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Doctrines and Practice

**Islamic History**

**Jihad in**

Select readings from:

*For discussion -*

To the memory of my sister  
*Alisa Bonner*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Introduction*

#### *What Is Jihad?*

In the debates over Islam taking place today, no principle is invoked more often than jihad. Jihad is often understood as the very heart of contemporary radical Islamist ideology.<sup>1</sup> By a sort of metonymy, it can refer to the radical Islamist groups themselves.<sup>2</sup> Some observers associate jihad with attachment to local values and resistance against the homogenizing trends of globalization.<sup>3</sup> For others, jihad represents a universalist, globalizing force of its own: among these there is a wide spectrum of views. At one end of this spectrum, anti-Islamic polemicists use jihad as proof of Islam's innate violence and its incompatibility with civilized norms.<sup>4</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, some writers insist that jihad has little or nothing to do with externally directed violence. Instead, they declare jihad to be a defensive principle,<sup>5</sup> or else to be utterly pacific, inward-directed, and the basis of the true meaning of Islam which, they say, is peace.

<sup>1</sup> Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*.

<sup>2</sup> Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*.

<sup>3</sup> Barber, *Jihad versus McWorld*.

<sup>4</sup> Pipes, "What Is Jihad?"

<sup>5</sup> For a nuanced argument along these lines, see Sachedina, "The Development of Jihad in Islamic Revelation and History," and "Justifications for Just War in Islam."

frequently overlap with one other. They also change with distance and time. Jihad refers, first of all, to a body of legal doctrine. The comprehensive manuals of classical Islamic law usually include a section called *Book of Jihad*. Sometimes these sections have different names, such as *Book of Siyar* (law of war) or *Book of Jizya* (poll tax), but their contents are broadly similar. Likewise, most of the great compendia of Tradition (*hadith*; see chapter 3) contain a *Book of Jihad*, or something like it. Some Islamic jurists also wrote monographic works on jihad and the law of war. Not surprisingly, these jurists sometimes disagreed with each other. Some, but not all, of them legal universe into four classical schools (*madhabs*), and of Islam as a whole into the sectarian groupings of Sunnis, Shis, Kharijis, and others. Like Islamic law in general, this doctrine of jihad was neither the product nor the expression of the Islamic State: it developed apart from that State, or else in uneasy coexistence with it. (This point will receive nuance in chapter 8.)

These treatments of jihad in manuals and other works of Islamic law usually combine various elements. A typical *Book of Jihad* includes the law governing the conduct of war, which covers treatment of nonbelligerents, division of spoils among the victors, and such matters. Declaration and cessation of hostilities are discussed, raising the question of what constitutes proper authority. A *Book of Jihad* will also include discussion of how the jihad derives from Scripture (the Quran) and the Example of the Prophet (the Sunna), or in other words, how the jihad has been commanded by God. There are often—especially in the hadith collections—theoretical passages urging the believers to participate in the wars against the enemies of God. There is usually an exposition of the doctrine of martyrdom (see chapter 5), which is thus part of jihad. The list of topics is much longer, but this much can begin to give an idea of what the jihad of the jurists includes. Historians of Islam often encounter it and try to understand its meaning and especially when they think about such things as motivation, mobilization, and political authority. For instance, regarding the earliest period of Islam, why did the Muslims of the first generations fight so effectively? What was the basis of their solidarity? How did they form their armies? Why did they assume the attitudes that

Thus Islam, through jihad, equals violence and war; or else, through jihad, it equals peace. Now surely it is not desirable, or even possible, to reduce so many complex societies and polities, covering such broad extents of time and space, to any single governing principle. And in fact, not all contemporary writers view the matter in such stark terms. Many do share, however, an assumption of nearly total continuity, in Islam, between practice and norm and between history and doctrine. And it is still not uncommon to see Islam described as an unchanging essence or a historical cause. The jihad then conveniently provides a key to understanding that essence or cause, and so we are told that Islam is fundamentally "about" war, that it "accounts for" the otherwise inexplicable suicidal activity of certain individuals, that it "explains" the occurrence of wars in history, and so on.

None of this so far has told us what jihad actually is, beyond its tremendous resonance in present and past. Is it an ideology that favors violence? A political means of mass mobilization? A spiritual principle of motivation for individuals?

While we do not wish for this to be an argument over words alone, we cannot understand the doctrines or the historical phenomena without understanding the words as precisely as possible. The Arabic word *jihad* does not mean "holy war" or "just war." It literally means "striving." When followed by the modifying phrase *fi sabil Allah*, "in the path of God," or when—as often—this phrase is absent but assumed to be in force, *jihad* has the specific sense of fighting for the sake of God (whatever we understand that to mean). In addition, several other Arabic words are closely related to *jihad* in meaning and usage. These include *ribat*, which denotes pious activity, often related to warfare, and in many contexts seems to constitute a defensive counterpart to a more activist, offensive *jihad*. *Ribat* also refers to a type of building where this sort of defensive warfare can take place: a fortified place where garrisons of volunteers reside for extended periods of time while holding Islamic territory against the enemy. *Ghazw*, *ghazwa*, and *ghaza* have to do with raiding (from which comes the French word *vazza*). *Qital*, or "fighting," at times conveys something similar to jihad/*ribat*, at times not. *Harb* means "war" or "fighting," usually in a more neutral sense, carrying less ideological weight than the other terms. All these words, however, have wide semantic ranges and

Now, it is possible to draw meaningful parallels between these Western doctrines of just war and the classical doctrine of jihad expressed by the Muslim jurists. However, there are also differences. For the most part, the Muslim jurists do not make the "justice" of any instance of jihad the term of their discussion. Likewise, the concept of holy war, at least as we use it now, derives from Christian doctrine and experience, especially relating to the Crusades. Scholars of the ancient Near East and the Hebrew scriptures have broadened the concept, and so too have anthropologists. This anthropological literature on holy war may help us to ask about the links between the jihad, as it first emerged, with warfare in Arabia before Islam. It may also help us to see the role of jihad in the conversion to Islam of other nomadic and tribal peoples, such as the Berbers in North Africa and the Turks in Central Asia. At the same time, we must remember that the Muslim jurists did not usually discuss these matters in these terms; for them any authentic instance of jihad was necessarily

both holy and just. In the medieval Islamic world, there were philosophers who, unlike the jurists, were willing to foreground questions of justice and injustice in their discussions of warfare. They did this by adapting Islamic concepts into a Greek, mainly Platonic field of reference.<sup>8</sup> The most important of these philosophers was the great al-Farabi (d. 950). Al-Farabi considers a range of situations in which wars may be considered just or unjust. They are unjust if they serve a ruler's narrow, selfish purposes or if they are devoted solely to conquest and bloodshed. Just wars may, of course, be defensive, but they may also, under some circumstances, be offensive: what makes them just is their role in achieving the well-being of the "virtuous city." Here al-Farabi uses not only the Arabic word *harb* (war) but also, on occasion, the word *jihad*, though not quite in the technical sense assigned to it by Islamic legal doctrine. It seems likely, all the same, that al-Farabi was trying to find a philosophical place for the juridical doctrine of jihad within his teachings regarding the virtuous city and its ruler, the Islamic philosopher-king.

<sup>8</sup> Kraemer, "The Jihad of the Falasifa"; Heck, "Jihad Revisited," esp. 103–106. <sup>9</sup> Butterworth, "Al-Farabi's Statecraft," 79–100.

they did toward their own commanders and rulers? For historians interested in such questions, it is impossible to study the historical manifestations of jihad apart from the legal doctrine, for several reasons. First, some—though far from all—of the historical narratives that are available to us regarding early Islam seem to have been formed by juridical perspectives, no doubt in part because many of the early Muslim historians were jurists themselves.<sup>9</sup> Second, the doctrine of jihad had a role of its own in events, a role that increased over time (see chapter 8). And not only the doctrine, but also its exponents and champions: the jurists and scholars known collectively as the "learned," the *ʿulama*; many of these were protagonists in the ongoing drama of the jihad in several ways including, at critical junctures, their participation (both symbolic and physical) in the conduct of warfare (see chapter 7). Jihad, for the historian, is thus not only about clashes between religions, civilizations, and states but also about clashes among groups within Islamic societies. Equally important, jihad has never ceased changing, right down to our own day. If it ever had an original core, this has been experienced anew many times over.

### *Just War and Holy War*

The concept of just war, *bellum iustum*, has a long history in the West.<sup>10</sup> The medieval part of this history is particularly Christian, in part because of the emphasis on love (*agape, caritas*) in Christian doctrine and the difficulties this created for Christian thinkers and political authorities in their conduct of war. Then, with the introduction of natural law theory into the law of war in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and with Europe's increasing domination of the seas, Western doctrines of just war came to prevail over both Christian and non-Christian states—whether they liked it or not—and their interactions in war and peace.

<sup>9</sup> Brunschwig, "Tbn 'Abdallhakam et la conquête de l'Afrique du Nord par les Arabes."

<sup>10</sup> A starting point is provided by the essays collected in Kelsay and Johnson, eds., *Just War and Jihad*. See especially Johnson's "Historical Roots and Sources of the Just War Tradition in Western Culture," 3–30; also his *The Holy War Idea in Western and Islamic Traditions*; and Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*.

of speaking and writing about warfare, distinct from—though often related to—the practice and doctrine of jihad. Here we may briefly mention a few of these.<sup>13</sup>

Islam arose in an environment where warfare—or at any rate, armed violence with some degree of organization and planning—was a characteristic of everyday life. Even if it often amounted to little more than livestock-rustling, its threat was never far away, especially in those regions of the Arabian peninsula that lay beyond the control of rulers and states. We see this in the great corpus of pre-Islamic poetry, our most vivid and extensive source of information about Arabia on the eve of Islam. Some of this poetry was devoted entirely to the joys and travails of fighting, especially in the poems collected afterward under the rubric of *hamasa* (valor). War also loomed large in the countless dirges composed in honor of its victims. And in the songs of praise that the poets recited in honor of their patrons, their kin, and themselves, martial valor usually topped the list of virtues, followed closely by generosity. In all these poems, war typically appears as something ordained by fate, unwelcome but necessary, often imposed by the obligation to seek revenge for wrongs done to one's kin. Sometimes we find a willingness to be the first aggressor, together with a grim enthusiasm for the activity of fighting itself: "Yea a son of war am I—constantly do I heighten her blaze, and stir her up to burn whenever she is not yet kindled."<sup>14</sup> Most often, however, this enthusiasm is tempered by patient endurance (*sabr*) in the face of the constant, lurking possibility of violent death, as well as the inevitability of death itself, which here is the extinguishing of the individual, the end of everything. Thus the old Arabic poems, together with the prose narratives that accompany them, express a heroic ideal, where the courage and endurance of a few individuals illuminate a dark, violent world.

Long after the arrival of Islam, this ancient heroic ethos continued to hold considerable power and attraction. So for instance, when our sources report the death of a commander in the Islamic armies, they sometimes give the text of a dirge that was recited

<sup>13</sup> For the following, see also Donner, "The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War." Charles Lyall, *The Dreams of 'Abid ibn al-'Abras, of Asad, 'Amr ibn al-Tufail, and of 'Amr ibn Sa'sa'*, 29, verse 10; cited by Donner, "The Sources of Islamic Conceptions of War," 36.

We find a synthesis of juridical and philosophical views in the famous *Muqaddima*, or introduction to the study of history, of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406).<sup>10</sup> Ibn Khaldun begins his discussion of wars by saying that these "have always occurred in the world since God created it," naturally and unavoidably, because of men's desire for revenge and their need for self-defense. Ibn Khaldun then identifies four types of war. The first of these "usually occurs between neighboring tribes and competing families." The second is "war caused by hostility," whereby "savage nations living in the desert" attack their neighbors, solely with a view to seizing their property. These two types are "wars of outrage and sedition" (*burub baghy wa-fitna*). The third type is "what the divine law calls *jihad*." The fourth consists of "dynastic wars against seceders and those who refuse obedience." Of these four types, "the first two are unjust and lawless," while the last two are "wars of jihad and justice" (*burub jihad wa-'add*). In this way, as Charles Butterworth remarked, Ibn Khaldun "distinguishes just war from jihad and allows neither to encompass the other."<sup>11</sup>

The juridical discourse on jihad had incomparably more influence on intellectual life within premodern Muslim societies than did these philosophical discussions. The same applies to its influence over preaching, the popular imagination in general, and the running of the affairs of armies and states. Modern and contemporary Muslim thinkers, on the other hand, have had a great deal to say about justice and injustice in relation to the doctrine of jihad and war in general,<sup>12</sup> but this takes us farther than we can go here.

### Warfare and Jihad

We have seen that certain philosophical writers distinguished between, on the one hand, jihad, which they understood to be a part of the divine law of Islam, and, on the other hand, the phenomenon of warfare, which has occurred throughout history in all places inhabited by humans. In addition to this philosophical discourse, the premodern Islamic world was familiar with several other ways

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 2:73-74; Kraemer, "The Jihad of the Falasita," 288-289.

<sup>11</sup> Butterworth, "Al-Farabi's Statecraft," 96-97, n. 17.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Sachedina, "Justifications for Just War in Islam."



long afterward—of advice for princes. At the same time, however, Ibn Qutayba returns repeatedly to narratives from the early Islamic campaigns and to religious norms regarding the conduct of warfare. He thus tries to integrate two different conceptions of war (Sasanian/imperial and Islamic/jihad), which nonetheless remain distinct.

Throughout the centuries there was a steady, if not enormous, production of manuals and treatises on technical matters such as tactics, siegecraft, armor, weapons, and horsemanship.<sup>17</sup> The audience for this literature must have consisted of military professionals—a group which, as we shall see, stood apart from the military amateurs who made up the units of “volunteers.”<sup>18</sup> This technical literature tended to show less interest in the precedents of centuries past and more interest in the practices and activities of the enemy in the present time. For these and other reasons, it stands apart from the literature of jihad.

Finally, war is a central theme of the apocalyptic literature that flourished intermittently among medieval Muslims, as well as among their Christian and Jewish neighbors. Here war fills out the catastrophic scenarios that culminate in the end of this world as we know it—even though in these scenarios we do find, after a cataclysmic evil war, a just war led by the redeeming figure of the Mahdi. These apocalyptic wars are, of course, related to the Islamic notions of jihad and martyrdom,<sup>18</sup> but to a surprising extent, the relationship does not appear very close. It is noteworthy that at least from the second century of the Hijra/eighth century onward, Islamic tradition considered these matters under two different rubrics, *fitan* (wars of the Last Days) and *jihad*.<sup>19</sup>

Thus there were several ways available of thinking and arguing about warfare, its conduct, and its justifications. All the same, for most times and places in the premodern Islamic world, we must consider the religious discourse of jihad as the dominant one in this area, not only because of its prestige and its place in the central

<sup>17</sup> See Elgood, ed., *Islamic Arms and Armour*; and Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, with bibliography.

<sup>18</sup> Heck, “*Jihad* Revisited,” 102. Perhaps it is true, as Heck says, that “religious martyrdom . . . requires the addition of an eschatological climate.” However, the mature Islamic doctrine of martyrdom (see chapter 5, below) seems to have washed out this “eschatological climate” rather thoroughly.

<sup>19</sup> See Cook, “Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihad,” and below, p. 131–132.

on the occasion. Here we still find the thematics of the pre-Islamic poetry, praising the deceased for his courage and generosity, and for his steadfast defense of his kin and all those who sought his protection. More often, however, and in a great variety of contexts, we find the old Arab heroism blended together with Islamic piety. We do not have to consider this a contradiction, for it is precisely this combination of self-denying monothestic piety and swashbuckling derring-do that we find in many genres of Islamic literature relating to the jihad—for instance, in popular poems and romances and even in (apparently) sober biographical literature (see chapter 7). Nonetheless, the old heroic ethos was not, in the end, an Islamic virtue, and it constituted, for many people, a point of controversy.

Rulers in the Islamic world sometimes supported the activity of religious and legal scholars who produced, among other things, learned treatises on the jihad. However, within the royal courts, and in the concentric circles of influence and prestige that emanated outward from them, there was also a keen interest in viewing warfare from a broader perspective. We find an early example of this attitude in the lengthy chapter on war (*kitab al-harb*) written, in the mid-to-late ninth century, by the polymath man of letters Ibn Qutayba.<sup>15</sup> This chapter opens with citations from the sayings of the Prophet (the hadith) and the Quran, and some narratives from the early, heroic period of Islam. Soon, however, Ibn Qutayba begins to quote from the literature of “the Indians” and especially “the Persians” of the Sasanian dynasty, which had been defeated and destroyed during the early Islamic conquests some two centuries previously. Here we find counsel on many matters, including strategy, tactics, and the correct demeanor to observe in battles and on campaigns. The sources of this advice are utterly non-Islamic, which implies that any civilized belligerent, of any religion, may take advantage of it if he wishes. And at times the advice is indeed quite worldly, as when the “strategems of war” ascribed to an anonymous Persian king include “dis-tracting people’s attention away from the war they are involved in by keeping them busy with other things.”<sup>16</sup> This material is mainly in the mode—highly fashionable in Ibn Qutayba’s day and

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Uyun al-akbar*, I:107–222.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, I:112.

the contending parties in intra-Muslim conflicts did often have recourse to the doctrine and above all, the rhetoric of jihad. In juridical discourse, however, the matter is somewhat complicated. Organized armed action against the Muslim political rebel (*baghi*), as well as against two other types of malfactor, the apostate (*mur-tadd*) who renounces his own religion of Islam, and the brigand (*muhtarib*) who threatens the established order while seeking only his own personal gain, is indeed often described as a form of jihad. Loyal Muslims who die in combat against these rebels, apostates, and brigands achieve the status of martyr (see chapter 5). On the other hand, the status of the adversaries in these conflicts is considered to be different from that of the non-Muslim adversaries in the "external" jihad. Here we see differences in approach between Sunni and Shi'i jurists.<sup>20</sup> For the most part, however, we find that these matters are actually dealt with under headings of Islamic law other than jihad. In fact, it is possible to provide a nuanced, theoretical discussion of political rebels and rebellion in Islam while referring to jihad only intermittently or even minimally.<sup>21</sup> Thus, while the discussion of rebels is part of the juridical discourse on jihad, it is not, at least in a consistent way, at the heart of that discourse. Here, as elsewhere, we encounter the temptation of allowing the notion of jihad to apply to almost everything—a temptation that is best for us to avoid.<sup>22</sup>

The Quran and Tradition often speak of oppressors. What happens if oppressors arise within the Muslim community itself? Must we carry out jihad against them? Here, of course, we are looking at the problem of rebellion from the point of view of the ruled, instead of the rulers: is there a right to resistance against an unjust ruler? From very early on in the history of Islam, some Muslims have deployed the ideology and vocabulary of jihad against what

<sup>20</sup> Kraemer, "Apostates, Rebels and Brigands," esp. 58–59: "Whereas Sunnis seldom characterized warfare against rebels as *ghihad*, although one killed fighting them was considered a martyr, the Shi'is regarded suppression of rebellion as *ghihad* and the *baghi* [rebels] as infidels."  
<sup>21</sup> As in Abou El Fadl, "Ahkam al-Bughat"; idem, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law*.  
<sup>22</sup> We see this in Alfred Morabia's masterful *Le Ghihad dans l'Islam medieval* (hereafter *Le Ghihad*), which tends to make jihad into an all-embracing principle governing almost everything: so the discussion of "internal, coercive" jihad (against rebels, etc.), 298–309.

### Fields of Debate

system of values but also because it comprehended so much. Jihad, at least as it emerged in its full articulation toward the end of the eighth century of the Common Era, included exhortations to the believers to attain religious merit through striving and warfare. It also gave an account of the will of God, as this had become known to mankind through God's Word and through the Example of His Prophet, and as it had then become realized, over and over again, through the martial activities of the community of believers. At the same time, the jihad included a large body of precise instructions regarding the conduct of warfare, very much in the here and now, answering to the technical requirements of recruitment, tactics, and strategy. This does not mean, however, that the jihad—as expressed in the first instance by jurists—was preeminently practical in nature: in fact it often tended to be backward-looking, seeking models of conduct in an idealized past. Now we may consider how these Islamic jurists, and others, have construed the jihad and how they have argued about it.

Over the centuries, as Muslim jurists reiterated and refined the criteria for jihad, they referred constantly to several underlying questions. We may begin by singling out two of these.

#### Who Is the Enemy?

If we think of jihad first of all as a kind of organized warfare against external opponents, then who precisely are those opponents? How and under what conditions must war be waged against them? What is to be done with them once they have been defeated? Questions of this kind predominated in many of the juridical debates about the jihad, especially during the early, formative centuries of Islam.

Once some sort of consensus has been achieved regarding these enemies from outside, then what about internal adversaries? All agree that war may be waged, at least as a last resort, against Muslims who rebel against a constituted Muslim authority. Is such war then a kind of jihad? And must these internal Muslim rebels be treated in the same way as the external non-Muslim opponents just mentioned? Here we find that in actual historical experience,

they have seen as oppressive and tyrannous (though Muslim) rulers. From a later perspective, these oppressors might be described as political rebels or religious heretics—though here we run the risk of using the terminology and conceptual patterns of Christianity. The point for now is simply that jihad has a long history as an ideology of internal resistance (discussed in chapter 8 below). Finally, many have claimed that the authentic jihad, the “greater jihad,” is not warfare waged in the world against external adversaries but is rather an internal spiritualized war waged against the self and its base impulses. What does it mean to have such an adversary and to make war against it? This question will be taken up again very shortly.

### *Who Is in Charge?*

Early Muslim jurisprudence provided an answer to this question:

the imam, which then meant much the same thing as the caliph, the supreme ruler and head (after God Himself) over the entire Muslim community and polity. The imam has ultimate responsibility for military operations, both offensive and defensive; in particular, offensive campaigns outside the Islamic lands, against external foes, require his permission and supervision. However, since the imam or caliph could not be everywhere at once, it was always necessary for him to delegate his authority in these matters. Meanwhile, over time, his power and authority diminished in the world, and rivals emerged. Furthermore, jihad was acknowledged to be not only a collective activity; it was also a matter of concern and choice for the individual, of great consequence for his or her personal salvation. Thus the jihad became the site of an argument over authority, and it has remained one right down to the present day.

We have already mentioned the insistence, in many writings of our own day on jihad and Islam, on continuity. First of all, continuity in time: today’s historical actors are often seen to be repeating or reenacting things that happened long ago. Second, continuity between doctrine and practice: so for instance, calls to warfare and martyrdom in Quran and Tradition are thought to provide explanations for today’s violent behavior. This claim to continuity requires critical examination. However, there is no doubt that Muslims have often expressed a strong desire for continuity with their own past. In this case, does performing jihad establish continuity with the Prophet Muhammad, through literal imitation of

the actions he took during his military campaigns in Arabia? Or does it involve immersion in the study of the divine law? Or does it mean identifying oneself with the organized authority, the Islamic state—which in the language of early Islam often means the caliph/imam himself? Or does performance of jihad establish continuity with that other great protagonist of early Islam, the community, which did, after all, forge its place in the world through warfare and campaigns?

Other themes of debate in this book can be expressed in the form of binary oppositions that recur in the writings of medieval and modern authors, jurists and nonjurists, Muslims and non-Muslims. These include the following.

### *“Real” Jihad versus “Mere” Fighting*

In the Hadith or Tradition (see chapter 3), as well as in some other sources, a distinction is often made between, on the one side, militant activity (usually called *jihad*, or *ribat*, or both) that has authentic status and, on the other side, fighting undertaken with no concern for divine commandments, divine reward, and so on. It is often stated that some people act in accordance with jihad, while others fight only for the sake of worldly things such as glory, plunder, and power. The distinction is polemical, and perhaps applied arbitrarily or unfairly on some occasions.

### *External and Internal Jihad*

Most accounts of the jihad agree that it has both an external and an internal aspect. The external jihad is an activity in the world, involving physical combat against real enemies in real time. The internal jihad, sometimes called the “greater jihad,” is a struggle against the self, in which we suppress our own base desires, purify ourselves, and then rise to contemplation of higher truth. Most modern Western writings on the jihad consider that the external jihad, the physical combat against real adversaries, was the first to arrive in history and has priority in most ways. In this view, the internal jihad, the spiritualized combat against the self, is secondary and derivative, despite all the importance it eventually acquired in Muslim thought and society.<sup>22</sup> However, much of contemporary Muslim opinion favors the opposite view. As a question of first

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 291–336 (chapter on “Le jihad interne,” the internal jihad).

origins, we can argue that elements of the internal jihad were already present at the beginning, including in the Quran itself, and that jihad has often been, in equal measure, a struggle against both the enemy within and the enemy without.

### *Collective and Individual Jihad*

This is a central issue in the classical doctrine of jihad. As we shall see, it corresponded to real problems that confronted Islamic governments, rulers, and military commanders, together with a wide array of individuals who, in their quest for salvation and religious merit, became involved in the activities of the jihad. The most original modern treatment of this ancient problem came in the doctoral thesis of the late Albrecht Noth. In Noth's analysis, warfare against external enemies is a concern for the entire Muslim community, under the leadership of its imam/caliph. This warfare requires resources and organization on a scale that only the state can provide. At the same time, this warfare may be holy, as it fulfills religious objectives by protecting and, where possible, expanding the community and its territory. Then, on the other hand, we have the individuals who volunteer to participate in this activity. They too are carrying out divine commands. They receive a religious reward for their activity; their motivation (the sincerity of their intention) is often a source of concern. However, even if their intentions are pure, these individuals are likely to be less concerned with public goals (warding off enemy invasion, conquering new territory for Islam) and more interested in achieving religious merit for themselves. Noth identified these two elements as "holy war" and "holy struggle"—both of them components of what I am seeking to identify as the jihad, and at odds with each other much of the time.<sup>24</sup>

Presentations of the jihad, and indeed of Islam itself, most often have as their starting point a historical narrative that begins with

<sup>24</sup> Noth, *Heiliger Krieg und heiliger Kampf in Islam und Christentum*. I disagree with Noth where he states that the "private" heiliger Kampf is the dominant mode, and that true "holy war" almost never occurs in jihad (pp. 87–91). The distinction remains valuable nonetheless.

Muhammad in Mecca at the beginning of the seventh century and reaches a culminating point when Muhammad establishes his community in Medina in 622 ce, year 1 of the Hijra. When questions such as "What emphasis does Islam place on fighting and conquest?" or "What is jihad?" are asked, the answer most often takes the form of this master narrative about the rise of Islam, continuing from Muhammad's life through the great Islamic conquests that took place in the seventh-century Near East and beyond.<sup>25</sup> We are told how Muhammad first received divine Revelations and how a community gathered around him in Mecca; how war, and then afterward, how Islam grew, in part through conquest, into a comprehensive system of belief and doctrine and, at the same time, into a major world power.

More than in any other major religious or even cultural tradition, the narrative thus contains the answer to the question. This approach is shared by those who are sympathetic to Islam and those who are hostile to it. The matter is complicated further by the fact that the Quran, the Islamic scripture, is not a connected narrative in the sense that, for instance, much of the Old Testament presents a sequential history of the world and of a people. Somewhat paradoxically, a fundamentalist attitude in Islam—which is to say, a radically decontextualized attitude—usually bases itself not only on the sacred text of the Quran but also on a narrative of origins, a narrative that is, strictly speaking, exterior to the sacred text.

The rise of Islam was indeed an astonishing event, with tremendous consequence for world history. Moreover, narratives of the first origin were vividly present to Muslims of all later generations, especially those who found themselves acting within the broad sphere of jihad. However, as we have already seen, this search for an origin immediately leads into complex arguments about the reliability of the sources for earliest Islam, arguments that are not about to be resolved any time soon. Above all, the focus on a single narrative of origin can lead us to forget that any act of founding becomes obscure in retrospect, because it necessarily includes an element of myth—even in cases where the course of events and

<sup>25</sup> For instance, Firestone's *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam*, which does not venture far beyond the Quran and the life of Muhammad.

the actors' identities and roles are not particularly in dispute, as for instance in the founding of the American republic.

In this book I speak of the origins of jihad, in the plural. There is no need to challenge the primacy of the first beginnings. However, speaking of origins allows us to look afresh at each historical instance, and at Islamic history as a whole. It also encourages us to look at how the jihad has been revived and reinterpreted in many historical contexts, right down to the present day. It may also help us to integrate the jihad into the history of "real" armies and warfare, from which it has largely been divorced in modern historical scholarship.

Much of this book, especially its early chapters, is devoted to modern debates over the sources for early Islam. Writing already existed in Arabia when Islam first arose, and many Muslims of the first generations wrote, most often in the Arabic language. However, for a number of reasons, writings from that earliest period of Islam have survived only sporadically and by accident. (Here, as so often, the Quran constitutes the great exception.) The compendious Arabic works on which we rely for most of our knowledge of the events, ideas and doctrines of the earliest Islam were written in later times (beginning around 750 ce, and in most cases considerably later than that). These works were based on earlier works, but those earlier works have since disappeared and it is difficult or impossible for us now to establish their texts. The matter grows even more complicated because of the intertwining of within the oldest Arabic sources, of oral and written techniques of transmission, itself very much a matter of dispute among modern scholars. The modern arguments over the old Islamic sources have ranged mainly on two battlegrounds, one regarding the formation of Islamic law and the other regarding early Islamic historical writing. Both of these will be mentioned as we go along.

Many of these modern arguments over historiography, and over the rise of Islam and the origins of jihad more generally, began in the nineteenth and the earlier twentieth centuries among European academic specialists in the study of the East, often referred to as the orientalists. Their involvement in the colonial project has been much discussed.<sup>26</sup> What will come back over and again in the

<sup>26</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, followed by a large literature; see also Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*.

present book is their relation to the classic Islamic narrative of origins. For origins were precisely what many of the orientalists liked best. Their approach was predominantly textual: finding the manuscripts, establishing the texts, understanding what the texts mean, and then sifting and combining all this information so as to produce a more "scientific" narrative than what the "native" sources had to offer. In many cases, the orientalists' interest in origins had the further, and unfortunate, result of encouraging them to see the social practices of Muslim countries—in their own time and also for earlier periods—as outcomes or expressions of the text. In this view, the norms of doctrine and religion dictated everyday behavior; the texts, especially the texts concerned with origins, became all the more precious as a result.

At the same time, other scholars, some of them in the orientalist tradition and some not, have posed different kinds of questions and inserted different kinds of protagonists into their narratives. I have tried to put emphasis on at least some of these, and on the other options available to us today. It is noteworthy, in any case, that there have been few successful attempts to apply the methods of the modern social sciences to these questions. This is partly because of the burden that such an attempt imposes (a combination of textual and linguistic expertise together with profound knowledge of the social sciences) and partly, no doubt, because of the difficulties inherent in the primary evidence itself.

I portray the origins of jihad as a series of events, covering all of the broad extent of Islamic history. Of course, I only have room for a few representative instances. However, I hope to show that many people have used the notion of jihad creatively in the construction of new Islamic societies and states. For this they have employed a shared idiom, derived from the Quran, from the various narratives of origins, from the classical doctrine of jihad, and from their own shared experience. However, their ways of doing this, and the Islamic societies they have constructed, have been quite diverse: not mere repetitions or reenactments of the first founding moment but new foundations arising in a wide variety of circumstances.

Questions regarding the jihad and its origins resonate loudly in our world today, when jihad has become the ideological tool of a major, and substantially new, political actor. I see no choice but to ask whether today's "jihadists" are in continuity with their

own tradition and past. The answer, not surprisingly, is that in some ways they are and in other ways, quite radically, they are not. But here the emphasis is on origins, both among Muslim believers and among many non-Muslim observers, should not lead us to think that the same thing merely happens over and over, that Islam—and now, all of us—is doomed to repeated cycles of violence and destruction.

For as long as we deal with this subject matter, it is our destiny to speak “of war and battle,” as Socrates, arriving late, is informed by his host: “We must account for many debates over debating and fighting, and describe numerous intellectual, spiritual, and physical techniques of contention. All the more reason to leave room at the end of the book for the often-discredited claim that jihad and Islam are both really about peace. For peace is the true goal of all righteous contention and war, both in the *bellum iustum* of Augustine, Gratian, and Grotius and in the *jihad* of the Quran, al-Shafi‘i, and Saladin.

### Readings

The comprehensive survey by Alfred Morabia, *Le Jihad dans l'Islam médiéval: Le "combat sacré" des origines au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993), includes a thorough summary of the doctrine of the jihad and its role in Islamic history. Since this work was published after the author's premature death in 1986, it does not include more recent developments. The recent article by Paul L. Heck, “*Jihad* Revisited” (*Journal of Religious Ethics* 32 [2004]: 95–128), covers much of the ground covered in this book from a somewhat different perspective. Important terrain is mapped out in “The Idea of *Jihad* in Islam before the Crusades,” by Roy Parviz Mortahedeh and Ridwan al-Sayyid, in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, 23–29, edited by Angeliki Laiou and Roy Parviz Mortahedeh (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001). Another valuable contribution has just appeared, too late for me to incorporate into this book: *Understanding Jihad* by David Cook (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

11 Plato, *Gorgias*, 447a.

This book covers much of the same ground as the present one, but also from a different perspective. It includes a full and well-informed survey of the jihad as conceived and deployed by modern-day radical Islamist groups.

Just war and holy war are studied in comparative perspective in two volumes edited by John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, *Western and Islamic Traditions* (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1990); *Cross, Crescent and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Islam and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (Westport, Greenwood Press, 1991). Albrecht Noth's *Heiliger Krieg und heiliger Kampf in Islam und Christentum* (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid Verlag, 1966), already mentioned, provides a comparative synopsis of the notions and practice of holy war in Islam and Christianity. Noth began by remarking that until then (the 1960s), Western treatments of the jihad tended simply to recapitulate the Islamic juridical doctrines; history was seen as a mere application or outgrowth of these doctrines. With Noth's book, this situation began to change. However, historical treatments of armies and warfare in the Islamic world, such as Hugh Kennedy's excellent *The Armies of the Caliphs* (London: Routledge, 2001), still tend not to devote large amounts of attention to the jihad and its practitioners. A few of the many books on jihad in contemporary thought and society are mentioned in the notes to the beginning of this chapter. Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1996) provides a general introduction, essays, and translated texts.

In addition, see the recent book by John Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). Ibn Khaldun's views on jihad and warfare are discussed by Malik Mufti in a paper titled “Jihad as Strategy: Ibn Khaldun on the Management of War and Empire,” presented at the November 2007 meeting of the Middle East Studies Association.

the same hands cultivated the soil as before the arrival of the Muslims. The system of taxation also remained broadly similar to what had been in effect previously under the Byzantines and Persians. The most important tax, on the land, became known in Arabic as *kharaj*. Another tax, a poll tax "on the heads," was levied on individuals (and households), and became known as *jizya*. The relatively small elite of Arab warriors were thus recipients of tax money amidst an enormous, taxpaying majority. As Muslims they were expected to pay a communal alms tax (*zakat* or *sadaqa*), but this was lighter than the burden of *kharaj* and *jizya* imposed on non-Muslims. This distinction between recipients and taxpayers corresponded rather nearly to distinctions in religion and in occupation: those who received were Muslims, while those who paid were Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians; the Muslims spent their

time as warriors, the others as producers.

Of course this outline of a conquest society corresponds only roughly to what actually happened. And in any case, things soon changed. To begin with, some members of the larger group tried to join the elite. In order to do this, conversion to Islam was necessary but not enough. For the Arab Muslims disagreed among themselves over what to do with the new converts. Although the Quran's language was "clear Arabic," its message was just as clearly directed toward the entire world. Yet to admit non-Arabs into the inner group meant altering the lopsided balance between recipients and payers of taxes. Now, the armies often needed recruits, and many non-Arab converts were eager to enlist, on the condition that they receive the same treatment—including the stipend—as their Arab coreligionists. Nonetheless, some of the Arabs insisted on keeping these newcomers out. Tensions of this kind became a major preoccupation, going far beyond the armies. Ultimately, the Arab fighters lost their privileged position, and the conquest society came to an end. By then, however, it had created

several results of lasting consequence. During the Umayyad period (661-750), some non-Arab converts did manage to get their names inscribed on the register as fighters in the army and as recipients of stipends. Others failed but continued to press forward anyway, going on campaign with little or no compensation other than a

## Encounter with the Other

### CHAPTER SIX

The early expansion of Islam set in place what we may call a conquest society.<sup>1</sup> When the dust settled, the Arab Muslims found themselves scattered over great distances, clustered together in old cities and new garrison towns. They continued to fight against non-Muslim adversaries along the ever-receding frontiers and also, at times, against each other. Their activity as fighters was not a question of paid service. Rather, it had to do with identity and status, of being Arab Muslim males—even if, in reality, some of the fighters looked for ways to avoid their duty to serve in the army (see end of chapter 3). The fighters received a fixed stipend, called *ata*, which literally means "gift," an indication that the notions of reciprocity and gift, so important in the Quran (chapter 2), still had their importance. The fighters received their stipends from a treasury staffed by bureaucratic specialists who kept the recipients' names inscribed on a register (*diwan*). Funds flowed into this treasury from taxes levied on the population. How much that population had suffered during the early conquests is not entirely clear: there seems to have been much movement because of enslavement and other reasons, while some elite groups—such as the great landowners of formerly Byzantine Syria—picked up and left altogether. For the most part, however,

...and resources available to them.<sup>4</sup> The fiscal law of Islam was designed to conflict with political and economic realities or else to become a body of ideal norms, observed selectively when at all. Meanwhile, the fiscal and landholding structures themselves changed profoundly, as the caliphate went into political decline and as the old *levée en masse* of fighters receiving stipends became replaced by a variety of professional, specialized military units.

### Treatment of Non-Muslims

Like the fiscal regime, the treatment of non-Muslims in Islamic law grew directly out of the ancient conquest society. It differed from the fiscal regime in that it was actually observed in most times and places in the premodern Islamic world, at least in its broad outlines and general spirit.

The Arabic sources for the early conquests report the texts of numerous agreements made between conquerors and conquered on termination of hostilities. These texts exist only in chronicles and legal compendia; not a single original document survives and, as before, we must rely entirely on a long process of literary transmission. The treaty texts take the form of contracts, often in the form of a letter sent by the Muslim commander in the field, addressed to "the inhabitants of such and such a place and their dependents." In some cases a specific person, often an ecclesiastic, is named as the representative of the city in question. In the simplest contracts, the Muslim commander stipulates that the inhabitants of the place will have safe conduct (*aman*) for themselves, their religion, and their property. In return they must pay *jizya* "out of hand" for every adult male, according to his capacity. They must show goodwill and avoid deception; they must accommodate Muslim travelers in their houses for a day and a night. The arrangement is called *ahimma* (protection); those who benefit from it then become known as *ahimmi* (protected persons).

The most famous of these arrangements is the one the caliph Umar is said to have granted to the residents of Jerusalem, sometime between 636 and 638. The different versions of this text show

<sup>4</sup> Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 356-357.

share of the spoils of battle. These volunteers (*murtawwi'a*) formed units that set a precedent for the future practice and theory of *jihad*, as the following two chapters will show.

Another result regarded the fiscal regime of classical Islam, which took some time to emerge. During the Umayyad period, as people converted to Islam and claimed exemption from their heavy tax burden, the ruling elites faced a threat to their fiscal base, eventually together with severe disagreement among themselves. Eventually these controversies gave birth to the classical theory of Islamic taxation. The *khara*, the tax on the land, was to be paid regardless of the religious status of the land's owner. (This had become a bone of contention because of the conversion of landowners to Islam, and because of the alienation of land through inheritance and sale.) The *jizya* (poll tax) was demanded only from non-Muslims living under the protected status of "People of the Book" (to be described shortly). One's obligation to pay *jizya* thus ended on conversion to Islam. In reality, it seems that in some circumstances, the treasury tried to recoup its loss of revenue from *jizya* by making the *zakat* or *sadaqa*, the alms tax on Muslims, into a heavier tax.<sup>5</sup> In theory, meanwhile, the entire system became based on a right of conquest, through the principle of *fay* (return) deriving from Quran 59: 7 (see above, chapter 2). The conquered lands—or most of them—were now seen as a kind of trust in perpetuity for the benefit of the Muslim conquerors. Non-Muslim landholders retained title to their property, but the Muslim community as a whole had a residual right of ownership.

This system of taxation weighed heavily on the countryside and the land. Urban and merchant wealth were also taxed, but by comparison they got away nearly unscathed. This imbalance provided a boost to the tremendous commercial expansion of the eighth and ninth centuries, but it also led to problems. For by now the archaic structure of the conquest polity had become, irrevocably, the fiscal system of Islamic law. Over and again, rulers and governments, finding themselves strapped for cash, would resort to extra-canonical fiscal measures, at times including outright confiscation. And over and again, the jurists and other spokesmen for the divine legislation (*shari'a*) would oppose these measures. The rulers might then grant a "reform," canceling the extra-canonical taxes,

<sup>5</sup> Sijpeštin, "The Collection and Meaning of *Sadaqa* and *Zakat*."



*ḥajya* meant "tribute," a sum paid collectively by an entire community. Soon, however, it came to refer to the poll tax levied on individuals and households. All discussions of *ḥajya* turn on Quran 9:29 (*al-Tawba*):

Fight those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden—such men as practise not the religion of truth, being of those who have been given the Book—until they pay the tribute out of hand (*al-ḥizyatā 'an yadin*) and have been humbled. (Arberry translation)

The protected persons are monotheists, "People of the Book." This obviously applies to Jews and Christians. Zoroastrians presented some difficulty to the Muslim authorities, but the jurists soon agreed that these were monotheists of a kind, and that they even had a book. Conquests in "pagan" lands, especially India, afterward presented problems, but the solution was often similar. *ḥajya* was due from the People of the Book every year, its amount graded according to their ability to pay. The sums in question were not trivial, but the Muslim authorities agreed that the significance of *ḥajya* had to do first and foremost with the "humiliation" prescribed in Quran 9:29: their paying "out of hand" (*an yadin*) symbolically represented their state of subjugation.

At the beginning, when the ideal of the conquest society bore some relation to reality, the settlements of Arab Muslims amounted to no more than small islands scattered over the vast ocean of the People of the Book. We have seen that many of these Arab Muslims, jealous of their status and their stipends (*ata*), had incentives for keeping the outsiders at bay. But as the old structures broke down, especially under the 'Abbasid caliphs (from 750 onward), conversion became freely allowed. In most of the great provinces, it appears that the proportion of Muslims reached half or more of the population by roughly 900 ce. After that it only increased.

This meant that the dhimma henceforth governed relations with minorities—although some later conquests, such as those of the Ottomans in eastern Europe, did restore demographic preponderance to the dhimmis, at least at a local or provincial level. But to a remarkable extent, the basic principles of the dhimma were actually observed in most times and places. To begin with,

considerable variety. The Christians are allowed free practice of their religion, but in some versions, the Christians are forbidden to build new churches and monasteries. They must refrain from making noise during their services, and they must not display crosses prominently. They may not "mount on saddles," and they may not carry swords or weapons of any kind. They must dress differently from the Muslims, and in particular they must wear a sash around the waist known as the *zummar*. Their houses must be lower than those of the Muslims. They are also forbidden to teach the Quran to their children.

This "pact of 'Umar" (*ahd 'Umar*) has attracted much attention.<sup>5</sup> Some have pointed to its anachronisms: how, for instance, were the Jerusalemites to teach the Quran to their children in the 630s, when most of them knew no Arabic? This clause may relate to circumstances of a later time, when Palestinian Christians were becoming Arabic speakers and might have used the Quran as a model of literary style.<sup>6</sup> The document's historicity thus remains a problem. Most important, however, is that the two parties named in the contracts include all future generations. And for many centuries, these agreements were indeed seen as binding on all sides. For the pact is built to last. There are very few ways for its "protection" to come to an end; one of these is conversion to Islam on the part of the "protected." Here the jurist al-Shafi'i raises a question: what about a Jewish dhimmi who wishes to convert to Christianity (or vice versa)? Al-Shafi'i argues that he may not do this. The original agreement granted him protection, but only in the religious status of his forebears. He always has the right to convert to Islam if he likes—though no one may compel him to do this. His only other options are to remain in his current religion or else to leave the Abode of Islam altogether.

The fundamental obligation of the dhimmi is payment of the *ḥajya*. At first—including in many of the surrender agreements—

<sup>5</sup> Tabari, *al-Tarikh*, 1:2404–2406. This seems to be a concession to the Christians who, previously under Byzantine rule, had sought to prevent Jews from residing in Jerusalem.

<sup>6</sup> See the summary in Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 55–74; and idem, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar?"

<sup>7</sup> See end of chapter 5.

and processions, exaggerating the sumptuary laws, and ordered a long series of confiscations and destructions of monasteries and churches, culminating in the razing of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1009. On the whole, however, such episodes remained exceptional, like the episodes of forced conversion to Islam.

The realities of this area are complex and often confound any attempts at generalization. One observation, however, seems to hold: that it was along the outer fringes of the Islamic world, especially in the presence of an urgent menace coming from outside, that Muslim tolerance wore thin, and local Christian or Jewish communities found themselves most in danger.<sup>10</sup> This helps to explain Granada in 1064, certain episodes in the age of the Crusades (when Syria became a frontier province), and a deterioration of the condition of non-Muslims at the beginning of the modern era, in many Muslim countries. But in most epochs, in the heartlands of Islam, dhimmis lived mainly unmolested, their numbers slowly dwindling over time. Even in theory, their situation was far from that of a minority in a modern state, especially since they absolutely did not enjoy equality of status with their non-Muslim neighbors. All the same, there is no doubt that the history of the dhimma compares favorably with the treatment of non-Christians in Europe during most of the premodern era.

The People of the Book did not, of course, constitute a single group, but were divided instead into many different confessional units. Christians in particular comprised several groups, often in intense rivalry with one another. Leadership within these confessional groups was religious (bishops, rabbis, etc.). The confessional groups within a locality had considerable autonomy in legal matters, and were collectively answerable to the fiscal authorities. These confessional groups (today often referred to by a Turkish word for them, *millet*) are often thought of today as solid blocs, rather like medieval Western corporate bodies, standing firm in solidarity vis-à-vis the Muslim authorities and one another. This picture derives mainly from the Ottoman Empire. In reality things were often far less neatly defined, including in the Ottoman Empire itself.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*.

there was no forced conversion, no choice between "Islam and the sword." Islamic law, following a clear Quranic principle,<sup>8</sup> prohibited any such thing: dhimmis must be allowed to practice their religion. When Muslim armies encountered non-Muslims outside the lands already under the rule of Islam, they were supposed to offer them the choice of conversion to Islam; payment of *jizya* and acceptance of *dhimmi* status; or trying the fortunes of war. If the adversaries chose the last of these three and then lost, they faced expropriation, slavery, or even death. Even then, however, they must not be converted forcibly. And in fact, although there have been instances of forced conversion in Islamic history, these have been exceptional. Furthermore, the protection accorded to People of the Book meant that they—like the Muslims themselves—could not be enslaved. Since medieval Islamic societies made considerable use of slaves, especially for domestic labor, these had to be acquired from outside the Abode of Islam altogether. This combination of circumstances provided an incentive for constant raids by sea and on land, as well as for long-distance trade.

We have seen that the People of the Book were prevented from dressing in the same style as the Muslims, from bearing arms, and from riding. These sumptuary laws were taken seriously, but at the same time it is clear that they were often observed in the breach: we see this in the reforming zeal that accompanied their reintroduction from time to time. After all, it was difficult to maintain such distinctions in a world where patronage, business partnerships, scientific collaboration, and indeed friendship, often crossed confessional lines. Likewise, much ingenuity went into circumventing the prohibition against building new churches and synagogues and restoring old ones. The picture that emerges is thus endlessly variable, and serves to remind us that identity in the premodern world was itself often flexible. At the same time, this picture of the dhimma must also include shocking instances where it was flouted or abandoned, as in the massacre of the Jews of Granada in 1064,<sup>9</sup> or the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, which lasted from 996 until 1021. In his capital of Cairo, this unbalanced (and, in the view of most, mad) caliph raged against the Christians in particular, preventing them from performing their

<sup>8</sup> 2:256 (*Baqara*): "Compulsion in religion is not allowed."

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 165–166.

At the same time, this territorial outlook did not dominate everything and everywhere. Islamic law also had an intense interest in the personal status of individuals, so much so that it tied this status to the historical conditions of the early conquests. In all these ways, the juridical and historical roots of dhimma were inseparable from those of *jihad*. This may help to explain the presence, in some Islamic texts, of what we might call both an internal and an external Other. The internal Other, the non-Muslim native of the Abode of Islam, has juridical characteristics that include both a long-term contractual relationship with the Muslims and the inability to carry arms. This means that he is destined to participate in never-ending negotiations, over his status, obligations, and rights.<sup>14</sup> But if the internal Other is a figure of constant negotiation, the external Other is not. We see this in the often-stereotyped view of early Islam's most stubborn enemy, the Byzantine empire. Characteristics of Byzantium, in Muslim eyes, included considerable worldly power; the identification of its ruler, the Byzantine emperor, as the paradigmatic tyrant (*taghyya*); skill in the arts, crafts, administration, and warfare; an alleged lack of generosity; and, surprisingly, women associated with immorality and prostitution.<sup>15</sup> Above all, the empire figures as Islam's main antagonist and rival, its archenemy until the end of time.<sup>16</sup> Even though many of the people in question—Christians living on either side of the border between Byzantium and Islam—were actually quite similar in their customs and beliefs, this external Other had an utterly different set of characteristics from the internal Other, a figure of constant negotiation and, on occasion, an object of condemnation or even contempt.

### Convencina

*Convencina*, "getting along together," has been a preoccupation of much modern scholarship on medieval Spain. And there is no

<sup>14</sup> Robinson, *Empire and Elite*, 1–32.  
<sup>15</sup> Shboul, "Byzantium and the Arabs"; El-Chelikh, "Describing the Other to Get at the Self."  
<sup>16</sup> Miquel, *La géographie humaine du monde musulman*, 2:384; "D'où viens-tu, qui t'as mis sur mon chemin, lequel de nous deux fut créé pour la ruine de l'autre?" ("Where do you come from, who put you on my path, which one of us was created so as to destroy the other?")

### Abode of Islam, Abode of War

The early Islamic conquest society provides one of the first images (if that is the right word) of the community in relation to the world around it. Here the critical relationship was between the believers, who were consumers and warriors, and the far more numerous nonbelievers all around them, who were producers and taxpayers. In geographical terms this polity was already vast, and its pursuit of further conquests provided an outward extension for a center that already controlled an enormous part of the known world.

Soon afterward, Islamic jurists began to represent the world according to a different scheme, dividing it between an Abode of Islam (*dar al-islam*) and an Abode of War (*dar al-harb*).<sup>11</sup> As the

vocabulary indicates, these two are in a permanent condition of war. Since the only legitimate sovereign is God, and the only legitimate form of rule is Islam, the various rulers and states within the Abode of War have no legitimacy, and their rule is mere oppression or tyranny. The Muslim state—in the classical theory, the imam—may conclude a truce with those rulers and states, but for no longer than ten years. Individuals from the Abode of War who wish to visit the Abode of Islam, especially for purposes of trade or diplomacy, may be granted safe conduct (*aman*) for a limited period of time. However, in reality, Muslim states did often live in peace with their non-Muslim neighbors for prolonged periods. Some jurists therefore recognized the existence of an Abode of Truce or Treaty (*dar al-sulh*, *dar al-'ahd*), in addition to the Abodes of Islam and of War.<sup>12</sup> However, this addition of an intermediate category did not fundamentally change the territorial character of the doctrine of *jihad*. This doctrine requires warfare for the defense of lands under Islamic control and encourages the acquisition, through conquest, of new lands. It does not aim at the extension of populations or individuals, but rather at the extension of God's rule over the world: "Fight them, till there is no persecution and the religion is God's entirely."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Motahedeh and al-Sayyid, "The Idea of *Jihad* before the Crusades," 28; identify the first emergence of Realm of Islam/Realm of War in the later eighth century, in Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya.  
<sup>12</sup> Beginning with al-Shafi'i himself; see *ibid.*, 29; H. Inalcik's article, "Dar al-Ahd," in *EF*, 2:116.  
<sup>13</sup> Quran 8:39 (*Amfal*), Arberry translation.

Abode of Islam that became permanently lost to the faith. But whatever we may think about tolerance in Spain, the central Islamic lands on the whole practiced convivencia much more often than not. Though far from perfect, a practical system of tolerance prevailed in the central lands of Islam, right down until the modern era. That modern era is another story, less fortunate in many ways.

### Readings

Morabia again provides a point of departure in *Le Gihad*, 263-289. The fiscal regime of early Islam used to be hotly argued, including the idea that relief from taxes provided an incentive for conversion to Islam. Daniel C. Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), is still worth reading. A series of articles in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* by Claude Cahen, Dominique Sourdel, and others, is still valuable.<sup>19</sup> An interesting approach to conversion may be found in R. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

The position of non-Muslims in Muslim societies has provoked many writings, ranging from the myth of an interfaith paradise to the highly negative views expressed by Bar Yeor in *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (East Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985). For a balanced summary of the question, see Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. 3-14. The chapter "Islam and Other Religions," in Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 3-66, also provides a balanced view. For the Christian communities, see now Anne-Marie Eddé, *Françoise Michéa and Christophe Picard* (eds.), *Communautés chrétiennes en pays d'Islam, du début du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle au milieu du X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Sedes, 1997). Older treatments include K.A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of Umar* (1930; reprint, London: F. Cass, 1970), and the more technical

<sup>19</sup> *Et* articles on 'Ara', Bayr al-Mal, Diwan, Daysh, Diziya, Fay', Kharad).

question that it did take place there under Muslim rule, as Muslims, Christians, and Jews coexisted and collaborated in some of the great cultural productions of the age. Of course, Islamic Spain was not the interfaith paradise that some have thought: we have already mentioned the terrible events of Granada in 1064. But when convivencia ultimately failed in Spain, this happened in the wake of the Christian *Reconquista*, after centuries of coexistence under Islam.

The history of the Reconquista includes a series of agreements between conquerors and conquered, going back to the occupation of Toledo by King Alfonso VI of Castile and León in 1085. Muslims who found themselves living under Christian rule became known in Spanish (at least at some point) as *mudéjares*. Their status paralleled that of Christians and Jews living in Islamic territory under the regime of dhimma: in return for payment of a tax, they enjoyed protection of their persons and property and were allowed to practice their religion with certain restraints. As more Islamic territory fell to the Christians, the numbers of Muslims living under this regime increased. Their status was not viewed favorably in Islamic law: most jurists outside Spain who were consulted on the topic agreed that Muslims residing in lands that had fallen under the control of the infidels ought to emigrate to the Abode of Islam.<sup>17</sup> Yet the *mudéjares* mostly stayed put, eventually forget-

ting their Arabic but not their Islam.

Unlike the dhimma of Islam, these arrangements all failed. The best-known part of the story is its tragic end. In January 1492, the last Muslim ruler of Granada, known to the Spanish as Boabdil, handed over the keys of the Alhambra to Ferdinand and Isabella. Boabdil had negotiated an agreement allowing the Muslim inhabitants of the province to remain both Muslim and Granadan. But soon this agreement fell apart. By 1526, the practice of Islam was outlawed in all of Spain. An exodus of Muslims took place, like the previous Jewish exodus of 1492. Some won the right to stay in Spain by converting to Catholicism. Yet in the end, this too was not enough and the converts, known as Moriscos, were expelled between 1609 and 1611. The existential absurdity of the situation appears in the *Don Quixote*, composed right at this time.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Salgado, "Consideraciones acerca de una farva de Al-Wansarisi."  
<sup>18</sup> Menocal, *The Ornament of the World*, 253-265.

work by Antoine Fatal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en*  
*d'Islam* (2nd ed., Beirut: Dar El-Machreq, 1995). For the O-  
 man empire, F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sa-*  
*tams*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929) is still highly  
 regarded; and see especially Benjamin Braude and Bernard Le-  
 eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of*  
*Plural Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982). For medieval  
 Egypt, there are useful chapters on the Jews and Copts by  
 N. Stillman and T. Wilfong in Carl F. Petry (ed.), *The Cambridge*  
*History of Egypt*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,  
 1998), 175-210. For an illustration of how the spirit of the  
 dhimma, though not its strict letter, was observed in Crete under  
 Ottoman rule in the seventeenth century, see Molly Green, *A*  
*Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediter-*  
*ranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).  
 In addition, see Kohan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in*  
*Islam: Intersubject Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge:

As Islam became rooted in societies that were separated by vast  
 distances, from the Atlantic coast of Africa and Europe far into  
 Central Asia and India, these societies acquired characteristics in  
 common. One of these was the phenomenon of men of religious  
 learning (often called *'ulama'*) taking it upon themselves to per-  
 form the jihad in person. This involved them, at various times, as  
 legal functionaries or advisers, preachers, combatants, specialists  
 in ascetic and mystical practice, experts in the history of the com-  
 munity and its wars, or any combination of these. Their activity  
 had a largely symbolic value: by associating themselves with the  
 conduct of war, the scholars affirmed their own sincerity, together  
 with the values of the jihad and Islam. At the same time, they  
 showed a desire for participation in the here and now, in the real  
 world of conflict and combat.

One of them is 'Ali ibn Bakkar, who went to live along the  
 Arab-Byzantine frontier in the early ninth century. Once 'Ali was  
 wounded in battle, so that his entrails came spilling out onto his  
 saddle. He stuffed them back, used his turban as a bandage to bind  
 them in place, and then proceeded to kill thirteen of the enemy.  
 Elsewhere, however, 'Ali makes a less warlike impression, as when  
 we find him sitting in the wilderness with a lion sleeping in the  
 fold of his garment, and when we are told that he wept until he  
 went blind.<sup>1</sup> This combination is fairly typical. Here, however, we

<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Jawzi, *Sifat al-safwa*, 4:267.

## Embattled Scholars

### CHAPTER SEVEN

will dwell not on picturesque elements, but rather on the embattled scholars' role in the growth and development of the jihad in several regions of the Islamic world. Their presence along the great frontiers will help us to map out the jihad, while giving us a more accurate sense of the origins, in the plural, of the jihad.

### Syria and the Byzantine Frontier

Among the frontier zones of the early Islamic world, the one facing the Byzantine Empire, known as al-Thughur (the passageways, mountain passes) was often considered the most important and prestigious. So according to the early tenth-century Iraqi administrator and geographical writer Qudama ibn Ja'far, since the Rum (Byzantines) are Islam's greatest and most stubborn enemy, "it behooves the Muslims to be most wary and on their guard against [them], from among all the ranks of their adversaries."<sup>2</sup> It is here, in northern Syria and south-central Anatolia, that we first find the warrior-scholar phenomenon on an appreciable scale.<sup>3</sup>

This begins during the caliphate of the Umayyads (661-750). A few chronicles tell us that in the great expeditionary force that besieged Constantinople unsuccessfully in 717-718, several scholars were in attendance. One of these, Khalid ibn Ma'dan al-Kalabi (d. ca. AH 104/722-723 CE), a Syrian from Hims, had a reputation as a student of the history of the early Islamic conquest of Syria. It is later biographical sources (from the tenth century onward) that describe him as an actual warrior. This progression is typical: early biographical notices only note a thematic, scholarly interest in matters of warfare, while later sources, often of a more hagiographical nature, make the subject into both a washbuckling hero and a model of pious conduct. Another Syrian scholar of the Umayyad period, Makhul (d. AH 113/731 CE) is also said to have taken part in expeditions. The details of this are vague. What is beyond doubt, however, is Makhul's role in the production of maghazi: the historical narratives about the early community and

What emerges in al-Fazari—both in the biographical notices about him and in what survives of his book—is a distinctive view of imitation of Muhammad. Because the Prophet fought wars, the way to imitate him is through study of both the norms of warfare and the history of the community and, at the same time, through taking

combination. Come later, and al-Fazari is among the first jurists to make this of the comprehensive manuals of Islamic law. These, however, find in the great compendia of hadith (see chapter 3) and in some combination with maghazi narratives. We find a somewhat similar combination in the intertwining normative statements regarding *siyar*, together past, with minimal narrative context. Here Fazari seems original: normative principles from terse statements about the Islamic reward. Furthermore, these early *siyar* works tend to derive their reward from the themes of the merit of jihad and the fighter's divine noncombatants, division of spoils, etc.). They make little mention of the questions relating to the conduct of warfare (treatment of al-Shaybani (d. AH 189/805 CE). These books are devoted to practical questions relating to the conduct of warfare (treatment of noncombatants, division of spoils, etc.). They make little mention of the themes of the merit of jihad and the fighter's divine reward. Furthermore, these early *siyar* works tend to derive their normative principles from terse statements about the Islamic past, with minimal narrative context. Here Fazari seems original: he intertwines normative statements regarding *siyar*, together with maghazi narratives. We find a somewhat similar combination in the great compendia of hadith (see chapter 3) and in some of the comprehensive manuals of Islamic law. These, however, come later, and al-Fazari is among the first jurists to make this combination.

The literary genre of *siyar* (law or conduct of war) was already established by this time: we have at least fragments of books on *siyar* by al-Fazari's master, the great Syrian jurist al-Awza'i (d. AH 157/774 CE) and the Iraqi Abu Yusuf (d. AH 182/798 CE) and al-Shaybani (d. AH 189/805 CE). These books are devoted to practical questions relating to the conduct of warfare (treatment of noncombatants, division of spoils, etc.). They make little mention of the themes of the merit of jihad and the fighter's divine reward. Furthermore, these early *siyar* works tend to derive their normative principles from terse statements about the Islamic past, with minimal narrative context. Here Fazari seems original: he intertwines normative statements regarding *siyar*, together with maghazi narratives. We find a somewhat similar combination in the great compendia of hadith (see chapter 3) and in some of the comprehensive manuals of Islamic law. These, however, come later, and al-Fazari is among the first jurists to make this combination.

<sup>2</sup> Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, 5:172-173, nos. 9275, 9276, 9278. On al-Kalabi and Makhul, see Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, 1:75f., 111-113.

<sup>3</sup> Qudama ibn Ja'far, *Kitab al-khwarj wa-sma'at al-kitaba*, 185. For the following, see Bonner, "Some Observations Concerning the Early Development of Jihad on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier"; idem, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War*, esp. 107-134, 157-184; Heck, "Jihad Revisited," esp. 99-103.

This book in Muslim Spain, the *Book of the Merit of Jihad* (*Kitab*

in addition to these two founding figures of the Arab-Byzantine frontier and of the jihad we may include a third, Ibrahim ibn al-Fazari, is said to have come to Syria and to have taken part in military campaigns. This activity may well be largely legendary; in later generations we see Ibn Adham's lasting legacy among those radical ascetics of the frontier district whom the sources call *wahid al-khushm* (the devotees of harsh practice). Their activities included extreme fasting, ingesting dust or clay, and a rigorous insistence on working for a living (*kash*). Such people and practices were known, if not universally approved of, along the Arab-Byzantine frontier district for many years. Here the concern with purity of intention and conduct—already quite pronounced in Ibn al-Mubarak—goes that much farther: not only do Ibn Adham and his disciples ignore the imam/caliph—and with him, the public concerns of the Islamic state—but they even leave behind the Islamic community itself, in their uncompromising quest for absolute ritual purity (*al-hal al-mahd*) and their confirmation of the individual and his religious merit. What remains is obedience to and emulation of the ascetic master, Ibn Adham and others like him. This will all be characteristic of ascetic groups along the Byzantine and other frontiers, and later on, of mystical or Sufi groups.

Much of the information that we have on these three men and their many colleagues has been retrojected from later times and embellished. Nonetheless, they are useful to us because they represent three distinctive attitudes toward imitation and authority, precisely at the time when jihad first emerges as a comprehensive, coherent doctrine and set of practices. At the same time, there is evidence that many scholars did actually go to the frontier, from the later eighth century until the reconquest of the district by the Byzantines in the mid-tenth. Typically they were transmitters of hadith, reciters of the Quran, and so on. A few accepted employment with the 'Abbasid state, notably as qadis (judges). Some of them led contingents of volunteers for the wars, always arriving from Iraq and the Iranian East.

up arms against the enemies of Islam, thus literally reenacting what the Prophet did. At the same time, significantly, al-Fazari's attitude toward the 'Abbasid governmental authorities along the frontier seems to have been ambiguous at best. He certainly was not a political rebel, but in several accounts he is said to have been flogged for disobedience or some other offense. Above all, al-Fazari represents and embodies the authority of the religious and legal scholar, looking back to the precedent of the Prophet and the earliest Muslim community as this has been transmitted to him by other religious scholars in the intervening generations. Al-Fazari thus stands at the frontier—in every sense—of the Islamic state.

In al-Fazari's work, the word *jihad* occurs rarely, *what* even less so. It is in his eastern Iranian friend 'Abdallah ibn al-Mubarak (d. AH 181/797 CE) that we find these twin concepts flourishing. Ibn al-Mubarak's many achievements included several sojourns on the Byzantine frontier, and the composition of a *Book of Jihad*, apparently the oldest surviving work on this subject. Unlike al-Fazari's book, this is a work of hadith. It also differs in other ways. Whereas al-Fazari recalls the early community of Islam by recreating the Prophet's campaigns in study and in deed, Ibn al-Mubarak recrates the community here and now through internalization of the norm by each individual. Many of the narratives in Ibn al-Mubarak's book are accounts of the martyrdom of heroes in the early wars of Islam. Many of these narratives also place much emphasis on the fighter's intention (*niyya*) in jihad. The community thus takes form through the striving (*jihad*) and volunteering (*taraww'*) of the many individuals who comprise it. The Islamic state and its goals have little to do with all this: Ibn al-Mubarak shows little interest, if any, in the issues of obedience to the imam, and of the role of the imam in the conduct of military campaigns.

Biographical notices of Ibn al-Mubarak emphasize his personal strength and self-control: when he read from his own Book of Asceticism (*Kitab al-zuhd*), he bellowed like a bull being slaughtered. These biographical accounts also describe a close bond between him and his comrades-in-arms on campaign, modeled on relations among the Companions of the Prophet. Similar themes abound in Ibn al-Mubarak's *Book of Jihad*, which also contains much *targhib* (exhortation), as we see in the title that circulated

<sup>5</sup> Khaub, *Tarikh Baghdad*, 10:167.

<sup>6</sup> See the debate over this point in Chabbi, "Ribar," and Touati, *Islam et voyages*, 247f.

## Arabia

Although Arabia was neither a front line combat area nor a center of political power after the 650s, its two major centers of religious and intellectual life, Medina and Mecca, long held leading roles in the debates over warfare and jihad.

## Medina

Yathrib, later known as Medina—*al-Madina*, "the city" of the Prophet and the first capital of the Islamic state—boasted many of the most famous specialists in maghazi narratives, including Ibn Ishaq (d. 767) and al-Waqidi (d. 823). These men did not seek to combine their teachings on past wars together with active participation in present ones in the way that Abu Ishaq al-Fazari had done. Of course, this does not mean that they disapproved of such active participation. However, there are indications that participation in jihad was a matter of some controversy in early Islamic Medina.

Medina was the original home of one of the four great *Summi madhabs* (schools of law), the Maliki School, named after its founding figure Malik ibn Anas (d. AH 179/795 CE). The most famous book of this school is the legal compendium called the *Muwatta'*, originally composed by the eponymous founder, Malik himself. As is typical for Islamic books of this and later times, we do not have a single, authoritative version of the *Muwatta'* which everyone agrees in ascribing to the master. Instead the *Muwatta'* exists in several recensions, which have come down through separate chains of scholarly transmission. The recension which is generally best known is the work of a man named Yahya ibn Yahya al-Mas'mudi, who died in Cordova in AH 234/848 CE.<sup>7</sup> Not surprisingly, this book—the *Muwatta'* of Malik in the recension of Yahya al-Mas'mudi—has a chapter on jihad (*Kitab al-jihad*).<sup>8</sup> This chapter opens with hadith of the *targhib* (exhortation) type, encouraging people to perform jihad, just as we find in Ibn al-Mubarak's *Book of Jihad*—and indeed, many of the traditions in the two books are

<sup>7</sup> F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I:459–460.  
<sup>8</sup> Malik, *Muwatta'*, 2:443–471.

identical? The chapter then moves on to *siyar* topics: division of spoils, treatment of prisoners, and so on, followed by sections on martyrdom and more exhortation.

None of this seems particularly remarkable. However, when we examine another recension of the *Muwatta'*, that of the great Iraqi jurist al-Shaybani, we find something different. This recension is dated to date from al-Shaybani's visit to Medina during his youth, roughly around 150/767 (when he came to attend Malik's lectures). Here we find a short chapter on *siyar* and otherwise nothing at all about jihad. Notable for its absence is the material that we find in Yahya's recension of Malik's *Muwatta'*, on exhortation, reward, martyrdom, and so on.<sup>10</sup> This is the case also in the famous *Kitab al-siyar* composed afterward by the same al-Shaybani: in its original form, al-Shaybani's *Siyar* is "neither an exhortative nor an apologetic treatise, and jihad is not evoked."<sup>11</sup>

What may we deduce from this? Perhaps the Median jurists in the middle of the eighth century, including Malik himself, were as yet unfamiliar with the notion of jihad as this was expressed afterwards in Yahya al-Mas'mudi's recension of the *Muwatta'* and in Ibn al-Mubarak's *Book of Jihad*. Or perhaps it was certain Iraqi jurists—al-Shaybani and the emerging Hanafi madhhab—who disapproved of this concept and excised it from their version of the *Muwatta'*. Either way, we have basic disagreement over the jihad.<sup>12</sup>

Ever aware of its status as the home of the Prophet and the earliest community, early Islamic Medina was at once a conservative place, concerned with maintaining older values, and the home of some quite distinctive views. For instance, regarding poverty and almsgiving, at least some Median scholars believed that we should place no limit on the amount we give in alms, that we may give to the point of impoverishing ourselves, and that we must give to anyone who asks, regardless of his status and wealth. Above all, they believed that if any group of poor are especially meritorious

<sup>9</sup> The exhortations to jihad from Malik's *Muwatta'* are translated in Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam*, 19–26.  
<sup>10</sup> As noted by Bonner, "Some Observations," 25.  
<sup>11</sup> Chabbi, "Ribat," 495. Chabbi notes the presence elsewhere in the Shaybani *Muwatta'* (55–56, no. 95, s.v. "Prayer") of material on the "merit of jihad."  
<sup>12</sup> See the discussion in Motrahehdeh and al-Sayid, "The Idea of *Jihad* before the Crusades," 25f.



ous, it is those who desire to fight in the army but lack the means to do so. Such donations should be made as a kind of alms. Here the Medinans seem to have opposed some teachings of Iraq and Syrian jurists, as well as certain practices that were current in the early Islamic armies whereby military service became, to some degree, commodified.<sup>13</sup> Fighting in the wars is, for the Medinans, a matter of belonging and identity.

We have already noted the close connection between warfare and almsgiving in the Quran (chapter 2). And not by chance: for the early Medinan scholars seek to build their doctrine on solid Quranic ground. They want to send a Quranic fighter to war by making Quranic gifts to him. And here we come to a basic problem in the origins of jihad. Most of the jihad's basic elements are already present in the Quran, including the doctrine of martyrdom, the divine reward, and exhortations to take up arms for the sake of religion and God. Yet there is a practical difficulty. In the stateless condition in which Islam first arose in Arabia, and even to a large extent afterward under the caliphate, there was often no way to enroll all the warriors required for a campaign, and no agreed method of providing for their needs and transporting them to the battlefield. The Quranic solution to this problem amounts to a system of gift. However, the realities of conquest and empire—including the sudden arrival of unimaginably huge amounts of money—soon made this Quranic system of gift impractical in most ways and in most places. It survived in the fiscal vocabulary, and even in the fiscal practice of the Islamic state for some time (above, chapter 6). All the same, Medina, the city of the Prophet, positioned on the margins of power and events, continued to insist on and to refine the original, archaic Quranic system over several generations.

### Mecca

Even more remote than Medina from the centers of power and the theaters of war, Mecca continued to attract immigrant scholars and ascetics, as well as an endless stream of visitors coming to take part in the pilgrimage (*hajj*). Of course, most of these scholars and

<sup>13</sup> See above, end of chapter 3. For the views of some of the early Medinans on poverty, see Bommer, "Definitions of Poverty and the Rise of the Muslim Urban Poor," 339–341.

scholars did not take part in the wars. However, we are fortunate to have an early source that gives the views of some important Meccan scholars on these matters, together with the views of some other early Islamic jurists who lived in other places. The Meccan scholar 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah (d. AH 150/767 CE) is reported to ask the elder Meccan jurist 'Amr ibn Dinar al-Makki (d. AH 126 or 127/743–745 CE) if well as 'Amr ibn Dinar al-Makki (d. AH 126 or 127/743–745 CE) if fighting (*ghazw*) is an obligation incumbent on everyone. 'Ata' gives an answer of admirable frankness: "I don't know." Ibn Jurayj himself also seems to be at a loss. By contrast, in this same chapter, the Syrians, led by Makhlul (see above), think that the answer to this question is a clear "yes," and that such activity is called "jihad." Afterward, when the conversation turns to such topics as the "merit of jihad" and martyrdom, the Meccans do not take part, except very marginally.<sup>14</sup> Thus in Mecca we again detect the presence of something new and controversial. The main stumbling block is the nature of the obligation of fighting in the army: is it universal, and on whom does it fall?

Meccan reticence in jihad, like its Medinan counterpart, might possibly be explained by conservatism. Another explanation has to do with a rivalry between the advocates of the jihad and of the pilgrimage, or more accurately, between the advocates of sustained devotion to these two activities over long periods of time. The practices in question are called *jihad* and *rihat* for the fighters, and *rihat* and *mujawara* (both of which mean dwelling nearby) for the enthusiasts of *hajj*. A partisan poem on the theme is ascribed to none other than Ibn al-Mubarak:

Worshipper of the two sanctuaries, if you could only see us,  
You would know that in your worship you are merely  
playing games.

For some it may be fine to tinge their necks with tears,  
But our breasts are dyed in our own life's blood.

They tire out their horses in some vain enterprise,  
While our steeds grow tired on the Day of Brightness.

For you the scent of perfume, but the scent that we prefer

<sup>14</sup> Abd al-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, 5:171–173, nos. 9271–9278; 5:255, no. 9543; 5:256, no. 9536; 5:271, nos. 9576, 9577.

Is the hooves' burning and the most delicious dust. A true and trusted saying has reached us from our Prophet, Out of his sayings, one that cannot be called a lie: "The dust of God's cavalry, as it covers a man's face, will never be found together with the hell-smoke of the fire."<sup>15</sup>

Ibn al-Mubarak's poem is addressed to his fellow Iranian, Eudaym ibn 'Iyad, a famous practitioner of jihad. However, in the biographical sources, the rivalry between these two does not seem bitter at all. This is not really a conflict between two different groups: some people, including Ibn al-Mubarak himself, have associations with both. The intent here may be not to devalue other acts of devotion, but rather to associate the jihad with these practices.<sup>16</sup>

### Iraq: The Synthesis of al-Shafi'i?

We see now that there was disagreement among the major intellectual centers of the early Islamic world over the jihad. We cannot map this disagreement precisely, because it has been overshadowed by the consensus achieved afterward. Nonetheless it was there, and it seems to have its origins in the difficulty of reconciling the requirements of the Quran, with its economy of gift, together with the practical demands of conquest and empire. Much of the argument bears on the nature of the obligation of jihad: is it universal, on whom does it fall? This problem is inseparable from that of the leadership provided by the imam/caliph or the state. Early Islamic Iraq, like Arabia, was not a site of warfare against the external enemies of Islam, though it did see much internecine violence. Iraq's importance came from its place as the seat of empire and, increasingly, as the home of many of the most influential juridical thinkers in Islam and as the original seat of three of the

<sup>15</sup> Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar a'lam al-nubala'*, 8:364-365; Ibn Taghribirdi, *al-Nujum al-zahira*, 2:103-104; al-Harawi, *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage*, 149; Touan, *Islam et voyage*, 244f. For the hadith paraphrased in the last verse, see Wensinck, *Concordance*, 4:45; al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al-ummal*, 2:261.  
<sup>16</sup> Touan, *Islam et voyage*, 244; Noth, "Les 'ulama' en qualité de guerriers."

Sunni schools of law. Fittingly, it was in Iraq that a solution was found to the problem of the obligation of jihad, in the form of a doctrine known as *fard 'ala l-kifaya*: we may translate this as "collective obligation" or else as "obligation bearing on a sufficient number." This doctrine declares that the obligation of jihad may be considered fulfilled at any time if a sufficient number of Muslim volunteers undertake it and perform it. In this case, the obligation does not fall on each individual. However, if a military emergency occurs and the enemy threatens the lands of Islam, then the obligation falls specifically on any or each individual. In that case it becomes *fard 'ala l-'ayn*, an individual obligation. This obligation bears especially on residents of the frontier district where the enemy invasion has taken place.

The great jurist al-Shafi'i (d. 820), whom we have already met, had a key role in the emergence of this doctrine: he gives what is apparently the first full definition of *fard kifaya*.<sup>17</sup> Where he speaks about these matters, al-Shafi'i is not primarily concerned with the activity of volunteers for the jihad, and even less concerned with the ambitions of martially inclined scholars of the law. What impels him most of all is the role, in the allocation of resources, of something that we are tempted to identify as the state, an entity that al-Shafi'i calls the *sultan* (constituted authority).<sup>18</sup> For al-Shafi'i, the context of all this activity is defensive warfare, where Islam is threatened by invasion from its external enemies. It is interesting to see that the "classical" doctrine of *fard 'ala l-kifaya*, as it appears in many legal works written later on, often approaches the problem more from the point of view of the individual Muslim and less from that of the state or the imam. The political nature of the question is clear nonetheless, as al-Shafi'i showed at the beginning.

The articulation of this doctrine of *fard 'ala l-kifaya* did not put an end to all these tensions. We see this in a wide variety of what we sometimes call the "successor states," the Islamic polities that

<sup>17</sup> Chabbi, "Ribar," 497.  
<sup>18</sup> Al-Shafi'i, *Umm*, 4:84-90; idem, *Risala*, 362-369. Discussion in Bonner, "Ja'ail and Holy War," 59-61; *Artstowart Violence*, 39-40; Chabbi, "Ribar," 497.  
<sup>19</sup> The formal office or function of sultan did not come about until much later. In Shafi'i's day, the word still maintains its sense of "authority," even though it is also applied, by metonymy, to caliphs and other representatives of the government.

is in this context that scholar-warriors become a recognizable part of the Maghrib. Early in the series comes the great Maliki jurist Ibn al-Muqaffa (d. AH 240/854 CE), who sojourned at ribats and engaged wealthy people to provide endowments for them.<sup>21</sup> In Muhammad's son Muhammad, an important scholar in his own right, association with ribat is already much stronger, or, we could say, more thematic. We see this in biographical accounts—which indeed have a strong hagiographical character—such as the *Siyaḥ-nama* of Abu Bakr al-Maliki (late fifth/eleventh century). If, in the old days, the scholars of early Islamic Medina—the original home of the Maliki madhhab—had certain qualms about individual jihad, their intellectual descendants, the Maliki jurists of Aghlabid Ifriqiya, had few or none.<sup>22</sup> So, for instance, when Ibn al-Muqaffa takes on the topic of the obligation of jihad, he mainly cites Sahnun and Muhammad ibn Sahnun—both were local North African authorities, not far removed in time from Ibn Abi Zayd himself, and both were active practitioners of jihad and ribat. Here, as elsewhere, Ibn Abi Zayd does not much cite the earlier authorities of Medina, including the *Muwattaʿ* of Malik himself. Mathias von Bredow has argued that this mature Maliki doctrine of jihad actually originated with Sahnun and his son Muhammad ibn Sahnun, and that they borrowed it not from Malik and the old Medinan school, but rather from Iraq, and more specifically from the book of *Siyaḥ* by the great Hanafī jurist al-Shaybānī (d. 805), which the North African Malikis acquired and used as a “systematic model.”<sup>23</sup> One problem with this theory is that as we have just seen, al-Shaybānī actually seems to have had little to say in his *Siyaḥ* about the general nature of the obligation of jihad.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, we see the gap between mature Maliki doctrine and early Medinan teachings when Ibn Abi Zayd does actually quote a few early Medinan sayings about participation in warfare, as-

<sup>21</sup> North, “Les ‘ulama’ en qualité de guerriers,” 188; Halm, *The Empire of the Abbasids*, 225.

<sup>22</sup> Mallo, “La guerra santa según el derecho malikī,” 29–66; Bredow, *Der heilige Krieg (Jihad) aus der Sicht der malikītschen Rechtschule*.

<sup>23</sup> Von Bredow, *Der heilige Krieg*, 50–54.

<sup>24</sup> Above, p. 99. Bredow refers to Shaybānī’s *Siyaḥ* only in the much later commentary, or expanded version of this work by Sarakhsī.

arose and flourished over a wide geographical range from the third/ninth century onward, upon the decline of the central Maghrib. In the remainder of this chapter, and in much of the next one, we will look at a selection of these.

### North Africa

The former Roman province of Africa, corresponding to modern-day Tunisia and parts of Algeria and Libya, was conquered for Islam in the late seventh century and became known, in Arabic, as *Ifriqiya*. As they had done earlier on in Iraq and Egypt, the Arab conquerors congregated in a new garrison city, al-Qayrawan. Before very long, this became the site of quarrels and tension between the urban population and its political and military leadership. Under the independent Aghlabid amirate of Ifriqiya (800–909), jurists of the Maliki madhhab emerged as the prime spokesmen for this urban population. In 827, amid growing tension between these two sides, the Aghlabids called for jihad for the conquest of Byzantine Sicily, and received an enthusiastic response. The actual conquest of Sicily then required a good century, which worked to the advantage of both the Aghlabids and their successors, the dynasty of the Fatimids, who managed in this way to divert away from themselves an internal opposition that risked becoming quite fierce. For the ruling elite, the endless campaigning and turmoil in Sicily thus provided a much-needed escape valve.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the coasts of Ifriqiya itself remained exposed to attack from the sea. The Aghlabid rulers and their subjects devoted considerable resources to fortified defensive structures, known as ribats, where volunteer garrisons of *muwabbidun*, people taking part in ribat (defensive warfare) could reside for long or short periods of time. Here the frontier faced the sea, even though the frontier life of the murabitun took place on land. This meant that often the enemy was not there: one reason why in the long run, North African ribat—both in the sense of the activity and of the physical structure—acquired a demilitarized character as time went by.

<sup>20</sup> Bren, *The Rise of the Fatimids*, 80.

cribed to Ibn al-Musayyab" and to 'A'isha, the Prophet's wife. These clearly date from before the time that the general consensus regarding *fard kifaya* took hold.

In the early tenth century, most of Muslim North Africa was conquered by the new Isma'ili Shi'i caliphate of the Fatimids. The (Sunni) Maliki doctors of the law led some of the resistance against them. However, they did not mobilize the networks and ideology of jihad and ribat against the new masters, at least not in an effective, concerted way. We see this in Jabala ibn Hammud, an ascetic and former student of Sahnun, who lived as a *murabit* in Qasr al-Tub. When the Fatimids came to power, Jabala, now in advanced old age, moved to Qayrawan. When people reproached him for abandoning his post against the Byzantines, he called on them to stand watch, no longer against the old enemy "from whom we are separated by the sea," but against this new, more dangerous foe. Now every morning Jabala took up his station on the outskirts of Qayrawan, facing the Fatimid center of Raqgada, holding his bow, arrows, sword, and shield. After sundown he would get up and return home.<sup>77</sup> The claim that many Maliki jurists suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Fatimids does not stand up to examination; it seems rather that, as Heinz Halm says, "retreat into the ribat" became for them "a kind of internal emigration."<sup>78</sup>

The Fatimids themselves made liberal use of the jihad in their propaganda during their campaigns of conquest. Beyond this, however, we are witnessing a long-term change. In Fatimid North Africa, we have on the one hand, tribal armies motivated by religious fervor and charismatic leadership, and on the other hand, military units that we may describe as, in some sense, professional. There is less room for the *mustawwif* (volunteer). The presence of scholars and ascetics continues, but as an increasingly abstract and ideological ribat.

<sup>77</sup> Von Bredow, *Der heilige Krieg*, p. 8 of the Arabic text of Ibn Abi Zayd's *Kitab al-jihad min kitab al-manawadir wal-ziyadat*, where Ibn al-Musayyab says, "It is an obligation on everyone, such that they must not neglect it."  
<sup>78</sup> Ibid.: "If someone feels cowardice within himself, he should not go on campaign."  
<sup>79</sup> Abu Bakr al-Maliki, *Riyad*, 2:37f.; Halm, *Empire of the Mabdi*, 239.  
<sup>80</sup> Halm, *Empire of the Mabdi*, 246.

now appears that considerable numbers of scholars in al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) participated in the wars.<sup>79</sup> Here, at the other end of the Mediterranean, the situation has much in common with the marshlands of Anatolia and northern Syria: an extensive frontier zone (also often called the *Thughur*) lying between well-established adversaries. Here too, a caliphal government seeks the support of the doctors of the law, and at times comes into conflict with them.

We begin with the remarkable literary success in Spain of the *fiqh al-jihad* (Book of the merit of jihad). From the time of the introduction of these books in the peninsula in the later ninth century right down to the fourteenth, they enjoyed uninterrupted popularity,<sup>80</sup> even more than in their own homelands. The trio coexisted with native Spanish works such as the *Qidwat al-ghazi* (The fighter's exemplar), by Ibn Abi Zamanin (d. 1008). Above all, interest in historical narratives of sira and maghazi remained strong in al-Andalus, increasing whenever the struggle against the Christian adversary grew in intensity.<sup>81</sup> This helps to explain the lasting appeal, in al-Andalus, of al-Fazari and his attitude toward imitation of the Prophet. Thus the figure of the jurist-consult (*faqih*) who goes to the frontier to take up arms—of which al-Fazari remains a prototype—becomes naturalized in al-Andalus.

The Andalusian jihad also resembles its eastern counterpart in its use by ambitious rulers. As we shall see in the following chapter, Harun al-Rashid (r. 785–809) was the first true ghazi-caliph in

<sup>79</sup> Urvoy, "Sur l'évolution de la notion de jihad dans l'Espagne musulmane," though there was little military activity by scholars. However, Cristina de la Puente has shown otherwise in "El Jihad en el califato omeya de al-Andalus y su culminación bajo Hisham II." See also Philippe Sénac, *La frontière et les hommes*, esp. 127–134 ("Savants et hommes célèbres").  
<sup>80</sup> De la Puente, "El Jihad," 28.  
<sup>81</sup> Jarrar, *Die Prophetenbiographie im islamischen Spanien*.

Spain

the East. In Spain, once the independent Umayyad caliphate was created in 929, the caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III went on campaigns in person, inciting to the jihad and recruiting volunteers all while. The Andalusian ghazi-caliph then became most prominent known in Spanish as Almanzor, the powerful regent and usurper (978-1002) who took great pains to appear as a fighter in the jihad, having himself buried, at the end, in his old fighting clothes. Almanzor attracted volunteers from among the scholars and ascetics and did whatever he could to keep them happy. This included enforcing hyper-rigorous orthodoxy, to the point of burning the "pagan" books in the library of his charge, the hapless caliph Ham II.<sup>32</sup> However, even as he sought legitimation from the Andalusian 'ulama', Almanzor imported more and more Berber soldiers from North Africa. These contributed soon afterward to the final crash of the Umayyad caliphate in Spain.

Ultimately, this professionalization of the armies further marginalized the Andalusian scholar-volunteers. Nevertheless, they continued to fight. So we have the much-respected Abu 'Ali al-Sadiq, who died fighting "with the volunteers" in the Almoravid army at Cutanda in AH 514/1120 CE, a battle in which twenty thousand Muslim volunteers are said to have perished.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, with the arrival of the Almohads, the position of Sunni 'ulama' in al-Andalus became increasingly strained. For many of them, ribat became a way of expressing or transcending their alienation;<sup>34</sup> and like its North African counterpart, this ribat had less and less to do with the actual conduct of war.

### Central Asia

The early Islamic frontier zone of Khurasan and Transoxania was unlike its western counterparts in many ways. Here military operations took place over an enormous area, with territories and cities often changing hands. This eastern frontier was also different socially, in part because of the survival and flourishing of a local

<sup>32</sup> An early occurrence of this theme (the burning library) in Spanish history and literature.

<sup>33</sup> De la Puente, "Vivre et mourir pour Dieu," esp. 95-97.  
<sup>34</sup> Maribel Fierro, "Spiritual Alienation and Political Activism."

downing class or petty aristocracy, the *dehqans*. Here, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Tahiriid and Samanid authorities went to great pains to construct systems of defensive fortresses, as well as walls, ramparts, and trenches to defend the great cities. Large numbers of "volunteers" served in these places; whether they did so out of religious motivation, or because of payment or coercion from the state, is still a matter of debate. For these and other reasons, it would be wrong to think of this eastern marchland as secondary or as less important than its Arab-Byzantine counterpart. The ideology and practice of jihad owed a great deal to it.

We have early instances of fighting scholars in this region: so for instance, Ibrahim ibn Shammās al-ghazi al-Samarqandi (d. AH 221 or 222/837-338 CE), was the owner of an estate (*day'a*) near Samarqand, and bequeathed one hundred thousand dirhams for the ransoming of prisoners from the Turks.<sup>35</sup> Significantly, Ibrahim ibn Shammās actually died in combat, unlike almost all his fighting colleagues along the Arab-Byzantine frontier. However, a number of these Central Asian scholars and ascetics left their own marches beginning in the second half of the eighth century, as Ibn al-Mubarak and Ibn Adham—both of them natives of Khurasan—established their ties with the Byzantine frontier region. During the following two and a half centuries, a significant proportion of the scholars who lived in the Arab-Byzantine frontier district came originally from Khurasan and Transoxania. Large masses of nameless volunteers moved along the same path, especially during the military crises of the tenth century. The scarcity of books expressing the ideas of Khurasan and Central Asia in the area of warfare and jihad (whether in the form of narratives, hadith, or legal works), books that might have played the role that al-Fazari's *Siyar* played for the Arab-Byzantine frontier, or that Ibn Abi Zamān's *Qidwat al-ghazi* played for Spain, also points to a certain amount of "brain drain" toward other frontiers and other regions.<sup>36</sup>

During the amirate of the Samanids (892-1005) in Khurasan and Transoxania, religious scholars had a role in military as well

<sup>35</sup> Mizzi, *Tabdih al-kamal*, 2:105-107.

<sup>36</sup> The well-known commentary by al-Sarakhsi (d. ca. 1090) on the *Siyar* of the Iraqi scholar al-Shaybani (d. 805) performs this role for the eastern frontier, but considerably later.

as political affairs. This consisted largely of preaching and hortating, but there is also evidence for men of learning at the head of large units of *ghazis* (fighters for the faith), units that do seem to have been organized by the Samanid state. What we know about these men comes mainly from biographical notices about them in urban histories where they appear as 'ulama'. Now to what extent do the categories of scholar and volunteer/*ghazi* overlap? If a *ghazi* rises to a position of leadership, does that not suffice to promote him to the category of scholar? At any rate, this frontier ceased to have a military character by the eleventh century. From then on it has a central place in the history of asceticism and Sufism.<sup>38</sup>

### The Embattled Scholars: Conclusions

When we speak of the *jihād* in history, we tend to generalize the various environments where it took place so as to obtain a more unified, composite picture. Here I have tried to give an idea of some of the variety among the frontier provinces of the early Islamic world. Of course, these provinces also had elements in common, including a shared idiom of expression relating to the *jihād*. However, we cannot always assume that this common idiom was present, in every case, from the very beginning. On the contrary, it sometimes took new forms and provoked new quarrels. Volunteering, the participation of military nonprofessionals in the war against the enemies of Islam, has been a constant in Islamic history at all times. In a special sense—including the personal involvement of men of learning—it emerged first in Umayyad Syria, though perhaps also, simultaneously, on the northeastern frontier of Khurasan. The early Syrian jurist Makhul is said to have participated personally in the wars of his own time (which we may or may not believe); he had more than a passing interest in

<sup>38</sup> Paul, "The Histories of Samarqand," esp. 82-87; "The State and the Military: The Samanid Case"; Herrschel, *Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vor-mongolischer Zeit*, esp. 93-139.  
<sup>39</sup> See the article in *EF* on "Ribat" by Jacqueline Chabbi, and her "Remarques sur le développement historique des mouvements ascétiques et mystiques au Khurasan."

*ghazi*, which is to say, in historical narratives about the military campaigns of the Prophet and the earliest Islam; and he expressed a view that fighting against the enemies of Islam is a universal obligation incumbent on each able-bodied Muslim male. This combination, especially the idea of universal obligation, immediately became a matter of controversy. Two generations later, Abū al-Fazl and his colleagues along the Byzantine frontier mixed these same elements into a far more potent brew, which many people in other environments, notably Islamic Spain, then found intoxicating. Al-Fazl combined his imitation of the Prophet Muhammad's martial activity together with a bold claim to authority for the religious scholar, at the expense of—and even in defiance of—the authority of the imam/caliph, which is to say, of the early Islamic state. At the same time, other scholar-ascetics along the frontiers, especially 'Abdallah Ibn al-Mubarak and his followers, expressed the idea that volunteering for the *jihād*, and martyrdom, is the best way of constituting the community of Islam out of the striving and activity of many individual believers in search of their own religious merit and salvation.

Meanwhile, the classical doctrine of *farḍ al-kifāya* (collective obligation) first expressed by al-Shāfi'i, became widely (though not universally) accepted. This doctrine provided some resolution to tensions that had been breeding among various contending parties that included the imam/caliph and other representatives of the Islamic state, who needed to mobilize armies so as to defend and, where possible, expand the territory of Islam; scholars such as al-Fazl, who were making a claim to authority for themselves in matters of law and belief by looking back to the precedent of the Prophet and the early Muslim community; and those individuals who, following Ibn al-Mubarak and Ibn Adham, made the *jihād* into a vehicle by which one could join, constitute, or even (as in Ibn Adham's case) transcend the community of Islam itself. Nonetheless, this resolution of tensions through the juridical doctrine of *farḍ kifāya* is largely formal. Governments keep on having to solve the practical problems of recruiting and maintaining armies; while men of learning, in many later generations and in many different environments, find themselves taking up arms and confronting these questions all over again.

Houari Touati is right in saying that the activity of these fighting scholars is symbolic in its importance, and that its ultimate

meaning is as a foundational act.<sup>39</sup> We may see this in the fact that among the hundreds of extant biographical notices of scholars ascetics of the Byzantine frontier, only a handful are reported to have died in combat.<sup>40</sup> Yet in other places, such as Spain, plenty of them did fight and die. As symbolic actions go, this one is remarkably rooted in the here and now and can cause its practitioners to get their hands quite dirty. The question of real versus symbolic is not completely clear-cut.

The recurring phenomenon of the embattled scholars shows that the jihad does indeed have a plurality of origins. Each time a distinctive Islamic society emerges, it must work through a set of questions that regard the identity and meaning of volunteering and scholarship just as much as fighting against external or internal adversaries. In this way, these societies learn to express themselves creatively within the common idiom of jihad.

### Readings

Once again, it was the late Albrecht Noth who first identified the phenomenon of men of learning, including *fugaba* or (jurisconsults), settling or sojourning in considerable numbers along the various military frontiers of the medieval Islamic world.<sup>41</sup> Since the early 1990s, the phenomenon has been taken up by Michael Bonner,<sup>42</sup> Jacqueline Chabbi,<sup>43</sup> Albrecht Noth again,<sup>44</sup> Cristina de la Puente,<sup>45</sup> Houari Touati,<sup>46</sup> Linda Darling,<sup>47</sup> Jürgen Paul,<sup>48</sup> Deb-

<sup>39</sup> Touati, *Islam et voyage*, 256–257.  
<sup>40</sup> Bonner, *Artistic Violence*, 158; Noth, "Les 'ulama' en qualité de guerriers," cites a few casualties.  
<sup>41</sup> Heiliger *Kampf in Islam und Christentum* (Bonn, 1966).  
<sup>42</sup> Bonner, "Some Observations Concerning the Early Development of Jihad on the Arab-Byzantine Frontier," *Artistic Violence and Holy War*, esp. 107–134, 157–184.  
<sup>43</sup> Chabbi, "Ribat."  
<sup>44</sup> Noth, "Les 'ulama' en qualité de guerriers."  
<sup>45</sup> De La Puente, "El Yihad en el califato omeya de al-Andalus y su culminación bajo Hisám II"; idem, "Vivre et mourir pour Dieu, œuvre et héritage d'Abu 'Ali al-Sadaf."  
<sup>46</sup> Touati, *Islam et voyage au moyen âge*, 237–258 ("Le séjour aux marches").  
<sup>47</sup> Darling, "Contested Territory: (Roman Holy War in Comparative Context."  
<sup>48</sup> Paul, "The Histories of Samarqand"; idem, "The State and the Military"; idem, *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler*.

Tor,<sup>49</sup> and other writers, some of whom are cited in the notes of this chapter.  
 The identity and role of the 'ulama' in urban life and Islamic society as a whole has been much discussed. See the summary of a question in R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 28–254. To this we may add the highly interesting books by Jonathan Berkeley, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); and Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).  
 Note the recent and much-anticipated arrival of the book by D. G. (Deborah) Tor, *Violent Order: Religious Warfare, Chivalry, and the Ayyar Phenomenon in the Medieval Islamic World* (Wurzburg: Ergon Verlag and Orient-Institut Istanbul, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Tor, "Privatized Jihad and Public Order in the Pre-Saljuq Period."

should the discovery of God, self, and community be linked indissolubly to the waging of war? Why are these two nonthe- represented as separate stages, not only in the narratives but in some undeniable way, in consciousness? How does this combination then maintain such attraction over so many centuries and ranging so far beyond the original Arabian environment in which Islam first arose?

The best we can do for now is to confirm that things went this way. Islam transformed its early adherents through its spiritual and moral message, and through the activity of fighting on behalf of that message. The first results of this transformation included the early Islamic state. Here it is important to recognize the impassioned urgency of the early Arabic sources that describe these events. Modern treatments often tend to flatten or to avoid this urgency; one book that conveys it, together with a critical approach to the sources, is Hichem Djait's *La Grande Discorde*. Here the jihad is an indissoluble part of the transcendent, transforming Message—though at the same time, a part of the Message that has arrived somewhat later than the rest. The jihad provides motivation and pride; eventually, looking backward in time, it provides the basis of a criterion for establishing distinctions and degrees among the believers.

Now we proceed to outline a sketch of the jihad's trajectory in the political and military history of Islam down to the modern era. We have already traced the first and best-known episodes: the rise of Islam and its diffusion during the heroic period of the early conquests. Here, as in the previous chapter, we will examine the various contexts of the jihad through a series of frontier societies, linked together over time and space. We must also keep in mind that in this historical trajectory of the jihad, there is no neat, simple division between concrete, real experience on the one side and abstract, theoretical knowledge on the other.

*The Umayyad Caliphate: Imperial Jihad*

The most brilliant epoch of the great conquests was the thirty-year period following the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632.

: Djait, *La Grande Discorde*.

*Empires, Armies, and Frontiers*

CHAPTER EIGHT

Islam begins in Mecca in an encounter with the transcendent Other, with the God whose Word enters and transforms the consciousness of human beings. Out of this encounter there emerges an individual soul, acutely aware of itself and its precarious place in the cosmos. At the same time, there emerges a new community, defined and held together by its faith in God. The activity that stands out as most characteristic of this early community, the activity that its Scripture calls for over and again, has to do with generosity and care for the poor and unfortunate. Though we may disagree over the historical details regarding this very earliest Islam, and some may even claim that these historical details are beyond recovery, we cannot doubt that all this involved a profound transformation, both spiritual and social, in Arabia.

Then comes what is usually presented as a new, separate stage involving the birth of an Islamic state and, simultaneously, of organized warfare in the path of that same transcendent God. This transition from Mecca to Medina, from the encounter with the divine to fighting and statehood, is described in the narratives about Muhammad and the early community (chapter 3). Again, some non-Muslim observers have had suspicions about the reliability of those narratives, as we have already seen. But the real difficulty, for some outsiders, may be in their underlying sense.

: Quran 81:14 (*Takwin*): "Then [on the Judgment Day] shall a soul know what it has produced" (Arberry trans).



caliphs, Mu'awiya (r. 661-680), had already acquired considerable experience in warfare against the Byzantine empire, from having previously held the governorship of Syria for many years. Once he became caliph, Mu'awiya continued to reside in Syria, rather than in Arabia, which allowed him to maintain military pressure against the Byzantine empire. These campaigns did not bring much territorial gain, but they did reveal the imperial and Mediterranean scope of Mu'awiya's ambition: he would conquer Constantinople and occupy the seat of the Basileus, the Roman emperor. How Islam would have fared in the event that Mu'awiya had succeeded is beyond knowing: all we can say is that things would have turned out very differently from the way they did. But as it happened, neither Mu'awiya nor his dynastic successors achieved this imperial Mediterranean ambition. The expeditions sent against Constantinople in 669, 674, and 717 all failed, leaving thousands dead from wounds, hunger, and disease.<sup>5</sup>

The Umayyads fared better on other fronts, especially beginning in the 690s, as expansion resumed on a global scale. Muslim armies—we may no longer call them Arab armies, as many of their recruits were now not Arabs at all—conquered North Africa and then Spain, while in the East they advanced into the borderlands of India and China (see map 2). By this time, a full century after the Hijra, Islam securely occupied the largest single expanse of territory ever held under unified control in the history of the world until that time.

Territorial expansion was thus dear to the Umayyads' hearts. Was it an articulated, deliberate strategy? The lack of evidence makes it difficult to say. However, Khalid Yahya Blankinship has proposed that the Umayyad caliphate was indeed a kind of machine devoted to external expansion. With its huge armies, its expanding bureaucracy, and the conspicuous consumption of its central and provincial courts, the caliphate systematically lived beyond its means, placing its hopes in continuing conquest and in the acquisition of more and more spoils for distribution. This proceeded well enough until expansion met its inevitable limits, under the caliph Hisham (r. 724-743). Hisham, a serious and capable ruler, had to confront a near-catastrophic series of external

<sup>5</sup> See the article by Wellhausen, "Arab Wars with the Byzantines in the Umayyad Period," recently translated by Bonner.

Toward the end of this period came the first internal war of Islam, the *fitna* (great discord) eloquently described by Djair in the book just mentioned. This war's arrival is not at all surprising. The Arabs had just vaulted from poverty and marginality into control over most of the territory and riches of the known world. However, their state rested on new foundations, and the juridical and moral status of their leader, the caliph, turned out to be precarious when the third caliph, 'Uthman, was murdered in Medina in 656. The ensuing struggle was, all at once, a quarrel over leadership, morality, and the allocation of resources within the nascent state. What concerns us now is the man who emerged as the winner of this first Muslim civil war, Mu'awiya (r. 661-680), together with the Umayyad dynasty (661-750) of which he was the founding figure.

Our textbooks of Islamic history still tend to describe the Umayyad caliphs as the rulers of an "Arab kingdom," eager for power and indifferent to religion, unlike the dynasty that eventually took their place, the more overtly pious 'Abbasids who, according to this commonly accepted notion, held command over an "Islamic empire." This idea goes back, once again, to the orientalism of a century ago and, in particular, to the work of the German scholar Julius Wellhausen who, like so many others at the time, had great admiration for the *raison d'état*.<sup>6</sup> So where medieval Arabic writers had condemned the Umayyads for their alleged disregard for religion and their licentious behavior, Wellhausen and his followers could claim evidence for shrewd, Machiavellian statecraft on the part of those same Umayyads. Similarly, it was possible to dismiss the ostentatious piety of the 'Abbasids as so much hypocritical display. More recently, however, it has been claimed, convincingly, that the Umayyads wished in fact to be portrayed as religious figures, ruling the earth as "God's deputy" (*khalifat Allah*).<sup>7</sup> It is clear, at any rate, that the Umayyads held the supreme power during a series of turbulent decades when the basic notions of Islamic rulership were first being invented, tested, and tried. These early ideas of rulership definitely included leadership in the wars against the enemies of Islam. The first of the Umayyad

<sup>6</sup> Especially in his history of the Umayyads, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturz* (Berlin, 1902), translated into English as *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*.

<sup>7</sup> Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*.

light function as lawyers? Moreover, there is other evidence that at least the later Umayyad caliphs promoted an ideology of jihad which involved subduing all opponents to their rule, whether these opponents lived outside the Umayyad domains (unbelievers) or within them (heretics, rebels).<sup>10</sup>

It was in the later Umayyad period, in the metropolitan province of Syria, that jurists such as Makhul began to preach the idea of jihad as an obligation incumbent on each individual—an idea that at first received a cool reception in the other provinces (chapter 7). We do not know what effect this idea had on the "imperial jihad" of the Umayyads, though from Blankinship's work we can clearly see that the Syrian armies at the time were starved for men. It is worth noting, in any case, that while the Umayyad caliphs sent out countless military expeditions, they did not, as a rule, take part in the fighting themselves. Those of them who, like Hisham, had fought in their youth,<sup>11</sup> did not make this into a claim for legitimacy or glory. At least not until the end: in the last years of the Umayyad caliphate, we find that Hisham's sons were military men, and that the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan ibn Muhammad (r. 744–750) was a battle-hardened soldier who had fought all his life against Byzan-

nes, Khazars, and a variety of Muslim opponents. Even among the unloved Umayyads, Marwan has always been one of the most unpopular figures. However, we have the text of an epistle of thanksgiving, composed for Marwan by his chief scribe on some occasion of victory.<sup>12</sup> Here we find the caliph acting in matters of war as the divinely appointed head of the Muslim community: he has inherited the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad, a legacy that allows him to endure the hardships now upon him. Then, on the other side, we find warriors who acquire religious merit for fighting the enemies of Islam. God has caused these warriors to inherit their enemies' lands and possessions; they spend their blood in obedience to God, who has sold them Paradise in exchange for their lives. These warriors may or may not

<sup>9</sup> Abu Yusuf, *Kitab al-radd 'ala syar al-awza'*, 1–2, 20.  
<sup>10</sup> Heck, "Jihad Revisited," 106–108; al-Qadi, "The Religious Foundation of Late Umayyad Ideology and Practice."  
<sup>11</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh*, 2:1185; Baladhuri, *Futuh*, 186.  
<sup>12</sup> The epistle is by 'Abd al-Hamid, edited by 'Abbas in *'Abd al-Hamid ibn Yahya al-Katib*, 273, no. 26.

detears, internal rebellions, and fiscal crises. After his death, the Umayyad state split apart in civil war and then fell prey to its enemies. According to Blankinship, it was the jihad that provided the ideological basis to the entire Umayyad enterprise: "[The Umayyad] caliphate constituted the *jihad* state par excellence. Its main reason for existence, aside from maintaining God's law, was to protect Islam and to expand the territory under its control, and its reputation was strongly bound to its military success."<sup>13</sup> This argument has a certain shock value, in that it presents the jihad as an *imperial* ideology, and as the tool of rulers whom the Islamic tradition subsequently rejected, or at least found controversial. One possible flaw here is in the assumption of a nearly centralized empire, where one actor could pull all the right ideological, political, and military levers at once. Reality may have been otherwise: the Umayyad enterprise was vast, and its center in Damascus was often unable to compel the far-flung provinces (whose governors tended to behave like monarchs) to forward their fiscal surpluses; this center may thus have found itself isolated, overstretched, struggling to maintain control, and unable to benefit from the expansion taking place all the while on the frontiers of Central Asia, North Africa, and Western Europe.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, there are arguments in favor of the imperial character of the jihad during the Umayyad century, especially in its later decades. Joseph Schacht, a modern historian of early Islamic law (see chapter 3), thought that the imperial legislation of the Umayyads provided much of the material basis for what eventually became Islamic law, especially in the area of the law of war (*siyar*). In other words, the Umayyad caliphs, through their governors, generals, and judges, began and developed much of what eventually became the Islamic law of war; only afterward was this law of war ascribed to more acceptably Islamic sources such as the Companions of the Prophet and, of course, the Prophet himself. Though this point has been contested, like the rest of Schacht's work, it has much in its favor, especially in the figure of the important Syrian jurist al-Awza'i (d. 774), a specialist in *siyar* who was entirely sympathetic to the idea that the Umayyad caliphs

<sup>13</sup> Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*, 232.  
<sup>14</sup> Kennedy, "The Financing of the Military in the Early Islamic State."  
<sup>15</sup> Schacht, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, 23–24.

include the caliph himself: the point seems not to matter. The two inheritances, of caliphate and jihad, are not closely linked despite Marwan's lifetime of military service, and despite Umayyads' long success in conquest and war. Afterward, some after the fall of Marwan and his dynasty, we will see an attempt to join these two inheritances together.

### Revolution and Jihad

One of the most important things about the Umayyads in the history of Islam is the opposition they provoked. Whether or not it was fully deserved, this opposition extended over a broad spectrum of groups with very different interests and ideas, who had in common their hatred of the Umayyad oppressors and "imams of tyranny." For in the end, the Umayyads' posing as divinely appointed protectors of the community and its armies did them little good. They had the misfortune, as we have already seen, of holding power during an age when the categories of just rule in Islam were being discovered and worked out.

Opposition to the Umayyads took many forms, but most of it crystallized into two groupings which came to constitute the classical opposition parties of Islam.<sup>13</sup> One of these, the Shi'a, began as the faction or "party" of the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, the fourth caliph 'Ali (d. 661). It was, however, the death of 'Ali's son al-Husayn, at the hands of an army sent by the Umayyad caliph Yazid in 680, at Karbala' in Iraq, that galvanized the Shi'a: we have seen (chapter 5) that Shi'is have always considered al-Husayn the "martyr of martyrs." In the chaotic conditions of the Second Fitna or civil war (683-692), branches of the nascent Shi'a made ample use of the vocabulary of jihad and martyrdom. They directed their violence both against others and against themselves. So for instance, one of the first groups to take up the cause of the slain al-Husayn was that of the *rawabun* (penitents). These began as a group of men in Kufa who felt remorse at not having helped al-Husayn at Karbala' and vowed to avenge his death or else to die in the attempt. They attracted followers to their cause, but

<sup>13</sup> F. M. Denny's article, "Tawwabun" in *EF: Jafri, Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam*, 222-234.

<sup>14</sup> Isma'il or "Severer" Shi'ism did not have this problem: see later in this chapter.

<sup>15</sup> Kohlbarg, "The Development of the Imami Shi'i Doctrine of Jihad." Important parts of the narrative about the Kharijites during the First Fitna may have originated in exegetical and juridical argument over this point: see Hawting, "The Significance of the Slogan *La hukma illa li'Allah*."

<sup>16</sup> The classic treatment is once again by Wellhausen, *The Religio-political Factors in Early Islam*.

be careful not to apply rationalizing, historicizing interpretations to this framework of analysis. For what we have before us is idealized sectarian structure of Islam, where books of "orthodox" heresiography neatly list, for each single movement, both its political aspirations in history, and its doctrinal errors in theology. The result is compelling but utterly schematic. What we can affirm is that as soon as we find opposition movements expressing themselves, in Islamic terms, against the Islamic leadership of their day, they do this in the language of jihad, with martyrdom above all. They do this so much that we might even define the earliest jihad as warfare against the enemies of God, in a situation where the identity of those enemies is still far from clear.

When the Umayyad caliphate fell in 750, it was neither to Kharijites nor to Shi'ites, but rather to a conspiracy which turned out to be operating on behalf of the 'Abbasid family, descendants of an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad named al-'Abbas. In fact, the rhetoric and program of what we now call the 'Abbasid Revolution were overwhelmingly Shi'i in flavor and style. The movement's partisans demanded revenge for the crimes of the usurping Umayyads, especially their crimes against the Prophet's family. They demanded that the imamate be restored to "the one who is pleasing [to God] from among Muhammad's family" (*al-rida min al-Muhammad*). And they demanded (here more like the Kharijites) a reformed and just sharing of the revenues deriving from conquest. In all this they employed the language of martyrdom, but in Shi'i fashion, which is to say, with focus on the suffering of the family and the denial of its rights and claims. If 'Abbasid partisans made use of other parts of the doctrine of jihad, this does not figure prominently in the sources as we have them. It was afterward, when the 'Abbasids were securely in power, that jihad in a broad sense became a prime concern.

### The 'Abbasid Caliphate and Its Military Crisis

The victorious 'Abbasids established the center of their caliphate in Iraq, which already surpassed Syria as a center of economic and cultural production. In this way, they renounced the old Umayyad ambition of capturing the seat of the Byzantine emperor—an ambition that had already proved unrealizable in any case. However,

(*faqh*), and a thoroughgoing rejection of other Muslims who do not share their views on these points. Indeed they declared such Muslims to be not Muslims at all, but infidels (*kuffar*), and in the activity of *takfir* (declaring infidel), they were eager for violence and war.

The Kharijites showed special attachment to the jihad in their preaching, their doctrine,<sup>18</sup> and their poetry.<sup>19</sup> They called their lives in themselves *shurat* (sellers), meaning that they had sold their lives in return for the divine reward promised by God in the Quran (see chapter 2). They were intensely pious, as well as warlike: indeed, we might think that "gentle ones worn out by fasting"<sup>20</sup> would not be well suited to vanquishing enemies with sword and spear. However, the Kharijites paid special attention to those verses of the Quran that militate against "sitting" at home (*qan'd*) while battles and campaigns are taking place (see chapters 2 and 3).<sup>21</sup> They did not share the view of jihad as "sufficient obligation" (*far'd ala l-kifaya*; see chapter 7) but adhered to the ancient view that jihad is an obligation on each and every individual. And, unlike the Sunnis, they declared jihad to be one of the Pillars of the Faith.<sup>22</sup> The Kharijites were a major presence during the Umayyad and early 'Abbasid periods, when they often posed a serious threat to the caliphate and its local representatives. Afterward, though they remained a force to be reckoned with in many areas, they receded from view in the central regions of the Islamic world. Even then, however, they carried on the militant piety of the early days.

It is often said that these "opposition parties"—Shi'ites and Kharijites—began as political movements and only later acquired their religious character as sectarian movements.<sup>23</sup> However, we

<sup>18</sup> Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Salim ibn Dhakwan*, esp. 52-57, 140-141, 181-182.

<sup>19</sup> Donner, "Piety and Eschatology in Early Kharijite Poetry," 13-19; 'Abbas, *Shi'r al-Khawarij*.

<sup>20</sup> Donner, "Piety and Eschatology," 14, citing a verse of Farwa b. Nawfal al-Ashja'i, in 'Abbas, *Shi'r*, no. 18, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Crone and Zimmermann, *Epistle*, 51f.

<sup>22</sup> This was the view preached by Makhul the Syrian in the early eighth century; see previous chapter. On the Kharijites, see also Morabia, *Le Gihad*, 196, 215f, 250-51.

<sup>23</sup> This view owes much to Wellhausen's *Religio-political Factions* and to Hodgson, "How did the Early Shi'a Become Sectarian?"

All this helps to explain why it was that before long, the 'Abbasid caliphs showed a personal involvement in the Byzantine wars that surpassed that of their Umayyad predecessors. The caliphs al-Mahdi (775-785) and his son Harun al-Rashid (786-809) led expeditions in person. Indeed, Harun made so much of his participation in the wars that we may characterize him as the first ghazal-caliph,<sup>25</sup> or in other words, as the first caliph who devoted himself conscientiously to the performance of jihad. Poets at Harun's court gave this theme into their panegyrics, with emphasis on the caliph's participation in campaigning (*ghazw*), nearly paired with his frequent performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca. They praised Harun for his many travels, exertion, and self-sacrifice:

You have feared God according to His due,  
while exerting yourself beyond the exertion of one who fears God. . . .

You visit [the infidels] in person every year,  
like one who restores ties with those have severed them.  
But you could, if you liked, resort to some pleasant place,  
while others endured hardship instead of you.<sup>26</sup>

This emphasis on the caliph's participation in warfare, on his personal (*nafs*) and exertion (*jabd*), on the supererogatory nature of his efforts, and on his travels and ubiquitousness together constitutes the ghazal-caliph of panegyric. The object of praise in these poems is the imam, the divinely appointed ruler, charged with the defense of Islam and supervision of its wars. At the same time, he is a volunteer, a kind of everyman, distinguished through his personal effort and through his free choice of roles not strictly required of him. The poets recognized that this was something new: "None but you, of those who have succeeded to the caliphate / Has ever held the frontiers."<sup>27</sup> The combination appeared afterward, most famously in Harun's son al-Mu'tasim (r. 833-842), to whom some of the most famous panegyric verses ever written in the Arabic

<sup>25</sup> Bonner, *Arabic Literature and Holy War*, 99-106. The phrase "ghazal-caliph" was first used by C. E. Bosworth in the introduction to vol. 30 of the English translation of Tabari's *History* (Albany, 1989), xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Abu Nuwas, *Dwan*, 452, 641.

<sup>27</sup> Abu l-Ma'ali al-Kilabi, at Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 3:710.

they soon found that they could not ignore Syria altogether. The formidable threat of Byzantium required the massing of troops on the Muslim side, troops that only Syria could supply. Four years after the 'Abbasid Revolution, these Syrian frontier troops took part in a rebellion against the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mansur (r. 754-775). Al-Mansur put this rebellion down and then looked for ways to reconcile the Syrian fighters and their leadership. Settling the Arab-Byzantine frontier district with fighters and maintaining their loyalty and strength thus became a major political concern. The problem went beyond any one frontier district. It appears, as we have seen, that the later Umayyad caliphs had tried to promote an imperial ideology of jihad. We have also seen that at that same time and afterward, many of those people who were beginning to articulate the idea of jihad in rhetoric, theology, and law had different ideas on this matter. Some of them, in particular, advocated the idea of jihad as a universal obligation on each and every (i.e., able-bodied male Muslim) individual. At stake here, of course, was the religious merit and reward in store for the individual, which he might seek through fighting in the armies (or what ever else he understood the jihad to involve); probably not for the first time and certainly not for the last, these individual quests for religious merit came into conflict with the needs and interests of the Islamic state. In this way, as the doctrine and practice of jihad took shape under the early 'Abbasids, it became an area of endeavor for jurists and other people who very often were not under the direct control of the 'Abbasid caliphs themselves. There certainly were exceptions to this pattern, as we see in a handful of writings, addressed to or from caliphs, that aimed to keep warfare and its ideology, together with the armies themselves, firmly under the control of the caliphs.<sup>28</sup> Already in the early 'Abbasid period, like Abu Ishaq al-Fazari, striking a somewhat defiant pose vis-à-vis the 'Abbasid authorities along the frontier; or else 'Abdallah ibn al-Mubarak, showing general indifference to those authorities.

<sup>28</sup> For the reign of al-Mansur, see Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Risala fi l-sabaha* (episode on the Companions), edited and translated by Charles Pellat in *Ibn al-Muqaffa, 'consillieur du Calif'*. For the reign of al-Ma'mun, see Arazi and El'ad, "L'Épître a l'armée."

language were dedicated. But why did this figure of the caliph emerge at this time, and what purpose did it serve? Despite the famous prosperity of the reign of Harun, the basid caliphate had already entered into a broad crisis, much military in character. The old *levée en masse* of the early conquests had long since been supplanted by units that were called professional. The commanders of these units wanted a gross share of the revenues, and some of them demanded a leading role in the administration of the provinces. Under these circumstances, where were new soldiers to be found? How was the state to bear the growing cost of their recruitment, training and maintenance? And how could the caliph make sure that they would be loyal to him first of all, and then to their commanders? These problems became fully apparent in the generations after Harun,<sup>28</sup> but they could already be seen in his day. In these circumstances, Harun's adoption of the role of ghazi-caliph meant an anachronistic harkening back to the old *levée en masse*, when being an able-bodied Muslim meant being a fighter in God's wars and a recipient of God's spend or gift (*auq*). Harun sought a civilian constituency that would respond to the message of a jihad mediated through the commanders who were increasingly dominating the military and political scene.

Several of the later 'Abbasid caliphs also made much of their personal involvement in the wars against Byzantium, but this did not save off the crisis. While the office of caliph itself survived, the Islamic world experienced a redrawing of its political map and a transformation of its fiscal structures. In the armies, the trend toward professionalization only increased. Often this meant a reliance on slave soldiers, men who had first entered the armies as slaves imported from outside the Islamic world. Other types of military units coexisted with these, including volunteers for the jihad (*muntaziri*), civilians driven by religious fervor but having only marginal military skills. It seems that the professionals often considered these volunteers to be an unreliable nuisance. Nonetheless, the ghazi-caliph remains part of the story. What made it possible in the first place was the emergence of the jihad, in the later eighth century CE, as a recognizable and definable set

<sup>28</sup> A. Arazi and A. El'ad, "L'Épître à l'armée."

The gradual breakup of the 'Abbasid caliphate led to the emergence of many independent dynastic states within the Islamic world, most of them founded by men who had begun their careers as military professionals. Most, though not all, of these new states and rulers remained loyal, at least in theory, to the 'Abbasid caliph in Baghdad. However, by the middle of the tenth century CE, this caliph had become a powerless figurehead. The societies and states that emerged out of all this were varied and complex.<sup>29</sup> Here, we resume the previous chapter's discussion of regions and states that constituted border societies, and of the role of the jihad within them.

We have seen that the Byzantine frontier long held pride of place among the Islamic frontier districts. The Umayyad caliphs failed in their efforts to conquer Constantinople; Muslim apocalyptic writings, which can plausibly be dated to the Umayyad period, describe the conquest of the city as a transcendent religious goal.<sup>30</sup> They include the prophecy that Constantinople would fall

### Frontier Societies: Against Byzantium

<sup>29</sup> For a thorough introduction, see Garçin et al., *Etats, sociétés et cultures du monde musulman médiéval, X-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*.  
<sup>30</sup> Canard, "Les expéditions des Arabes contre Constantinople dans l'histoire et dans la légende."

to a ruler who bore the name of a prophet, a prophecy that turned out to be accurate, even though the event took place much later than originally expected (in 1453, when an Ottoman sultan named Mehmed or Muhammad conquered the city). These writings betray anxiety among the Muslims over the possibility of a Byzantine invasion along the Syrian seacoast, followed by a sequence of events culminating in the conquest of Constantinople and the capture of the world as they knew it.<sup>11</sup>

With the arrival in power of the 'Abbasids in 750, no more attempts were made to capture Constantinople, which meant that no strategic efforts were undertaken to eliminate the Byzantine adversary. For many years, victories and defeats were fairly equally distributed between the two sides. Well-publicized expeditions such as that of the caliph al-Mu'tasim against Amorion in northern Anatolia in 838, did not alter this balance. Over time, however, Byzantine power consolidated, while the caliphate in Iraq became fragmented and weak. In the tenth century, the Muslims found themselves on the defensive, forced to improvise in the face of looming disaster. Ambitious local commanders came forward, especially the Hamdaniid amir Sayf al-Dawla, who brilliantly reinterpreted the role of ghazi-caliph as that of ghazi-amir, engaging the best Arabic poets of the time to sing his praises.<sup>12</sup> However, Sayf al-Dawla proved unable to match his success in public relations with success on the battlefield. Indeed, no one could stop the Byzantine Empire as it conquered Malatya (Melitene) in 936, Massissa (Mopsuestia) and Tarsus in 965, and Antakya (Antioch) in 969. Then the Byzantine juggernaut ground to a halt, as the empire sought to consolidate its gains and to contain its new antagonist, the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt. In 1071, the Saljuq Turks defeated the Byzantines at Manzikert, and drove them out of most

of the region in the following generation, another story to be taken up shortly. The history of the Arab-Byzantine frontier is closely tied to the continuation and office of the caliphate. For long periods of time the caliphs did not actually control the frontier zone directly. However, caliphs who had distinguished themselves in the jihad were remembered there long afterward. We see this in an episode that took place in the frontier city of Tarsus, in southern Anatolia, on the eve of its being handed over to the Byzantines under Nicephorus Phocas in 965. During the last Friday prayer, the time allotted for the *khutba*, the sermon in which it was customary to include a prayer for the ruling caliph. The dignitary to whom this task had been assigned refused to act as the last preacher on the *minbar* (pulpit) of Tarsus. Thereupon a man named Abu Dharr, a native of the city, stood up and began to preach, reciting the prayer in the name of the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tadid (r. 892-902), one of the great ghazi-caliphs, who by this time had been dead for more than six decades: as if Mu'tadid were still alive, or as if there had been no caliph worthy of the name since his death.<sup>13</sup>

The Byzantine onslaught came at a time when the 'Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad was hopelessly weakened and when the real holders of power in Baghdad showed little interest in these wars. However, the Byzantine-Arab frontier zone had always had a flow of volunteers for military service, arriving above all from the Persian-speaking East. In this crisis of the mid-tenth century, eloquent preachers urged people to make their way through mountains and deserts to volunteer for the fight.<sup>14</sup> At a time when there was no imam able to fulfill the religious obligation of leading the community in its wars against external enemies, and moreover, at a time when the real armies were professional and reduced in size, and recruited largely from alien nations such as the Turks and Daylamis, volunteering for military service became more important than ever, even if it failed utterly in its formal objective of rolling back the Byzantine armies. Tarsus and al-Massisa, the two most important towns of the frontier district, were remembered later on, after their fall, as places where volunteers had gone to

<sup>11</sup> Canard, "Quelques observations sur l'introduction géographique de la Bugh-yat ar-r'ab," esp. 52; Bosworth, "Abu 'Amr 'Uthman al-Tarsusi's *Siyar al-thughur*, 183-95; Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence*, 155, 176.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Nubata, *Dirwan*, esp. 202-207; M. Canard, *Sayf al-Dawla*, 167-173.

<sup>13</sup> Early Islamic apocalyptic literature has received considerable attention in the last few years. In relation to these themes of warfare and the fear of a Byzantine invasion of Syria, see Bashfar, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars"; David B. Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihad"; idem, "The Apocalyptic Year 200/815-16"; idem, "An Early Muslim Daniel Apocypse"; Michael Cook, "The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology"; idem, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions"; and idem, "An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle." Especially important has been the publication in 1991 of the Arabic text of the eschatological *Kitab al-Fitan* by the third/ninth-century writer Nu'aym ibn Hammam.

<sup>14</sup> Canard, *Histoire de la dynastie des Hamdanides*.

live in great numbers, supported by pious endowments in the countries of origin.<sup>35</sup>

However, this call to jihad did not resonate much at the time. After all, the Isma'ilis constituted only an elite minority, and though the Sunni majority managed to tolerate the rule of the Fatimids—who in their eyes were Isma'ili heretics—it was still about to volunteer en masse for combat under the leadership of the Isma'ili Fatimid Imam. It is thus not surprising that the Fatimid caliphs presented themselves as utterly civilian figures, rather than as ghazi-caliphs. The sole exception was the charismatic al-Mansur bi-Nasr Allah (r. 946–953), who devoted his brief reign to combat against Abu Yazid, the “man on the donkey,” and other Kharjite foes.<sup>37</sup>

The Fatimids first rose to power in central and western North Africa (in 909),<sup>38</sup> but once they conquered Egypt (in 969) their fortunes and interests became tied to Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean. Nonetheless, in western North Africa and the western Mediterranean world, the formation of new Islamic states at the hands of the Berbers had only begun. In the second half of the eleventh century, among the Sanhaja of the Western Sahara, a movement arose that eventually became known as al-Murabitun, the Almoravids. This was a movement of severe Sunni, specifically Maliki reform, even though some aspects of the Almoravids' Islam struck some of their contemporaries as odd. Their first ambitious leader was 'Abdallah Ibn Yasin, who had been educated as a jurist, and who brought his followers together in settlements and led them in battle. Ibn Yasin died in combat in 1058 against the Barghawata of the Far West, a people who still practiced a syncretic religion of their own—which meant that his death could properly be called a martyrdom. Afterward, the leadership passed to Yusuf ibn Tashfin, who led the Almoravids to expansion throughout what later became known as Morocco, and beyond. In 1085 he sent troops to Islamic Spain, where the Christian King Alfonso VI of Leon and Castile had just captured the ancient capital of Toledo and seemed unstoppable. Here, although the reformed Andalusians were reluctant to accept these rustics as their overlords, they had little choice: as one of Yusuf's knights is reported to have said, better to herd camels for Islamic Spain. In all this rapid and remarkable expansion, the

<sup>35</sup> Halm, *The Empire of the Mahdi*, 310–337.

<sup>37</sup> See above, p. 110.

### Frontier Societies: Spain and North Africa

When the 'Abbasid caliphate in Iraq reached its nadir in the mid-tenth century, Spain and North Africa both had powerful caliphates of their own. We have already seen that in al-Andalus, the powerful regent Ibn Abi 'Amir (Almanzor; d. 1002), took great pains to appear as a kind of ghazi-caliph, even as he usurped the position of his charge, the weak and hapless caliph Hisham II. This performance, which included a spectacular raid against Compostela and its shrine of Santiago (St. James) in the Christian North in 997, marked the end of the Umayyad caliphate in Spain, which subsequently fragmented into states known as *ta'ifa* (factional kingdoms).

Meanwhile the dynasty of the Fatimid caliphs ruled in North Africa from 909, adding Egypt to their dominions in 969. They were Shi'is of the Severan or Isma'ili persuasion, and owed their first rise to power to large tribal armies, Kutama Berbers from the Aurès (in present-day Algeria), inspired by the Isma'ili religious message and prepared to die for it. Before long, however, the Fatimids found it convenient to counterbalance their Kutama fighters with other, more predictable, and dependable elements. They created military units of various kinds, including slave soldier units such as were now to be found nearly everywhere in the Islamic world. Within the military hierarchy, the Kutama found themselves increasingly marginalized.

Nonetheless, the Fatimids—now a settled dynastic power, organized very much along the lines of their predecessors, especially the 'Abbasid caliphs—made considerable use of the jihad (primarily against Byzantium) in their propaganda as they tried to expand beyond their base of operations in Egypt into Palestine, Syria, and beyond. Their Isma'ili Shi'i doctrine favored the jihad, declaring it one of the Seven Foundations of the Faith. (Sunni recognize only five Pillars of the Faith, and do not include jihad among

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-ard*, 184.

<sup>38</sup> See above, p. 112.



Western European Crusaders, but rather the Turks, brilliant warriors and nonmonothelists about whom the Prophet, in a famous hadith, had once supposedly said, "Leave the Turks alone so long as they leave you alone" (*urku l-arak ma tarukukum*). As we have seen, the Islamic governments of the Tahirids and Samanids created strings of defensive fortresses against the Turks. We are told of burgeoning ribats along the eastern frontier, garrisoned by a constant influx of volunteers. However, these establishments gradually lost their military purpose as the Turks converted peacefully to Islam. In the early eleventh century, many Turks entered the Islamic world, largely unopposed, and caused some havoc before a new order arose from among the Turks themselves, in the form of the Saljuq sultanate(s), which ruled over much of Iran, Iraq, and Anatolia. Meanwhile, the buildings and establishments along the eastern frontier became devoted to the arts of peace. It was here, in a flowering of Sufism, that the internal, spiritual aspect of jihad was developed and deployed. The study of ribat is thus about more than the derivation or evolution of a word: it is about transformations in social practice.

### The Crusades

By now we have seen jihad and ribat involved in the formation of several new Islamic states, always associated with some kind of renewal of religion. One of the most dramatic of all these episodes comes in the confrontation with the Crusades. By the late eleventh century, western Europeans were known in the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean as seamen and merchants, as mercenaries in the Byzantine imperial service, and as the Norman conquerors of formerly Muslim Sicily. However, the First Crusade caught the Muslims of Anatolia and the Levant by surprise, just as it surprised those Europeans and Byzantines whose territory the Crusaders had already crossed during their long, violent overland trek. As the European Crusaders, or as the Muslims called them, "Franks" (*ifranj*) proceeded from Anatolia southward into Syria and Palestine, they sowed terror wherever they went. Their siege of Jerusalem culminated, famously, in an orgy of killing in 1099.

Almoravids received impetus from the jihad, both as a motivating force among the tribesmen who fought in their armies, and as a legitimizing element among the civilian populations that found themselves under Almoravid rule, in Spain and elsewhere.<sup>39</sup>

### Ribat

One point of controversy regarding the Almoravids has regarded their name, al-Murabitun (those who perform ribat). It used to be thought that ribat signified primarily a type of building associated with a particular social practice, that is, a Muslim military monastery. In this way, it was thought that Ibn Yasin originally gathered his followers into monastic establishments for an intensive spiritual preparation. In this view, their military activity would have been, to some degree, secondary. Now, however, we know that the meaning of ribat is complex and varies according to region and epoch.<sup>40</sup> The word has a complex history, beginning with the Quran, where it means "binding" or "linking together." In general usage, ribat comes to denote an activity that is often nearly the same as the activity of jihad itself. And in some cases this ribat does in fact become associated with a certain type of building. Where this happens, the activity of ribat often becomes remote from the conduct of war, and more and more associated with ascetic and mystical practices. To return to the Almoravids, however, their original ribat probably did not denote a building or institution, but most likely referred simply to the "bond," the "link" that held them all together: the *Murabitun* were a group of men bound together by a common religious link, which clearly involved both this question of ribat also comes up with regard to the eastern frontier in Central Asia. There the adversary was nothing like the hard-edged, inflexible Byzantium,<sup>41</sup> nor the strangely violent

<sup>39</sup> Messier, "The Almoravids and Holy War"; H. T. Norris and R. Chalmers, "al-Murabitun," in *EF*.  
<sup>40</sup> See the *EF* article "Ribat," by Jacqueline Chabbi. See also the recent work by Christophe Picard and Antoine Borrut described in the "Readings" for this chapter, below, p. 156.  
<sup>41</sup> Summed up in the image of a gold coin by Louis Massignon, "Le mirage byzantin dans le miroir bagdadien d'Ily a mille ans," esp. 438-440.

...frozen, barbaric lands that made up western Europe. Muslim attitudes toward non-Muslims were formed at home, in the Muslim lands, and included both tolerance and a sense of superiority. Thus the Muslims were unprepared, especially from the thirteenth century onward, when the Europeans grew prosperous and powerful and eventually outthanked the principal Muslim power of the time, the Ottoman Empire. Now for years these same Ottomans had adapted European technology and often made better use of it than the Europeans themselves. But in the modern age, the Ottomans failed to keep up. Their vocabulary for understanding the West did not advance far beyond what it had been in the early Middle Ages. Efforts at reform came too late. In this view, the Crusades represent both a first moment of European expansion into the Islamic heartland and, at the same time, a first failure on the part of Islam to recognize its adversary for who he truly was.

Yet many Muslims in the age of the Crusades did come to understand a great deal about Byzantines and Latins and the differences between them.<sup>45</sup> Already at the beginning, the Syrian jurist al-Sulami (d. 1106) tied the catastrophic events of the First Crusade to recent Frankish and Norman successes in Sicily and Spain. Al-Sulami did this in a *Book of Jihad*, one of the most remarkable works ever composed on this subject. God has visited this punishment on the Muslims, al-Sulami wrote, because of their neglect of religious duties, especially the jihad. The problem was political: while the conduct of jihad was the duty of the caliph in Baghdad, the political reality in Syria at the time amounted to a quarreling group of princelings—that is, in those parts of Syria not already occupied by the Crusaders. The Fatimid rulers in Cairo, and the Abbasid caliph and Saljuq sultan in Baghdad, were all unable or unwilling to do their duty. The key, said al-Sulami, was in the "greater jihad" (*al-jihad al-akbar*): through repentance and through fighting their own baser impulses, the Muslims might reconstitute their own strength and, with it, their political leadership.<sup>46</sup> Al-Sulami pointed to the need for two developments, which

<sup>45</sup> Dajani-Shakeel, "A Reassessment of Some Medieval and Modern Perceptions of the Counter-Crusade."  
<sup>46</sup> Sivan, "Genèse de la contre-croisade"; idem, *L'Islam et la croisade*; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, esp. 104–112.

The reasons for this extreme violence are beyond us here. However, it is not difficult to see why the populations of Syria and Palestine—Christian and Jewish, as well as Muslim—were unprepared for it. By this time, the Arab-Byzantine wars had receded from memory. After Byzantium's onslaught of the mid-tenth century, northern Syria had become a buffer between the empire and the Fatimid caliphate of Cairo. The Fatimids maintained frequent diplomatic relations with Constantinople and mostly avoided military entanglement.<sup>47</sup> But even an accurate memory of the Arab-Byzantine wars would not have prepared the Syrians and Palestinians for what was coming. Those wars had lasted well over three centuries and involved enormous resources, human, and monetary. They had brought the major regional powers of the time into direct conflict—unlike the Crusades, which had a peripheral character, at least at their beginning. And of course the Arab-Byzantine wars had not been polite, bloodless affairs: many thousands perished in them, and many thousands more were deported or enslaved. Nonetheless, the Arab-Byzantine wars had been conducted within certain limits, at least in retrospect. The Crusaders, with their crazed longing for Jerusalem and their enthusiasm for violence and bloodshed, must have seemed an entirely different type.

<sup>47</sup> Stern, "An Embassy of the Byzantine Emperor to the Fatimid Caliph al-Mu'izz"; Marus Canard, "Le cérémonial fatimite et le cérémonial byzantin"; Hamdan, "Byzantine-Fatimid Relations before the Battle of Manzikert."  
<sup>48</sup> Cabrita, "The Arabic Historiography of the Crusades," 98; and Lewis, "The Use by Muslim Historians of Non-Muslim Sources," 181, in Lewis and Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East*.  
<sup>49</sup> Lewis, *What Went Wrong?*

we have already identified in other contexts. These are, first, the mobilization of what we have called (in chapter 7) fighting or embattled scholars and, second, the rise to power of ghazi-caliphs, or rather, in these circumstances, ghazi-sultans. Remarkably, al-Sulami's treatise on jihad traces the broad outline of what actually happened subsequently, in the long process we often call the Counter-Crusade.

Al-Sulami's first requirement, the mobilization of fighting scholars, emerged in the political chaos just after the First Crusade. They included al-Sulami himself, a fiery preacher, while quite a few other scholars actually took up arms. From a strictly military point of view, their contribution may have been negligible, but from a broader political point of view, it mattered considerably. In particular, legal and religious scholars had a visible role in the first major Muslim victory over the Crusaders, at Balat in 1119. The death in combat of the likes of al-Findalawi and al-Halhalli provided inspiration. They proved to all that now, in the face of enemy invasion, jihad had become *farḍ 'ayn*, a duty incumbent on each and every individual, in defense of the heartlands of Islam. Meanwhile, new works on the jihad, such as al-Sulami's, were recited on public occasions, together with older ones such as the *Book of Jihad* by 'Abdallah ibn al-Mubarak.<sup>47</sup> New books also appeared on the cities of Palestine and Syria, Jerusalem above all, which now securely occupied its place as the third holy site of Islam, after Mecca and Medina. This emphasis on Jerusalem came partly in response to the Crusaders' searing passion for that city; and here the Muslim writers could recall their own apocalyptic literature, which centuries before had already shown an obsession with an enemy invasion of Syria from outside.<sup>48</sup>

It took longer for a ghazi-sultan to step forward, but eventually this figure dominated the political scene. The stages are familiar. Zangi, the Atabeg of Mosul in Upper Mesopotamia (northern Iraq), reconquered the Crusader stronghold of Edessa in 1144. He died soon afterward, just as the Europeans were responding with the Second Crusade. Zangi's son Nur al-Din emerged as the hero of this encounter and seized control of Damascus, becoming ruler of all Muslim Syria by 1154. Nur al-Din projected an austere image as an ascetic and *mujahid* (participant in the jihad), an image

all visible in inscriptions on monuments throughout the cities of Syria.<sup>49</sup> He cultivated the urban religious classes through patronage, establishing pious foundations for good works. Meanwhile, as strategic stalemate set in between the Crusaders and Nur al-Din, attention shifted to Egypt, where the Fatimid caliphate was in its death throes. A three-way struggle broke out among Egyptians, Syrians, and Crusaders. The victors were the men whom Nur al-Din sent from Syria, and among these it was Salah al-Din, known to the Europeans as Saladin, who won fame by bringing an official end to the rule of the Fatimids in Cairo in 1171. Three years later, when Nur al-Din died, a struggle began over domination of Muslim Syria. Egypt and its vast resources were now also in play. The eventual winner was, of course, Saladin. Only after many years of hard effort was Saladin able to devote himself fully to fighting the Frankish enemy, but when he did this the results came quickly, in the destruction of the Crusader army in July 1187 at Hittin, soon followed by the reconquest of Jerusalem and the greater part of Palestine. The Third Crusade, which arrived from Europe in response, reestablished a foothold for the Crusaders on the coast. However, never again would they control Jerusalem, except for a brief episode following negotiations in 1229 between the Ayyubid Sultan al-Kamil and the Emperor Frederick II. In 1291, the Crusaders finally evacuated Acre, their last major stronghold on the Levantine coast.

Saladin cut a dashing figure, commanding troops in battle and making a highly visible personal effort. Like Nur al-Din before him, he employed a network of religious scholars, poets, and historians who portrayed him as an austere ruler motivated by religion and by the desire to chase away not only the infidel, the Frankish intruder, but the internal enemy, the misguided Muslim, as well. Saladin's positive image went beyond the Islamic world, as is well known. His European adversaries came to consider him the very model of chivalry, and Dante portrayed him "standing off by himself" among the virtuous heathen in Limbo, a placement granted to only two other Muslim figures, the philosophers Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes).<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Tabbaa, "Monuments with a Message"; idem, *Constructions of Power and Piety in Medieval Aleppo*.

<sup>50</sup> *Inferno* 4:129: *E solo in parte vidi il Saladino*.

<sup>47</sup> Above, p. 100.

<sup>48</sup> Above, pp. 131-132.

Although the Crusades are sometimes presented as local affairs, little concern to Muslims in other regions—this is yet another point of controversy—they marked the emergence of Egypt and Syria as a unified center of power and cultural production in the Islamic world. Above all, the Counter-Crusade came together with what is often called the "Sunni revival," combining the ideology of the jihad with a rigorous attitude toward dissident Muslims, which meant mainly Shi'ites; a decrease in tolerance for "unorthodox" expressions of belief and thought, as with the mystic philosopher al-Suhrawardi, whom Saladin executed in 1191; and a narrow application of the principles of dhimma toward the local Christian and Jewish populations.

Muslim Syria and Egypt, which bore the brunt of the fight against the Crusaders, had to face a far more dangerous enemy in the Mongols, who after sacking Baghdad in 1258 and killing the last Abbasid caliph, turned their attention to the west. The Syrian Egyptian Mamluk armies defeated the Mongols at Ayn Jalut, in Palestine, in 1260, and then fought off repeated incursions over the next decades. In these difficult conditions we see the beginnings of a new interpretation of the jihad, of enormous consequence in later centuries. This comes especially in Ibn Taymiyya

(d. 1328), a Syrian scholar of the Hanbali madhhab.

Ibn Taymiyya took part personally in several military campaigns, and was indeed an "embattled scholar" in every sense. He preached the jihad in a variety of writings, including a treatise of public law in which he described jihad as the summation of all virtues and religious duties.<sup>54</sup> For Ibn Taymiyya, however, jihad was largely about the suppression of heretics (which meant Shi'ites of various persuasions); curtailing unorthodox customs, such as the visiting of tombs (which was often done by women); and keeping dhimmi firmly in their place. All this was not simply fanaticism or madness, as some observers, including some of Ibn Taymiyya's own contemporaries, have maintained.<sup>55</sup> In the context of the time—the massive destruction wrought by the Mongols, the loss of huge amounts of territory to them, and the violent death of the last caliph in Baghdad—Ibn Taymiyya was describing a new Islamic polity constructed not so much on Is-

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Siyasa al-shar'iyya*, 130f.; Heck, "Jihad Revisited," 116f. <sup>55</sup> Little, "Did Ibn Taymiyya Have a Screw Loose?"

Saladin's positive image, and the concerted propaganda effort associated with it, have aroused some modern controversy. As drew Ehrenkreutz has portrayed Saladin as a manipulative, self-seeking politician who spent more time fighting Muslim than Christian adversaries.<sup>51</sup> (Regarding Spain in the previous century, much the same might be said for Rodrigo Diaz, the *Cid* or *Campeador*, a Christian nobleman who spent much of his career in the military service of Muslim patrons).<sup>52</sup> Ehrenkreutz points to Saladin's mismanagement of the economy, especially in Egypt, which had to bear the weight of these endless wars. However, other treatments of Saladin—who has received far more scholarly attention than most figures in medieval Islam—have evaluated him as both politician and commander, and the general consensus has been positive. Despite the disappointment that Saladin himself expressed at the end of his life, his project was an overall success, the culmination of three generations' effort in the Counter-Crusade.

At the heart of this effort was the alliance between the ghazis and the fighting scholars. The armies themselves did not change much in their composition.<sup>53</sup> Saladin continued to rely on Turkish cavalry of slave origin and on other types of units, while civilian volunteers for the jihad remained marginal, in strictly military terms. The importance of the alliance lay in the cities, where for centuries there had been a loose distribution of power among military elites who were newcomers and outsiders in these urban societies, and civilian elites for whom participation in religious learning had special significance. Zangi, Nur al-Din, and Saladin managed to unite all these in a common purpose. And while they did not substantially alter the urban structures, they did create the basis for a new stability in the military elite, so much so that the combined reign of the Ayyubid dynasty, which began with Saladin in Egypt and Syria, and its continuator and inheritor, the Mamluk sultanate, lasted until 1517. Such political longevity had not been seen since the Abbasid caliphate, and presaged even greater political formations such as the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.

<sup>51</sup> Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin*.  
<sup>52</sup> Fletcher, *The Quest for El Cid*.  
<sup>53</sup> Gibb, "The Armies of Saladin."

1453. By many measures, including that of longevity (more than a hundred years) it was a remarkable success. Quite understandably, the question of how it came into existence has received much mention. And here again we find the jihad, or something like it, as the center of controversy.

In Europe and America, much of the argument was spurred by a short monograph, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* by the Austrian historian Paul Wittek, that appeared in 1938. Wittek argued against the old Ottoman imperial historiography, which had situated the founding figure Osman (d. ca. 1324) within a tribal genealogy and had linked Osman and his followers directly and organically to the earlier history of the Turks in Central Asia and Anatolia. Instead, Wittek argued that the early Ottomans were utterly devoted to frontier warfare—here known as *ghaza*—for the sake of plunder, territorial expansion, glory, and religion all at once. At that time (around 1300), the other small Anatolian Turkish principalities (*beyliks*) were no different in this way. However, Osman had the advantage of operating in northwest Anatolia, directly facing what remained of the Byzantine empire, a position that enabled him to attract more followers than his rivals. These followers were a motley crew searching for plunder and lands, and in some cases merely seeking a way to make a living; they included many who had crossed over from the Byzantine side. Wittek made much of an inscription in the early Ottoman capital of Bursa, dated to 1339 ce and describing Osman's son, the second Ottoman ruler Orkhan, as "ghazi son of the ghazi" and "marchlord of the horizons" (*marzaban al-asfag*). It was thus, Wittek claimed, an ideology of warfare, and specifically of holy warfare against Christians, that provided the raison d'être of the Ottoman state from its beginning and formed the basis of its identity and cohesion. Afterward, although the Ottomans fought on many other frontiers, they always looked first to their northwest, against the Byzantines and other nations of eastern and central Europe. Thus in 1914, when the empire went to war in alliance with Austria, its traditional enemy, it signed its own political death warrant.<sup>57</sup>

This "ghaza thesis," forever associated with Wittek, implies that the Ottomans were motivated mainly by a single ideological force, and that their empire could be reduced to a single historical

<sup>57</sup> Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*.

lamic governance, but more on "Islamic identity, which [Ibn Taymiyya located] in ritual and communal practice"; a polity defined more ritually than politically.<sup>56</sup>

One point that has made Ibn Taymiyya especially attractive to many modern Muslim radical reformers is his negative attitude toward the rulers of the Ilkhanid Mongol empire of his own day when these converted to Islam. Like many Sunni jurists, Ibn Taymiyya maintained that it is necessary to support and to tolerate Muslim rulers, even if they commit unjust acts on occasion, since their rule is preferable to anarchy or the rule of unbelievers. However, if a Muslim ruler is proved guilty of a serious crime, or if he hinders the practice of religion, then the situation changes completely: in this case, according to Ibn Taymiyya, the Muslims are obligated to fight him and his tyrannical regime. Consequently, when the Mongol elite of Iran and Iraq converted to Islam, toward the end of the thirteenth century, in Ibn Taymiyya's eyes they were still the same heathens as before, who had just recently come close to destroying all of Islam, still following their reprehensible customs and their non-Islamic, dynastic law (*yasa*). Their rule was Muslim in appearance only; worse, according to Ibn Taymiyya and his disciples, this rule amounted to a new *jahiliyya*, which is to say, the primitive condition of uncouth ignorance that had prevailed in Arabia before Islam. Ibn Taymiyya never condemned the Mamluk amirs and sultans of Egypt and Syria—that is, in his home country—in these terms. He directed his calls to the jihad against outside enemies, Mongols, Crusaders, or others. All the same, Ibn Taymiyya was quite controversial in his day, and spent a good deal of time in prison. In the twentieth century, he became a major authority for those who wished to turn the doctrine of jihad against the state, in the midst of the Islamic world itself, and for whom "Crusader," often paired with "Zionist," has become a current, everyday term of political abuse.

### Ottoman Origins

The Ottoman sultanate and empire became the dominant Muslim power in the world, especially after it conquered Constantinople

<sup>56</sup> Heck, 117, 120.

of these poems, their value for historical reconstruction remains difficult to pin down. And this turns out to be only the beginning of the difficulties presented by the sources. In fact, the study of Ottoman origins relies mainly on chronicles that were written down until the fifteenth century, long after the events themselves, and colored heavily by the ideological requirements of the Ottoman court and elite of their own time. All the evidence thus has been open to debate, including the famous inscription at Bursa in honor of Orkhan, the "marchlord of the horizons."<sup>64</sup> Wittek and some others have thought that this frontier life took place beyond the controls and limits of the settled Islamic states. Turks had been arriving in Anatolia in large numbers at least since the battle of Manzikert in 1071, and they brought with them the practices and beliefs of the old Central Asian frontier. This meant an Islam imbued with mysticism, or Sufism, sometimes involving nomadic practices and retaining some of the shamanistic customs of the Turks before their conversion to Islam. Among such groups as these, the figure of the holy man, the Sufi leader, held enormous authority. For these people along the wide Turco-Byzantine frontier, did the principle of ghaza have to do with this sort of mystical belief and practice, and with veneration for this figure of authority, combined together (perhaps) with actual, physical fighting? Furthermore, if ghaza was indeed a central value for the Turks of Anatolia, to what extent did it constitute a tribal or an urban value? After all, Anatolia around 1300 was not all lawless Wild West: it had cities with elites steeped in the venerable traditions of Islamic law.<sup>65</sup> These cities also harbored groups bound together in ascetic brotherhood (*akhis, furtawwa*), and perhaps others bound together through petty crime and hoodliganism. The practice and ideal of ghaza may have been attractive for precisely such groups as these. Here we find another challenge to Wittek, the idea that the ideals and practices of ghaza may be sought in the crowded cities as much as in the free, open spaces of the frontier. In all this we see a tension between religious and heroic individualism, on the one hand, and the desire to control this individualism in the name of some greater good, on the other. (The tension is as old as the jihad itself, as we have seen in Albrecht Noth's

force or essence. The argument is not far distant from others that have been made regarding Islam itself. At any rate, regarding Ottoman origins, a rich debate has gone on in the last two and a half decades.<sup>68</sup> Halil Inalcik modified the ghaza thesis but maintained it within a broader interpretation of Ottoman history as a whole. Rudi Paul Lindner has argued that Wittek misunderstood the way in which tribes are formed, which is actually a process of political inclusion. Lindner rejected Wittek's view of the early Ottomans as motivated by religious warfare: after all, they often fought side by side with Christian warriors and engaged in activity that might, from a religious point of view, best be described as unorthodox.<sup>69</sup> Colin Imber has pointed out that contemporary Byzantine sources provide no corroboration for the ghaza thesis.<sup>61</sup> Cemal Kafadar has argued that ghaza was an inclusive ideology, different from the formal norms of jihad as expressed by Muslim jurists.<sup>62</sup> Other contributions have appeared and are still appearing. Here we may mention a few themes in the light of what we have already seen in other times and places.

By the time Osman and his followers emerged, there was already a long history of frontier life in Islam, as we have seen. How do we know about this early Ottoman frontier environment in the first place? One type of source that receives attention nowadays is the popular literature of epic poems and tales about Sayyid Bartal, Abu Muslim, and other Muslim heroes, poems that have much in common with medieval Christian epics about the Cid, Digenes Akritas, and so on. These epics portray a dashing life of raiding and small-scale conquest, where "religious loyalties are more important than religious beliefs, and ethical, honorable, courageous behavior is more important still."<sup>63</sup> However, despite the popular-

<sup>68</sup> Of great importance also has been M. Fuad Köprülü's *Les origines de l'Empire ottoman* (Paris, 1935), now translated by Gary Leiser as *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*. I do not discuss Köprülü here, because he did not concentrate on the norms and practices of warfare.

<sup>69</sup> Inalcik, "The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State."

<sup>66</sup> Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*. Similar arguments regarding religious norms may be found in Jennings, "Some Thoughts on the Gazi-Thesis."

<sup>61</sup> Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*.

<sup>62</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*.

<sup>63</sup> Darling, "Contested Territory," esp. 139-140; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 62-77.

<sup>64</sup> Claude Cahen, *La Turquie pré-ottomane*, esp. 148-161, 208-226, 315-320, 329-338.

*Corsairs in the Mediterranean*

Now we turn away from the steppes and the mountains to consider the sea and its place in the jihad. It was Mu'awiya, the founding figure of the Umayyad dynasty, who in the mid-seventh century first created a powerful Arab navy in the Mediterranean, a remarkable achievement for a people who then still had an aversion to ships and the sea. (This may be related to the promise, made in the hadith, that the fighter who dies fighting at sea will receive twice the reward of one who dies fighting on land.) Soon, large Muslim fleets took part in the failed sieges of Constantinople, as well as in more successful campaigns against such countries as Spain and Sicily. However, those who chose to combine a seafaring life with warfare against the enemies of Islam usually devoted themselves to depredation, rather than conquest. For centuries, Muslim raiding vessels set out to strike, unpredictably, against the northern shore of the Mediterranean. They seized all manner of booty, including treasure from churches and above all, human beings destined for the burgeoning slave markets of the Islamic world. However, the enemy could, and often did return the compliment, striking the coasts of the Islamic world, especially the western part, with similar energy and determination. Those Islamic coastlines therefore bristled with ribats, defensive strongholds where volunteers congregated. The tenth-century geographer Ibn Hawqal found these places (at least in Sicily) festering with immoral activity.<sup>68</sup> We have no way of knowing if he was right; our point here is simply that these were not sites of naval warfare. The volunteers stood watch on the land, waiting for the enemy to come to them. This does not mean that Islamic lawyers ignored the question of how to conduct warfare at sea.<sup>69</sup> But as the doctrine of jihad developed, it remained resolutely territorial. Sea raiding brought less prestige, on the whole, than did ribat, residing and fighting along the terrestrial frontiers.

In the western Mediterranean, this situation changed after 1492 when the Spanish, having put an end to the political presence of Islam in the peninsula, went on to conquer much of the North

<sup>68</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Surat al-ard*, 121.  
<sup>69</sup> V. Christides, "Kaid and Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean."

distinction between "holy struggle" and "holy war."<sup>65</sup> This greater good may, in turn, correspond to the interests of an "orthodox" settled elite immersed in old Islamic learning and tradition, or else it may correspond to the interests of an Islamic state and its representatives and rulers.<sup>66</sup> And so, when, in the modern debate over Ottoman origins, the ghaza of the early Ottomans and their allies is contrasted with the jihad of the traditional, conservative jurists, we should not take this to mean that jihad must always refer to this more conservative (and defensive) element, because, in larger historical perspective, jihad often does not. (This does not rule out the possibility, however, that people along the early Ottoman frontier did think of jihad that way.) Even more important, we should avoid the essentializing aspect of the "ghaza thesis," which makes the Ottoman empire, and even Islam itself, the historical consequence or expression of a single ideology.

All the same, there is no denying that the Ottoman empire, in its maturity, devoted enormous care and considerable resources to the prosecution of its wars against Christian European adversaries. Some of the Ottoman sultans made much of their personal role as ghazi, most famously Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566), who began his reign with campaigns of conquest and then, at the end of his life, chose to die as a martyr, once again on campaign against the European infidels. The Ottomans, more than most Islamic rulers, maintained considerable control over their own jurists and learned classes; their ritualistic annual military campaigns may have had something to do with this. And when, in the fall of 1914, the empire entered the First World War on the side of Germany and Austria, it made a public declaration of jihad against the French, British, and Russian empires, which then ruled over many millions of Muslims in Africa and Asia. Much of the propaganda for this jihad was performed by German diplomats and orientalis, so that it became known as "the jihad made in Germany." In the end, this last Ottoman jihad had little effect on the war and its tragic outcome, but it remains a fascinating topic for study.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See above, p. 14.

<sup>66</sup> Darling, "Contested Territory," 141-145.

<sup>67</sup> See Hagen, "The Prophet Muhammad as an Exemplar in War"; idem, *Die Türkei im Ersten Weltkrieg*.

an urban phenomenon.<sup>12</sup> In the case of Algiers, Braudel saw *la course* as the key to the city's unity and success in commerce as well as in war, the main stimulus to its economy, and even as the element that united the city with its hinterland.<sup>13</sup> Now it certainly makes sense to view *la course* as part of a greater system of exchange: it depended on markets in Livorno as well as in Algiers, and there were plenty of Christian corsairs preying on Muslim coasts and ships, at the same time as the attacks of the Muslim corsairs against the Christians. But there are also reasons for taking a more negative view of the corsairs' economic, and perhaps even ideological importance.<sup>14</sup> In any case, corsair activity in Algiers and its neighbors peaked around the turn of the seventeenth century and then declined steeply. Just before it ended in the early nineteenth century, the young American republic had an episode of conflict with the "Barbary states," which were holding American merchant sailors captive. Here the Americans had the perplexing—and ironic—experience of seeing their (white) countrymen held in slavery, and of being unable for many years to do anything about it.<sup>15</sup>

### The Western Sudan

In this chapter we have only been able to consider a limited number of examples of the jihad in the history of Islam before the modern age. We have left out some of the most famous episodes, such as the two sieges of Vienna by the Ottomans in 1529 and 1683. As a final example, however, we may briefly cite an interesting case that carries over into the age of modernity and colonialism, and that brings together several of this chapter's themes. In question here is a series of movements that took place in the Western Sudan (in today's terms, northern Nigeria and surrounding areas) at the beginning of the nineteenth century, led at first by 'Utthman ibn Fudi (Usman dan Fodio, 1754–1817) and his son Muhammad Bello (1781–1837). These were men of reli-

African littoral. In the absence of any organized military defense against the Spanish, Muslim sea raiders took the lead. Two of these, the brothers Urju and Khayr al-Din Barbarossa, requested the intervention of the Ottoman empire in 1519. The sultan sent troops and named Barbarossa as high commander (*Beylerbey*) in the emerging new state of Algiers. Afterward, at century's end, when peace was signed between the Habsburgs and Ottomans, the Porte sought to bring Algiers under its control by sending governors for three-year terms. These, however, could not rule the country, which remained largely under the control of two local groups: the janissaries, imperial troops sent on a regular basis from Constantinople, and known collectively as the *ojak*; and the captains of the raiding vessels, who had a corporate body of their own known as the *ta'ifa al-ra'is*. Relations between *ojak* and *ta'ifa*, the janissaries and the corsairs, were violent at times, but eventually a kind of alliance emerged between them. For, in the relatively impoverished conditions of Algiers, only the wealthy corsair captains could guarantee at least some of the *ojak's* needs. The corsairs, for their part, since they commanded rather motley crews and had to be at sea much of the year, could never displace the more cohesive and better-trained troops of the *ojak*. Beginning in the 1640s, the *ojak* stripped the triennial pashas of their power, and by the end of the seventeenth century, they created the new supreme office of the *dey*, who was often one of the corsair captains. In the 1720s, the Algerines went so far as to prevent the Ottoman government from sending or even naming a pasha.<sup>16</sup>

In this way Algiers became a kind of ghazi state, where maritime ghazis—that is, corsairs—had a place within the ruling elite, and where the sea finally achieved the full dignity of an Islamic frontier. The residents of this frontier, who included renegades from Christian Europe, stood apart from the rest of the North African population. However, corsair captains took part in works of urban charity,<sup>17</sup> while much pomp and ceremony marked the comings and goings of the corsair ships. It was such considerations as these that led Fernand Braudel to think of corsair activity (*la course*) as

<sup>16</sup> Boyer, "Introduction à une histoire intérieure de la Régence d'Algier"; M. Hoexter, *Endowments, Rulers and Community*, 18–23.

<sup>17</sup> Hoexter, *Endowments, Rulers and Community*.

<sup>12</sup> Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 2:194.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 2:206–207.

<sup>14</sup> Lucette Valensi, *On the Eve of Colonialism*, esp. 47–55.

<sup>15</sup> Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*.



*Empires, Armies, and Frontiers: Conclusions*

Now we may remind ourselves once again of the beginning of Islam, which saw a transformation of individual consciousness, an awareness of moral responsibility within a tightly bound community, and then a duty and desire to fight in the path of the God who had made all these things happen. This chapter has presented a sample of the contexts in which this creative combination has been reexperienced within the political and military history of Islam. The variety of these contexts is considerable: so, for instance, the ghaza of the Turks in Anatolia at the turn of the fourteenth century had a certain amount in common with the *ribat* of the Almoravids some two centuries previously in North Africa and less in common, on the whole, with the *jihād* of the Counter-Crusade in Syria, which had formed the basis of an alliance among urban elites, civilian jurists, and military commanders. Thus, while these different historical episodes have all been processes of state formation, they have not been mere re-enactments or replays of a single, original scenario. They differ from the first experience—the rise of Islam—in several ways, which include the ever-increasing weight, as a historical factor, of the doctrine of *jihād* itself.

The elements of this doctrine of *jihād* are already present in the Qur'an, as well as in the early texts of *sira*, *maghazi*, and *hadith* (chapters 2 and 3). *Jihād* was also fundamentally important in the early wars of conquest, starting in the 630s (chapter 4) and during the Umayyad dynasty (661–750; see beginning of this chapter). Nonetheless, the doctrine and practice of *jihād* took more time to emerge than is usually imagined. It was not until the end of the eighth century that it emerged in plain view as an ideological tool of first importance and, at the same time as, in Linda Darling's phrase, a piece of "contested territory." Various groups then sought to associate themselves with the *jihād*, and to use it to advance their own positions. These included the governing elites, beginning with the 'Abbasid caliphs who invented the role of the *ghazal*-caliph, which is to say, the ruler devoted to the performance, in his own person, of *jihād*. Meanwhile, other groups laid claim

to the doctrine of *jihād* itself. The elements of this doctrine of *jihād* are already present in the Qur'an, as well as in the early texts of *sira*, *maghazi*, and *hadith* (chapters 2 and 3). *Jihād* was also fundamentally important in the early wars of conquest, starting in the 630s (chapter 4) and during the Umayyad dynasty (661–750; see beginning of this chapter). Nonetheless, the doctrine and practice of *jihād* took more time to emerge than is usually imagined. It was not until the end of the eighth century that it emerged in plain view as an ideological tool of first importance and, at the same time as, in Linda Darling's phrase, a piece of "contested territory." Various groups then sought to associate themselves with the *jihād*, and to use it to advance their own positions. These included the governing elites, beginning with the 'Abbasid caliphs who invented the role of the *ghazal*-caliph, which is to say, the ruler devoted to the performance, in his own person, of *jihād*. Meanwhile, other groups laid claim

(Last), "Muhammad Bello" (J. O. Hunwick), "Umar b. Sa'id b. 'Uthman Tal" (J. C. Froelich).

gious learning, originating among the ethnic group of the Fulani (or Fulbe), preachers and authors of works, in Arabic and in the local languages, on *jihād*, Sufism, and other themes. Their militant activity culminated, in 1804, in an emigration (*hijra*), followed by the defeat of a series of states (the Hausa sultanates) that were already under Muslim rule. They established their capital in the newly founded city of Sokoto, with 'Uthman, and afterward his son Bello, in the role of imam, or "Commander of the Faithful." Many of the fighters under their command were "students," eager to sacrifice themselves for the cause. Similarly, the governors of the amirates under their control were often '*wama*', men of religious learning. This militant activity went together with a movement of conversion to Islam among non-Muslims, and a movement of reform among those who already professed Islam. Meanwhile, other movements of *jihād* appeared, allied with or rivals of the Sokoto movement; all of them aimed to purify the local Islam from the syncretic practices that were typical of it.

Later on, the Sokoto caliphate, as it is called today, provided the basis for yet another movement of conquest and *jihād*, even more ambitious in scope, with the activity of another charismatic man of religious learning, Hajj 'Umar Tal (1797–1864). Hajj 'Umar sought to establish a new state along the entire extent of the Western Sudan, beyond any particular ethnic identification, while imposing the doctrine and practice of his mystical confraternity of the Tijaniyya *tariqa*. The result was the multiethnic state known as the Torodbe empire, which included, at its apogee, all the territory from Gridimaka to Timbuktu, and from Dinguiraye as far as the Sahara.<sup>76</sup> This state, which exerted only loose control over its own territory, did not survive long after the death of its founder. For now the Europeans were encroaching, especially the French from the coast of Senegambia. The main result of the Torodbe empire, like that of its predecessor, the Sokoto caliphate, was that Islam became rooted more deeply and widely in West Africa than it had been previously.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> M. Ly-Tall, in Ade Ajayi (ed.), *Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*, 620.

<sup>77</sup> Ade Ajayi (ed.), *Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*, esp. A. Barman, "The Nineteenth-Century Islamic Revolutions in West Africa," 537–554; M. Last, "The Sokoto Caliphate and Borno," 555–599; "Massina and the Torodbe (Tukulor) Empire until 1878," 600–635. See also *ET* s.v. "'Uthman b. 'Uthman" (D. M.

community and its wars; the performance of the internalized

"greater jihad," involving ascetic and mystical practices; and all sorts of preaching and advising. Though it may seem rigid to outsiders, this scholarly jihad is actually quite flexible and creative. More than the tribal and imperial jihad—which can never exist without it—this jihad of the scholars and jurists has long provided models of conduct and inspiration to entire communities and nations.

The fourth and most important protagonist of the jihad is the volunteer, known as *mujahid*, *muwabit*, *ghazi*, *mutatawwi*, and several other titles. Of course, this role constantly overlaps with the other three (tribesman, ruler, scholar). But it also applies to countless obscure people who devoted themselves to these practices, undergoing suffering and, in many cases, death. The purity of their effort, their doing what they were not strictly required to do, their abandonment of their usual roles in life, their long travels, their desire to please God and, in some cases, to achieve mystical encounter with Him: all these things made them marginal, even outcasts within their own societies. Many of them were literally outsiders, like the ghazi volunteers who flocked to the frontiers, and the sailors and fighters on the corsair ships. And many performers of jihad were involved just as much in ascetic and mystical practice, in juridical studies, and in other peaceful pursuits, as they were in actual fighting; meanwhile other, more stable groups bore the brunt of the actual work of warfare. Though it may seem a paradoxical way to achieve state formation, this is the way that things often went. These performers of jihad, these outsiders and volunteers, are at the heart of this ever-recurring, state-forming enterprise of the jihad. They are the reason why this chapter has presented the jihad and its origins as a connected series of frontier societies.

### Readings

The footnotes to this chapter and the general bibliography indicate some of the basic readings for the many areas and episodes mentioned in this chapter. Regarding Islamic frontier societies, much of the best work so far has been on the two extremes of the medieval Islamic world, India and Spain. However, it is important to mention the book by Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-century Ibero-African Frontier* (Chicago:

to this contested territory, including the many men of religious learning who moved physically to the frontiers.

The jihad in all its vicissitudes, and in all the practices associated with it (tribal, ghazw, ghaza, and so on), has always featured a certain number of protagonists. Naturally, it has often been possible for a single actor to play two or even more of these roles at the same time.

The first of these is the tribal warrior, who for us is usually rather faceless as an individual. Here, in what we might call tribal jihad, the original scenario of Islam in Arabia comes closest to reenactment. This is what Ibn Khaldun had in mind when he discussed the unifying power of religious teaching among the people of the desert. A message of Islamic reform, or even of conversion to Islam itself, galvanizes nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples and turns them into an irresistible fighting force; they conquer towns, upend states, and establish a new political formation, or as Ibn Khaldun would have said, a dynasty. However, their zeal does not last long; within the armies they are soon set aside in favor of more reliable, though more cumbersome units of regular soldiers.

The second protagonist is the ruler: first the imam/caliph, and then various independent governors (amirs), sultans, and others. It was the Umayyad caliphs who, at the beginning, went the farthest with an imperial ideal of jihad, no doubt because in their day the doctrine of jihad was still unformed and being worked out, and also because, in a very general way, basic questions regarding who held authority in matters of law and religious doctrine remained unresolved. After the Umayyads, the Abbasids reinterpreted this imperial ideal of jihad through the character of ghazi-caliph, which then reappeared in many forms and guises throughout the history of Islam. The usual tendency of this kind of "ruler's jihad" is to provide legitimation for the holders of power and for the existing structures of government.

The third protagonist is the scholar, in the widest sense. Ever since the full emergence of the jihad in the later eighth century, this protagonist has been the essential, unavoidable element in every conceivable environment of jihad and in every possible state-building enterprise that seeks to use jihad as an ideology. The jihad of the scholars provides a wide range of options, as we have seen in the previous chapter. These include the actual performance of warfare; the study of the norms of warfare and the doctrine of jihad; the reenactment of various idealized versions of the earliest Islamic

University of Chicago Press, 1978), which presents the shared historical space of the western Mediterranean as irrevocably split along ideological and religious lines between Muslims and Christian Europeans. Hess argues against the "Mediterranean" approach, forever associated with Fernand Braudel and more recently taken up by other historians,<sup>78</sup> which emphasizes the historical processes and geographical constraints which the Muslims of North Africa and the Near East, together with their western European neighbors, all had in common.

For more recent comparative perspectives, see the collections of essays in Robert Bartlett and Angus Mackay (eds.), *Medieval Frontier Societies* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Daniel Power and Naomi Standen (eds.), *Frontiers in Question* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); and David Abulafia and Nora Berend (eds.), *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002). The article by Linda Darling, "Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Context" (*Studia Islamica* 91 [2000]: 133-163), evaluates modern studies of various Islamic societies and historical contexts, in addition to the much-contested problem of Ottoman origins. The "volunteers" for the jihad are dealt with in work appearing now by Deborah Tor on the eastern frontiers of the early Islamic world. For the all-important Byzantine frontier district, see my recent *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004) and the bibliography there.

Furthermore, see Christophe Picard and Antoine Borrut, "Rabat, Ribat, Kabita: une institution à reconsidérer," in N. Proureau and Ph. Senac, eds., *Chrétiens et musulmans en Méditerranée médiévale (VIII-XIII siècles). Échanges et contacts* (Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisations Médiévales, 2003), 33-65; and Christophe Picard, "Regards croisés sur l'élaboration du jihad entre Occident et Orient musulman (VIII-XII siècles)," in D. Baloup and Ph. Jossierand, eds., *Regards croisés sur la guerre sainte. Guerre, religion et idéologie dans l'espace méditerranéen latin (XI-XIII siècles)* (Toulouse: CNRS-Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, Collection Méridiennes, Série Études Médiévales Ibe-riques, 2006), 33-65.

<sup>78</sup> Braudel, *La Méditerranée*; Purcell and Horden, *The Corrupting Sea*; Wansbrough, *Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean*.

## CHAPTER NINE

Colonial Empire, Modern State,  
New Jihad

This chapter does not offer a comprehensive outline or summary of jihad in the modern and contemporary world. This topic is vast and has been discussed in several recent books, some of which are mentioned in the notes to this chapter and the readings section at the end of this chapter. Here I wish to present a few themes for special emphasis, especially regarding continuity—or lack of it—with what has gone before.

## Resistance and Reform

The encounter between the Islamic world and western Europe came to a turning point in 1798, when Napoleon arrived with his army in Egypt. Soon afterward, much of the Islamic world experienced multiple shocks from Europe's military, political, industrial, and financial strength. Most traumatic of all, the Europeans themselves arrived in force in several Muslim countries and seized direct or indirect control. Enormous changes followed in demography, politics, economic and cultural life, and just about everything else. Jihad had a role in the first responses to this colonial domination. These were often attempts to build new structures within societies that were still relatively free of the invaders' influence,