of al-Ḥakam’s original East façade (Figure 52)	19:33–36 occurs as part of anti-trinitarian message in interior of octagon in Dome of the Rock: cf. Whelan 1998, 4
22:77–78 (<i>hajj</i>) [AR 215]	“(77) O ye who believe! Bow down, prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord; and do good; that ye may prosper. (78) And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the culture of your father Abraham. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Apostle may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind!”	(77) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (78) وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرِجٍ مَلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ	Mosaics round base of cupola of dome in mihrab vestibule	
31:22 (<i>Luqmān</i>) [AR 229–31]	“(22) Whoever submits his whole self to God, and is a doer of good, has grasped indeed the most trustworthy hand-hold: and with God rests the End and decision of (all) affairs.”	وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ	Another frieze inside mihrab chamber	
32:6 (<i>sajda</i>) [AR 219]	“(6) Such is He, the Knower of all things, hidden and open, the Exalted (in power), the Merciful.”	ذُٰلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ	Mosaics round entrance to mihrab chamber – innermost band	

(cont.)

Reference	Sūra	Translation	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
33:70–71 (<i>aḥzāb</i>) [AR 207]		“(70) O you who believe! Fear God and (always) say a word directed to the Right: (71) that He may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive you your sins. He that obeys God and His Apostle shall have already attained the highest Achievement.”	<p>يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا (71) يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا</p>	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: arch 1 (L)	
35:30 (<i>fāṭir</i> , or <i>malā'ika</i>) [AR 216]		“For He will pay them their meed, nay, He will give them (even) more out of His Bounty: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).”	<p>لِيُرْفِيَهُمْ أَجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ</p>	Column base 1 in mihrab vestibule	
39:46 (<i>zumar</i>) [AR 208]		“Say: ‘O God! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Knower of all that is hidden and open! It is Thou that wilt judge between Thy Servants in those matters about which they have differed!’”	<p>قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ</p>	Aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: arch 3 (L)	
40:3 (<i>mū'min</i>) [AR 177–8]		“[God ...] who forgiveth Sin and accepteth Repentance, is Strict in Punishment, and hath a Long Reach (in all things). There is no god but He: to Him is the Final Goal.”	<p>غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّلُوعِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ</p>	EXTERIOR (West façade): “Postigo de San Miguel”, see Figure 67	

(cont.)

Reference	Sūra	Translation	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
40:7-9 [AR 232]		<p>“Our Lord! Thy Reach is over all things, in Mercy and Knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in Repentance, and follow Thy Path; and preserve them from the Penalty of the Blazing Fire!</p> <p>(8) And grant, our Lord! That they enter the Gardens of Eternity, which Thou hast promised to them, and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity! For Thou art (He), the Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom. (9) And preserve them from (all) ills; and any whom Thou dost preserve from ills that Day – on them wilt Thou have bestowed Mercy indeed.”</p>	<p>(7) رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ</p> <p>(8) رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ</p> <p>(9) وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ</p>	Plaster impost below cupola in front of Bāb al-Sābāṭ	
40:12-14 [AR 178-80]		<p>(12) (The answer will be:) “This is because, when God was invoked as the Only (object of worship), ye did reject Faith, but when partners were joined to Him, ye believed! The command is with God, Most High, Most Great! (13) He it is Who showeth you His Signs, and sendeth down sustenance for you from the sky: but only those receive admonition who turn (to God). (14) Call ye, then, upon God with sincere devotion to Him, even though the Unbelievers may detest it.”</p>	<p>(12) ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ</p> <p>(13) هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ</p> <p>(14) فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ</p>	EXTERIOR (West façade): “Postigo de Palacio”, see Figure 67	

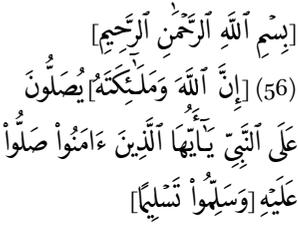
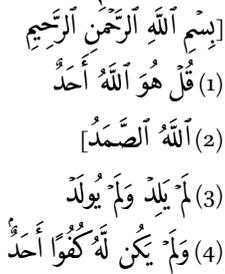
(cont.)

Reference	Sūra Translation	Arabic	Location	Comparative Occurrences
40:65	“He is the Living (One): there is no god but He. Call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!”	هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ	Innermost band of mosaics round entrance to mihrab chamber	
41:30–32 (<i>ḥā-mīm</i>)	“(30) In the case of those who say, ‘Our Lord is God’, and further stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time): ‘Fear ye not!’ (they suggest), ‘Nor grieve! But receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which ye were promised! (31) We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: therein shall ye have all that your souls shall desire; therein shall ye have all that ye ask for! (32) A hospitable gift from One Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!”	(30) إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَمُوا نَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشُرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ (31) نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهَى أَنفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ (32) نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ	Mosaic frieze on Bāb al-Sābāṭ	
59:23 (<i>hashr</i>)	“God is He, than Whom there is no other god. The Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith; the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme. Glory be to God! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him.”	هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقَدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيِّمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ	Mosaics in architrave of mihrab chamber	59:21–23, Gate 6 on East façade, <i>q.v.</i>

Qur'ānic Inscriptions on the Eastern Façade of the Cordoba Mosque

This appendix is based in part on Amador de los Ríos 1879 [AR]: page references to his volume are given in square brackets. These were verified and supplemented by my own readings of some of the gates he was not able to read. All Qur'ānic passages were verified against the text in Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'ān, with the help of Kassis 1983; the translations provided here are his. These readings have been supplemented – and, where necessary, corrected – by the readings in Calvo 2010a [indicated by C].

The locations of these gates are plotted on Figure 67. The gates of al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade are reconstructed in Figure 61, and illustrated in Figures 62–65. The gates of the 'Āmirid façade are illustrated in Figures 66, 68–74.

Location (S–N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
Gate 1 [C] E-7 Puerta de Jerusalén Figure 68	(<i>archivolt</i>) 33: 56	[Basmala] [God and His Angels] send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, [And salute him with all respect]		This gate was not read by Amador de los Ríos as the inscription was not sufficiently visible before restoration; it is read by Calvo 2010a, 186–7.
	(<i>horizontal band</i>) 112 (al-Ikhlāṣ)	[In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. (1) Say: He is God, the One and Only; (2) God, the Eternal, Absolute;] (3) He begetteth not, Nor is he begotten; (4) And there is none like unto Him.		Verses denying the divinity of Christ pick up on the theme expressed in 19:35 in the Puerta del Chocolate – in the same location on al-Ḥakam's original eastern façade as this one; and 6:101 (around window of Bāb al-Sābāt). Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ was an Umayyad motto on coinage in Syria and was used on the first coins minted by 'Abd al-Raḥmān III

(cont.)

Location (S-N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
Gate 4 [C] E-4 Puerta de la Concepción Antigua Figure 71	(uses whole <i>tympanum</i>) 43:68–71	“ <i>Basmala</i> . (68) My devotees! No fear shall be on you that Day, nor shall ye grieve, (69) (being those) who have believed in Our Signs and bowed (their wills to Ours) in Islam. (70) Enter ye the Garden, ye and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing. (71) To them will be passed round dishes and goblets of gold: ...	<p>بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (68) يَعْبادِ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ (69) الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ (70) ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ مُحْبَرُونَ (71) يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَالْكَوَابِ</p>	AR 183–185 Note that Calvo 2010a, 162 has swapped these inscriptions (her E-4) with those on the Puerta de San Nicolás (her E-3) No other occurrence of this <i>Sūra</i>
	(horizontal band)	... there will be there all that the souls could desire, [all that the eyes could delight in: and ye] shall abide [therein] (for aye). <i>Tasliyya</i> ”	<p>وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ صلى الله عليه وسلم</p>	
	(upper frieze) 36:78–79	“ <i>Basmala</i> . (78) And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (Origin and) Creation: he says, ‘Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?’ (79) Say: ‘He will give them life Who created them for the first time! [For He is well-versed in every kind of creation! <i>wa šalī allāh</i>] ‘ <i>alā Muḥammad (Tasliyya)</i> ’.”	<p>بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (78) وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظْمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ (79) قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ وصلى الله على محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم</p>	No other occurrence of this <i>Sūra</i>

(cont.)

Location (S-N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
Gate 5 [C] E-3 Puerta de San Nicolás Figure 72	(<i>archivolt</i>) 39:53 Note that traces of red pigment survive on the letters (<i>horizontal band</i>)	“[<i>Basmala</i>] (53) Say: ‘O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of God: for God forgives all sins, for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. <i>ḥusni allāh</i> ”	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (53) قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ حسن الله	AR 182–183 Note that Calvo 2010a, 162 has swapped these inscriptions (her E-3) with those on the Puerta de la Concepción (her E-4) 39:47 occurs in aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa: (arch 3L) (see Appendix 3A) No other occurrence of this <i>Sūra</i>
Gate 6 [C] E-2 Puerta del Batisterio Figure 73	(<i>uses whole tympanum</i>) 59:21–23	“[<i>Basmala</i> . (21) Had We sent down] this Qur’an on a mountain, verily thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of God. Such are the similitudes which We propound to men, that they may reflect. (22) He is [God, than Whom there is no other god]. Who knows (all things) both secret ...	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (21) لَوْ أَنزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (22) هُوَ [اللَّهُ] الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ	Not read by Amador de los Ríos; C 185–6. 59:23 also occurs in horizontal mosaic inscription above entrance to mihrab chamber (see Appendix 3A)

(cont.)

Location (S-N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
(horizontal band)	... and open. He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. (23) God is He, than Whom there is no [other god. <i>Attributes of God: the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might the Irresistible, the Supreme, Glory to God! (High is He) Above the partners they attribute to Him</i>]"	<p>وَالشَّهَادَةُ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (23) هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا [هُوَ] الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ</p>		
Gate 7 [C] E-1 Puerta de San Juan Figure 74	(uses whole <i>tympanum</i>) 3:191–192	“Basmala. (191) Men who celebrate the praises of God, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): ‘Our Lord! Not for naught hast thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire.	<p>بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (191) الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ</p>	AR 180–181 3:191–193 – appears in aisle between mihrab vestibule & Capilla de Villaviciosa (arches 2R–7R) (see Appendix 3A) The capital on the left-hand column of the right-hand window (as you face the gate) is signed by Ibn Badr: Souto 2007, 121 (#3, Plate 11).
(horizontal band)	(192) [Our Lord! Any whom] Thou dost admit to the Fire, truly Thou coverest with shame [and never will wrongdoers find any helpers! <i>Taslyya</i>]”	<p>(192) [رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن أَدْخَلَ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ] وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ</p>		

(cont.)

Location (S–N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
Inscriptions inside the ʿAmirid extension:				
Inscribed Corbel (6th aisle from East and 3rd bay from North)	<i>Shahada</i>	There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet.	لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله 'lā ilāha illā allāh muḥammad rasūl allāh'	Figure 58 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 575; Marfil 2003, 81–2
Inscribed Corbel (6th aisle from East and 3rd bay from North)	65:3	“Whosoever puts his trust in God, He is suf- ficient for him.”	وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ 'wa-man yatawakkal 'alā allāh fa-huwa ḥasbu-hu'	Figure 58 Torres Balbás 1957 [1996], 575; Marfil 2003, 81–2 No other occurrence of this <i>aya</i>
Painted on the last arch of the transverse arcade (interior of Puerta de San Ildefonso)	10:106–7 (<i>Yūnus</i>)	“(106) ‘Nor call on any other than God – such will neither profit thee nor hurt thee: if thou dost, behold! Thou shalt certainly be of those who do wrong. (107) If God do touch thee with hurt, there is none can remove it but He; if He do design some benefit for thee, there is none can keep back His favour: He causeth it to reach whomso- ever of His servants He pleaseth. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”	(106) وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (107) وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِحَيْرٍ	C 2000, 22–3; 2010a, 161
Inscriptions on the gates of al-Ḥakam’s original eastern façade:				
Gate 1 [C] ED-4 Puerta del Chocolate	19:35 (<i>Maryam</i>)	“It is not befitting to (the majesty of) God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When he determines a matter, He only says to it ‘Be’, and it is.”	مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَلَدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ	AR 237–8, C 185

(cont.)

Location (S-N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
Gate 2 [C] ED-3 Puerta del Altar de San Juan Bautista	16:90 (<i>nahl</i>)	“God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you that ye may receive admonition.”	<p>إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَأَنْتَأْيِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ</p>	Not read by AR; C 184
Gate 3 [C] ED-2 Puerta del Altar de San Sebastián			No surviving inscription	
Gate 4 [C] ED-1 Puerta del Altar de Santa Marta	3:19	“[The Religion before God is Islam: nor did the People of the] Book dissent therefrom except through envy of each other, after knowledge had come to them. [But if any deny the Signs of God, God is swift in calling them to account]”	<p>إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا اٰخْتَلَفَ [الدِّينَ اَوْتُوا] الْكِتَابِ اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ [وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَاِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ]</p>	Not read by AR; C 183-4

Inscriptions on the gates of the western façade:

W Gate 1 Bāb al-Sābat		No inscription as it would have been internal	
W Gate 2 [C] O-3 Puerta de San Ildefonso		No surviving inscription	The painted inscription on the transverse arcade is located on the inside of this entrance.

(cont.)

Location (S-N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
W Gate 3 [C] O-2 Postigo del Palacio	(<i>archivolt</i>) 40:12-14	“(12) (The answer will be:) ‘This is because, when God was invoked as the Only (object of worship), ye did reject Faith, but when partners were joined to Him, ye believed! The command is with God, Most High, Most Great!’ (13) He it is Who showeth you His Signs, and sendeth down sustenance for you from the sky: but only those receive admonition who turn (to God). (14) Call ye, then, upon God with sincere devotion to Him, even though the Unbelievers may detest it.”	(12) ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ (13) هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمُ آيَاتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ (14) فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ	AR 177-80, C 182
	(<i>horizontal band</i>) 40:16-17	“... Whose will be the Dominion that Day? That of God, the One, the Irresistible! (17) That Day will every soul be requited for what it earned; no injustice will there be that Day. For God is Swift in taking account.”	(16) لِيَنَّ الْمَلِكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ (17) الْيَوْمَ تُجْرَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ	Martínez Núñez 2004, 131

(cont.)

Location (S-N)	Reference	Translation	Sūra Arabic	Notes
W Gate 4 [C] O-1 Puerta del Espíritu Santo	<i>(interior archivolt of arch)</i> 40:3 <i>(mū'min)</i>	"[God ...] who forgiveth Sin and accepteth Repentance, is Strict in Punishment, and hath a Long Reach (in all things). There is no god but He: to Him is the Final Goal."	عَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ	AR 177-80, C 181. The lintel inscription is very deteriorated and the words are illegible.

Inscriptions on Objects Made for the ‘Āmirids

Inscriptions associated with Hishām II

1 Casket Made for Hishām II, Girona Cathedral (Datable 976; Figures 1–2)

بسم الله بركة من الله ويمن || وسعادة وسرور دائم /
لعبد الله الحكيم أمير المؤمنين /
المستنصر بالله || مما أمر بعلمه لأبي الوليد || هشام ولي عهد /
المسلمين . تم على يدي جوذر تزيينه

In the name of Allah. Allah’s blessing, prosperity, || happiness and everlasting joy / for Allah’s servant [‘Abd Allāh] al-Ḥakam, Commander of the Faithful / al-Mustanshir bi-llāh. || This is what he ordered to be made for Abū’l-Walid Hishām, the heir apparent. / Its decoration was carried out during the mandate of Jawdhar.

Signatures under the lockplate:

عمل بدر وظريف عبيده

Work of his servants Badr and Ṭarīf

This reading follows that published by Labarta 2015. Note that she believes the signature Ṭarīf should be read Ẓarīf.

2 Ṭirāz Woven in Hishām’s Name, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, inv. 298 (Datable 976–1009; Figure 9)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم البركة من الله واليمن والدوام
للخليفة الامام عبد الله هشام المؤيد بالله أمير المؤمنين

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. The blessing from Allah and prosperity and long life for the Caliph, the Imam ‘Abd Allāh Hishām al-Mu’ayyad bi-llāh, Commander of the Faithful.

Published: Lévi-Provençal 1931, 192 (#211)

3 Foundation Inscription Naming Hishām II in Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, Madrid, inv. 5.266 (Undated, Figure 48)

[... حـ ال] 1
[... ما الحـ] 2
...المصـ[طفا وامـ]ينه 3
امر الامام المؤيد 4
امير المؤمنين وى 5
[... 6

1 [...] 1
2 [...] 2
3 [al-Muṣ]ṭafā and [his] am[īn ...] / 3
4 Ordered the Imām al-Mu’ayyad bi-llāh ...] 4
5 Commander of the Faithful and [...] 5
6 [...] 6

Published: Souto 2007, 127–8 (inscription no. 11)

Inscriptions associated with the ‘Āmirids (in chronological order)

4 Minbar from the Andalusiiyyin Mosque, Fez (Dated 369/980 and 375/985; Figures 5–7; Chapter 7: 1.1)

a. right panel (ordered by the pro-Fatimid ruler of Fez, Buluqqīn ibn Zīrī (r. 979–985)):

بسمه ... عمل هذا المنبر في شهر شوال تسعة وستين و
ثلاث مائة من التاريخ

Basmala. This minbar was made in the month of Shawwāl in the year 369/980 of history

b. left panel:

Qurʿān 24:36: 'In temples, Allah has allowed to be raised up, and His name to be commemorated therein; therein glorifying Him, in the mornings and in [the evenings] ...'

c. backrest – upper panel:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم هاذا ما امر بعلمه
الحاجب المنصور سيف [ال] دولة الامام [sic] عبد
الله هشام المؤيد بالله اطال الله بقاءه
أبو عامر محمد ...
بن ابي عامر وفقه الله في شهر جماد الاخر
سنة خمس و ... وثلث ...

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is what the *hājib* al-Manṣūr Sword of [the] State ordered to be made [for/on behalf of] the Imām ʿAbd Allāh Hishām al-Muʿayyad bi-llāh – may Allah prolong his life! Abū ʿĀmir Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir – may Allah bring him complete success! In the month of Jumāda II of the year 3[7]5/October 985.

d. backrest – middle panel:

unread by Henri Terrasse; nothing recorded in *Maroc Médiéval*

e. backrest – lower panel:

no inscription

5 Tombstone of an ʿĀmirid *mawla*
(Dated 985; V&A: A.92-1921; Figure 8)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم / هذا قبر جمعة بن فتوح بن محمد
العامري. توفي ر/حمه الله ليلة الأربعاء / لت [سع بقي]
ن من جمادى الآ / خرة سنة أربع وسبعين / وثلث مائة
غفر الله له

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. / This is the tomb of Jumʿa ibn F.tūḥ ibn / Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī. He died, may God have mer/cy on him, on Wednesday eve / at ni[ne (nights) from] Jumādā the la/st of year 374. May God forgive him!

Published: Barceló 2014

6 Inscription Commemorating the
Restoration of the City of Lisbon in
April 985 (Museu da Cidade, Lisbon,
inv. MC.ARQ.CSJ.40.EP.0009; Figures
19–20)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم | أمر أمير المؤمنين هشام | المؤيد
بالله أطال | الله بقاءه | بتجديد | مدينة الأشبونة على يدي |
عبده وحاجبه وسيف | دولته أبي عامر محمد بن أبي عامر
وفقه الله فتم تجديده | على يدي نجم بن الحكم وخليد |
ابن أبي سليمان في شهر ذي القعدة سنة أربع وسبعين
وثلث مائة

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The Commander of the Faithful Hishām al-Muʿayyad bi-llāh – may Allah prolong his life! – ordered the restoration of the city of al-Ashbūna [Lisbon], under the direction of his servant and his *hājib* Sword of the State [Sayf al-Dawla] Abī ʿĀmir Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir – may Allah

bring him complete success! The restoration was completed under the direction of Najm ibn al-Ḥakam and Khalid ibn Abī Sulaymān in the month of *dhu'l-qa'd* of the year 374.

Published: Barceló 2013

7 **Al-Manṣūr's Marble Basin (Dated 377/987–8; Figures 108–9, 113–118; Chapter 7: 1.2)**

1. ... نعمة [؟] ونصر وتأييد
 2. للحاجب المنصور أبي عامر محمد
 3. بن أبي عامر وفقه الله مما أمر
 4. بعلمه بقصر الزاهرة فتم بعون الله وحسن تأييده على
 يدى خ... الفقى الكبير [؟] العامري سنة سبع وسبعين
 [وثلاث مائة]

- (1) ... ?grace/favour and victory and support
 (2) to the *ḥājib* al-Manṣūr Abū 'Āmir Muḥammad
 (3) ibn Abī 'Āmir – may Allah bring him complete success! (This is) what he ordered
 (4) to be made in the Palace of al-Zāhira. And it was finished with the aid of Allah and His good assistance, under the direction of Kh(-alaf?), the 'Āmirid *fatā al-kabīr*, in the year (3)77/987–8.

8 **Inscription Commemorating the Restoration of a Bridge at Écija in 988 (Museo Fuentes de Andalucía; Figure 21)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ أَمْرُ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ هِشَامِ الْمُؤَيَّدِ بِاللَّهِ
 أَطَالَ اللَّهُ بِقَاءَهُ بِتَجْدِيدِ هَذَا الْجَسْرِ | لِلْحَاجِبِ أَبِي
 عِدَامِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي عَامِرٍ أَمْرًا | عَزَّ اللَّهُ ظَلَمَهُ سَيْلُ شَتْوَةِ سَنَةِ
 ثَلَاثِ | وَسَبْعِينَ فَمَ بَعُونَ [الذ 4 ...]

[In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The Commander of the Faithful Hishām al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh – may Allah prolong his life! – ordered the restoration of this bridge / [from the *ḥājib* Abī 'Ā]mir Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Āmir – may

[Allah glorify him!] It was damaged by a winter flood in the year 3/[73/983. It was completed with the help of] Alla[h].

Published: Barceló 2013

9 **Inscription Commemorating the Restoration of the Bridge at Toledo (Puente de Alcántara), 997–8 (Figure 22)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ أَمْرُ بَيْنَانَ هَذِهِ الْقَنْطَرَةَ وَزِيرِ
 أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ [المؤيد بالله] هشام [أطال الله بقاءه] المنصور
 أبو عامر محمد ابن أبي عامر فتم [بعون الله على يدي] قائد
 طليطلة خلف بن محمد العامري في سنة سبع وثمانين
 وثلاث مائة

[In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.] The vizier of Commander of the Faithful, [al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh] Hishām [- may Allah prolong his life!], al-Manṣūr Abū 'Āmir Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Āmir. And it was completed [with the help of Allah, under the direction] of the *qā'id* of Toledo Khalaf ibn Muḥammad al-'Āmirī in the year 387.

Published: Rodríguez and Souto 2000a; Souto 2007, 121–2 (inscription no. 4)

10 **The 'Ashmolean' Pyxis (Dated 389/999; Figures 139–141; Chapter 7: 3.1)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ بَرَكَةً وَنَصْرًا وَتَأْيِيدًا لِلْوَزِيرِ أَبِي الْمَطْرِفِ بْنِ الْمَنْصُورِ
 أَبِي عَامِرِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي عَامِرٍ أَيْدَهُ اللَّهُ عَمَلًا فِي سَنَةِ تِسْعِ
 وَثَمَانِينَ [وثلاث مائة]

In the name of Allah, blessing, victory and support to the *wazīr* Abū'l-Muṭarrif ibn al-Manṣūr Abī 'Āmir Muḥammad ibn Abū 'Āmir, may Allah support (or strengthen) him! Made in the year [3]89/999.

11 **The Pamplona Casket (Dated 395/
1004–5; Figures 120–127; Chapter 7: 2.1)**

1 بسم الله بركة من الله وغبطة وسرور وبلوغ أمل في صالح
عمل
2 وانفساح أجل للحاجب سيف الدولة عبد
3 الملك بن المنصور وفقه الله مما أمر بعلمه على يدي الفتى
الكبير
4 زهير بن محمد العامري مملوكه سنة خمس وتسعين وثلاث
مائة

In the name of Allah. Blessing from Allah, good-will, happiness, and the fulfilment of hopes through good [or pious] works, and extension of life, to the *ḥājib* Sayf al-Dawla ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr – may Allah bring him complete success! (This) is what he ordered to be made, under the direction of the *fatā al-kabīr*, Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmirī, his slave, in the year 395/1004–5.

12 **The Braga Pyxis (Datable 1004–8;
Figures 11, 15; Chapter 7: 2.2)**

بسم الله بركة من الله ويمين وسعادة للحاجب سيف
الدولة أعزه الله مما أمر بعلمه على يدي
الفتا [الكبير زهير بن محمد] العامري

In the name of Allah. Blessing from Allah and good fortune and happiness to the *ḥājib* Sayf al-Dawla – may Allāh strengthen him! This is what he ordered to be made for him, under the direction of the *fatā [al-kabīr]*, Zuhayr ibn Muḥammad] al-ʿĀmirī.

Latin inscription on the base of the chalice now housed inside it:

*In n[omi]ne D[omi]ni Menendus Gundisabvi et
Tudad[o]mna sunm*

In the name of the Lord, we are Menendo González and Toda

13 **Basin Made for ‘Abd al-Malik
al-Muẓaffar (Datable between 1004 and
1007; Figures 128–133; Chapter 7: 2.3.1)**

1. بسم الله بركة من الله ونصر وتأييد للحاجب سيف الدولة
ناصر الدين وقامع المشركين أبي مروان عبد الملك بن
المنصور
2. أبي عامر أطال الله بقاءه مما أمر بعلمه
3.
4. ... وثلاث مائة

(1) In the name of Allah, blessing from Allah and victory and support to the *ḥājib* Sword of the State, Defender of the Faith and Tamer of Polytheists, Abū Marwān ‘Abd al-Malik ibn al-Manṣūr (2) Abī ‘Āmir – May Allah prolong his life! (This is) what he ordered to be made (3) ... (4) [in the year] 300 [and] ...

14 **Fragmentary Basin Found in the Casa
de Suero Téllez de Meneses in Toledo
(Chapter 7: 2.3.2)**

عبد الملك بن [المنصور]؟

‘Abd al-Malik ibn ... [al-Manṣūr?]

15 **Basin Fragments Found in the Secano
at the Alhambra (Figure 134; Chapter 7:
2.3.3)**

illegible (A)

(E) [ب]ن أبي عامر وفقه الله

[Ib]n Abī ‘Āmir, may [Allah] bring [him] complete success!

16 **The Doha Casket (Dated 394/1003–4; Figures 145–146; Chapter 7: 4.1.1)**

[sic] [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بركة من الله ويومن [sic] وسعادة وغبطة وسرور وعافية كافية ونعمة صابغة [sic] والاعالية [sic] ونعمة متصلة لصاحبها [sic] مما عمل في شهر ربيع الأول وذلك في سنة أربعة وتسعين وثلاث مائة

[In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Blessing from Allah, and good fortune and happiness and bliss and joy and sufficient health, and abundant and of the highest [i.e. from Allah] grace, and uninterrupted grace to [fem.] its owner. This was made in the month of Rabīʿ I which was in the year 394/1003–4.

17 **Minbar Possibly Installed by ‘Abd al-Malik in the al-Qarawiyyīn Mosque in Fez (Dated 1005); Chapter 7: 2.5**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ... تصليه ... هذا ما أمر بعلمه الخليفة المنصور سيف الإسلام عبد الله هشام المؤيد بالله أطال الله بقاءه على يد حاجبه عبد الملك المظفر بن محمد المنصور بن أبي عامر وفقهم الله تعالى وذلك في شهر جمادى الآخرة سنة خمس وتسعين وثلاث مائة

Basmala ... taṣlīyya ... This is what the Caliph al-Manṣūr Sword of Islam ‘Abd Allāh Hishām al-Mu’ayyad bi-llāh – may Allah prolong his days! – ordered to be made, under the direction of his ḥājib ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar ibn Muḥammad al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ‘Āmir – may Allah the Most High bring them complete success! And this was in the month of Jumāda II of the year 395/March–April 1005.

18 **Suaire de Saint Lazare (Datable 1007–8; Figures 84, 136; Chapter 7: 2.4)**

i. Autun fragment:

Inscription across the belts of three horsemen:

(1) المظفر (2) نصره (3) الله

al-Muẓaffar, may Allah bring him victory

ii. Lyon fragment:

Badly-damaged inscription on the round shield carried by one of the riders:

المظفر أعزه الله

al-Muẓaffar, may Allah strengthen him

19 **Ivory Casket in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (Late Tenth/Early Eleventh Century; Figures 148–149; Chapter 7: 4.1.2)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ بركة من الله ويمين وسعادة وغبطة وسلامة شاملة وعافية كافية ونعمة د[ائمة] وسرور دائم لصاحبه

In the name of Allah, blessing from Allah, and good fortune and happiness and bliss and total peace and sufficient health and per[petual] grace and perpetual joy to its owner.

20 **Basin Brought to Granada by Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs (Early Eleventh Century; Figures 156–158; Chapter 7: 4.2.1)**

The inscription (carved c. 1305) is on only one side of the object. The letters given here indicate: (a) right hand edge, running bottom to top; (b) top edge, running horizontally across the top of the basin; (c) left hand edge, running top to bottom.

(a) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 (b) الرخام كله باديس بن حبوس الصنهاجي الى قصر حضرته
 (c) (٢) غرناطة حرسها الله ولما لا..... [السلطان الملك
 العادل المنصور المؤيد أمير المسلمين وناصر الدين أبي عبد
 الله ابن مولانا أمير المسلمين ابن مولانا الغالب بالله.....
 و ذلك في شهر شوال من عام أربعة وسبعائة
 والحمد لله رب العالمين

- (a) In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful ...
 (b) Bādīs ibn Ḥabbūs al-Ṣanhājī [brought?] the marble, all of it, to the palace of his capital, Granada – may Allah keep it safe! And when.... [the Sultan, the king, the just, the victorious, the supported (by Allah), Amīr al-Muslimīn and Defender of the Faith, Abī ʿAbd Allāh, son of our master, Amīr al-Muslimīn, son of our master al-Ghālib bi-llāh ...
 (c) and this was in the month of Shawwal of the year 704/April–May 1305. And praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

21 **Bronze Disc Found in Calle Cruz Conde, Cordoba (Archaeological Museum, Cordoba, inv. CE009509; Figure 18)**

الحادي أربعين / ومائة من / الأبدان الصقلية / المزينة
 للحاجب [المنصور] محمد بن أبي عامر / وفقه الله

Number 14/1 of the mail coats decorated / in the Slav style, property of the *ḥājib* [al-Manṣūr/r]

Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir, may Allah bring him complete success!

Published: Labarta 2016; Labarta 2019a

I have put ‘al-Manṣūr’ in brackets because I do not read it on this disc.

22 **Bronze Disc Found in Excavations at Cercadilla (Archaeological Museum, Cordoba, inv. CER 93/S1/VE1/10-9-93)**

Obverse:

الحادية عشرة / من الغلائل الحرائية / للحاجب محمد بن أبي
 عامر / عدة في سبيل الله

Number 11 / of the Ḥarrānī chainmail tunics / property of the *ḥājib* Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir. / Equipment for the cause of Allah

Reverse:

وزنها عشرون / رطل
 erased: وزنها واحد وعشر / ون رطل

Its weight is 20 *raṭls*

Erased: Its weight is 21 *raṭls*

Published: Labarta 2016; Labarta 2019a

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