The Taifa of Denia and the Medieval Mediterranean

Travis Bruce
Western Michigan University

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THE TAIFA OF DENIA AND THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN

by

Travis Bruce

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of History
Advisor: Larry J. Simon, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 2010
THE TAIFA OF DENIA AND THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN

Travis Bruce, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2010

This dissertation treats the Muslim kingdom of Denia on the Spanish Mediterranean coast. Through a singular political program, the eleventh-century rulers of Denia created a maritime kingdom based on the resources and networks of the Mediterranean. Denia played a unique role as a Mediterranean polity, developing economic links with Christian Barcelona, Sardinia, Pisa and Genoa that would connect Muslim and Christian populations over several centuries. The dissertation demonstrates the importance of economics in the Muslim-Christian relations of the western Mediterranean using Latin archival documents, Latin and Arabic narrative sources, and archeological and numismatic evidence. It explores the extent to which local populations were dependent upon and reacted to the new economic and political structures of the eleventh century. The role of trade as a cross-cultural phenomenon and the nature of religious and political legitimacy revealed by this dissertation are as relevant today as they were in the eleventh century. For both the issues it explores and its innovative use of sources, the dissertation makes a substantial contribution to Spanish, Islamic and Mediterranean History.
This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of many different people. I hope that it merits the support they have given throughout the years.

My dissertation director, Larry J. Simon, has offered constant support, sharing his intellectual, professional and personal guidance, not to mention the Corner Bar and a passion for all things Mediterranean. My courses and conversations with Adam Sabra helped me to better understand the Islamic world, while his comments have greatly contributed to the eventual quality of this work. I would never have been able to undertake the research necessary for this dissertation without language skills gained through work with Rand Johnson and Mustafa Mughazy. Thomas Glick’s personal work, as well as his decision to sit on my committee, have pushed me to better develop aspects of my subject that might otherwise have been left to the side. In France, Philip Sénac has been a critical, supportive and patient mentor since long before this whole business started. I have called on Annliese Nef for her essential advice, corrections and critiques far too many times, while Dominique Valérian has always been a gracious comrade in piracy. Helpful comments from Pierre Guichard, Christophe Picard, Rafael Azuar Ruiz and Bernard Doumerc improved a much more flawed earlier version of this project. In Spain, Patrice Cressier, Mikél de Epalza, Rafael Azuar Ruiz, Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret and Josep Antoní Gisbert Santonja each offered advice, information and patient direction.

Many different organizations have generously provided essential financial
support for this dissertation. The History department at Western Michigan University
offered me a doctoral associateship, numerous travel and research grants, and the
inestimable chance to develop my skills in the classroom. A dissertation writing
grant from the Graduate College at Western Michigan University allowed me an
uninterrupted year of production. Grants from the Casa de Velázquez, the École
française de Rome and the Program for Cultural Cooperation made possible
necessary research trips to Italy and Spain. My research laboratories in Poitiers and
Toulouse likewise offered their financial support on more than one occasion. A
generous fellowship granted by the Fulbright Commission allowed me a year of
research in Spain, and more importantly has opened countless doors and
opportunities. Finally, the Université Lumière Lyon 2 provided a much needed
professional position in the final years of this dissertation.

On a personal note, Michelle and Danièle Page have always given me their
full support on many levels, and I could never thank them enough. I will not forget
Isabelle Engammare’s confidence, generosity and patience. My parents have
supported me at every step of this long process, and I am proud to offer them its
result. Emilie Taillade Bruce has left her mark on every page of this work.
Intellectually and personally, I could neither have finished nor even begun this
without her. I dedicate this work to my kids, to Elijah, who was willing to believe
those really were castles in the mountains of Alicante, and to Cleo, who could be the
princess of each of them.

Travis Bruce
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<tr>
<td>AASS</td>
<td>Acta Sanctorum</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.A.H.</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.G.A.</td>
<td>Biblioteca Geographorum Arabicorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.C.</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaealis</td>
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<td>CICMMO I</td>
<td>La Céramique médiévale en Méditerranée occidentale, Xe-XVe siècles (Valbonne, 11-14 septembre 1978)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICMMO II</td>
<td>Segundo Coloquio Internacional de Cerámica Medieval en el Mediterráneo Occidental (Toledo, 1981)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICMMO III</td>
<td>La Ceramic medievale nel Mediterraneo Occidentale (Siena 8-12 ottobre 1984 e Faenza 13 ottobre 1984)</td>
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<td>CICMMO IV</td>
<td>A Cerâmica medieval no Mediterrâneo Ocidental (Lisboa, 16-22 novembro 1987)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICMMO V</td>
<td>Actes du 5ème colloque sur la céramique médiévale en Méditerranée occidentale (Rabat 11-17 novembre 1991)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EI²</td>
<td>The Encyclopaedia of Islam. 2nd edition. Leiden, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.S.I.</td>
<td>Fonti per la Storia d'Italia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEM</td>
<td>Histoire de l’Espagne Musumane</td>
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<tr>
<td>JESHO</td>
<td>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>al-Maktabat al-Andalusiya</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.C.V.</td>
<td>Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEFRM</td>
<td>Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome, Moyen Âge</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.G.H.</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.G.H. SS</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.G.H. SSrL</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.I.E.E.I.</td>
<td>Revista del Instituto Egipecio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.I.S.</td>
<td>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.O.M.M.</td>
<td>Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settimane</td>
<td>Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Denia, on the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula, was one of the principal polities, or taifas, to emerge after the disintegration of the Cordovan caliphate at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century. The taifa rulers, or mulūk al-ṭawā’if, sought for the most part to duplicate on a regional scale the model of Andalusī statehood established under the Umayyads, some seeking even to reestablish the erstwhile caliphate under their own power. This model included not only Umayyad courtly culture and administrative practices, but also a decidedly peninsular or continental orientation. Denia’s rulers, however, consciously pursued a policy of active participation in the Mediterranean, and their taifa became a bridge between that world and the Iberian Peninsula. Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī (r. 400/1010–436/1044) and his son, ‘Alī (r. 436/1044-468/1076), expanded, built, and exploited maritime networks that placed their taifa in contact with ports and states across the Mediterranean.

Denia’s history sits at the crossroads of two phenomena: the fall of the Cordovan caliphate and the renewal of maritime exchange that transformed the Mediterranean over the course of the fifth/eleventh century. Both of these phenomena had their roots in the preceding century; political, social, and economic factors had weakened the centralized Islamic state in Cordova, while gradual growth along the Christian and Islamic Mediterranean coasts created opportunities for
increased trade and piracy. Denia’s rulers certainly did not orchestrate these changes, but the taifa’s specificity lay in Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s ability to recognize and exploit the opportunities that arose from them.

The taifa of Denia traces its origins to the regime of Ibn Abī ‘Āmir, better known as al-Manṣūr (r. 369/978-392/1002). The ‘Āmirid government, though in many ways the apex of the Andalusī caliphate, ultimately undermined it and led to its fall by insinuating itself between the legitimate caliphal ruler and the power that he exercised.1 As ḥājib, or chamberlain, al-Manṣūr became the de facto ruler of al-Andalus, usurping the political power of the Umayyad caliph, Hishām II, in the final years of the fourth/tenth century. Al-Manṣūr’s reforms supplanting traditional Andalusī tribal power structures, replacing them with elements loyal to his regime. Militarily, al-Manṣūr relied increasingly on Berber tribesmen imported from North Africa, paid for through direct and indirect land taxes, while caliphal administration came under the control of ‘Āmirid servile clients, known as Ṣaqqāliba (s. Şiqlabī).2

The delicate balance between these pro-‘Āmirid elements and the Andalusī elite was upset when al-Manṣūr’s son, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, disregarded Islamic political tradition and his father’s prudent precedent and had himself declared heir to the childless Hishām II in 399/1008. The civil war that followed, known in Andalusī historiography as the fitna, saw the fall and disintegration of the Cordovan caliphate,

---

2 See below, chapter 8 for a discussion of al-Manṣūr’s fiscal reforms and their effects. Chapter 2, _infra_, analyzes ʿĀmirid administration, the Ṣaqqāliba, and Mujāhid’s place within that group.
and the fragmentation of al-Andalus into over thirty regional polities, the taifas. ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn of Granada, one of the last taifa rulers, described how the once unified Andalusī caliphate fell to pieces:

When the ‘Āmirid dynasty came to an end and the people were left without an imām, every military commander rose up in his own town and entrenched himself behind the walls of his own fortress, having first secured his own position, created his own army, and amassed his own resources.3

Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī was one of the principal Ṣaqāliba officers on the eve of the fitna, most likely serving as governor in the Sharq al-Andalus, or eastern maritime provinces of al-Andalus.4 While a series of candidates and factions vied for control of the crumbling caliphate, Mujāhid transformed the territorial authority he had held under the former regime into a regional polity centered on the Mediterranean port of Denia, sometime shortly after 400/1010. Mujāhid’s early intentions are not clear, and, like many of his peers, he likely considered the situation temporary and was simply looking to protect his position in the transition between two regimes. Nevertheless, in 405/1014, Mujāhid broke with the Cordovan caliphal model and declared Denia a caliphate in the name of an Umayyad candidate, ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu‘ayṭī.5 Mujāhid’s declaration was singular in that it did not attempt to succeed the Cordovan Umayyad regime, but was intended as the religious and political basis for the conquest of the principal islands and routes of the Western Mediterranean.


4 See below, chapter 2, for Mujāhid’s role prior to the fitna. For the Sharq al-Andalus, see Pierre Guichard, “Sharq al-Andalus,” EI2, 9:351a, and the corresponding bibliography.

Mujāhid was establishing a caliphate based on a new territorial paradigm, one of expansion through maritime conquest. Within months, Mujāhid and his caliph conquered the Balearic Islands and began preparations to invade the island of Sardinia the following year. Mujāhid’s Mediterranean caliphate failed in the face of Pisan and Genoese resistance, his forces were pushed from Sardinia, and he deposed al-Mu‘ayṭī shortly thereafter, but he adapted this Mediterranean policy to build a regional kingdom that extended through the routes and networks he had intended to conquer outright.6

Denia’s principal activity in the early taifa years was piracy, an aggressive guerre de course carried out against the Christian ships and ports of the Western Mediterranean. Characterized by the medieval Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn as maritime jihād, state-sponsored piracy filled the regime’s coffers while offering Denia’s rulers the legitimacy of military action against unbelievers.7 Nevertheless, nonviolent commercial exchange, with Muslim and Christian ports alike, from Barcelona and Pisa to al-Mahdiyya and Alexandria, also passed through Denia. Maritime commerce and regional distribution, moreover, seem to have become the taifa’s principal activities in the final years of Mujāhid’s reign, and especially under his son, ‘Alī, whose rule began with Mujāhid’s death in 436/1044, and ended in 468/1076 when the taifa was annexed by the taifa of Zaragoza.

Denia’s history remains linked to al-Andalus and the Iberian Peninsula, but its specific historical interest comes from this determined Mediterranean policy over two

6 See below, chapter 4, for the invasion of Sardinia and relations with Pisa.
7 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ībar wa-diwan al-mubtada’ wa-l-khabar fi ayyām al-‘arab wa-l-‘ajam
generations. Denia was, in fact, active in multiple regions and areas of influence, defying easy categorization. Historians often consider the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean as different spaces, but Denia’s history surpasses those constructions, and, in a certain manner, highlights their limits. Denia existed concomitantly in both spaces, as a littoral periphery of the Iberian Peninsula, and as a Mediterranean thalassocracy, at the junction of various identities and forces.

Denia’s participation in multiple spheres illustrates the dynamics of the fifth/eleventh century Mediterranean, while taking into account the specificities of a fragmentary and declining al-Andalus. The taifa’s success was the result of a process of progressive investment by the Umayyad regime in its maritime zones followed by the collapse of that state, releasing those zones from Cordova’s centralizing forces. Denia also developed in conjunction with other Christian and Muslim ports, contributing to and benefitting from the Mediterranean economic renewal that Robert Lopez defined as the “commercial revolution” of the Middle Ages. The two phenomena were not exclusive, and it was precisely Denia’s participation in both that determined its course throughout the fifth/eleventh century.

Previous studies of fitna-era al-Andalus, and Denia in particular, have examined the taifa from a uniquely Andalusī or Islamic point of view, isolating it from the Mediterranean. In the last twenty years, however, studies have offered new

approaches to Andalusī and Mediterranean history that make it possible to reexamine the taifa in a way that encompasses its variegated identities. Olivia Remie Constable’s *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain* only briefly mentions Denia, but demonstrates the usefulness of examining al-Andalus in its relation with the Mediterranean. Constable likewise incorporates a variety of Latin, Arabic, and material sources that together point to new possibilities for historical inquiry. More recently, Peregrin Horden and Nicolas Purcell proposed a vision of the medieval Mediterranean based on “micro-regions” and communications through small, interlaced, and superimposed accidental networks. The present study will analyze the taifa of Denia through this culture of communications, examining how it built its networks across the various zones of al-Andalus and the Western Mediterranean.

In this dissertation I analyze the taifa of Denia according to the dynamics of its internal and external networks, with its ambition of integrating vaster Mediterranean spaces. Thus, I hope to demonstrate how exchange and communications networks were the result of forces of “duration,” characterizing Mediterranean spaces throughout time; how Denia developed within these networks, in particular those of the Iberian Peninsula, *Sharq al-Andalus*, Western Mediterranean, and the Muslim and Christian worlds. These communications resulted not only from long-term historical forces, but also from Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s

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11 For the concept of “duration” or “durée” in the Mediterranean, see Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1966).
decisions and policies, according to their vision of Denia and its place in the Mediterranean and al-Andalus. In this regard, it is important to understand the relation between the taifa of Denia, an artificial political construct, and the “organic” Mediterranean communications networks. I will thus explore to what extent Denia’s success came from “natural” forces and/or decisions knowingly made by its sovereigns, and how the Mediterranean networks influenced and were influenced by these policies.

I will first examine the political aspects of this network, with the relevant antecedents. This will include the historical space that Denia occupied in the *Sharq al-Andalus* between the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula, according to its relationship with the Cordovan Umayyad regime. The Western Mediterranean underwent structural changes between the disintegration of the ancient world and the establishment of the Muslim system, deteriorating the nature of communications. These changes came partly from a relaxation of the central political powers on the Mediterranean littorals, and I will show how this relaxation made it possible for the communities of the *Sharq al-Andalus* to orient their communications networks according to their own interests. Later, the rehabilitation of central power in these zones assimilated, according to its ambitions and needs, the structures created by these peripheral communities. The fragmentation of the caliphate of Cordova at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century released the cities of the *Sharq al-Andalus* from an imposed policy and the constraints of a meta-network of centripetal communications, and made it possible for the rulers of this area to establish their own
relations on regional and Mediterranean levels. I will thus examine how the sovereigns of Denia worked to create a physical and communicative space around their power, as well as the inscription of this space in the peninsula and the sea according to Andalusī and Mediterranean dynamics. This power was founded and consolidated through violence and conquest, but beyond their military presence the sovereigns of Denia had to lay down their power in terms understandable not only for their Andalusī subjects and counterparts, but also for the other political regimes of the Mediterranean.

The second section will define the communications networks built around the taifa of Denia. I will first examine Denia’s position vis-à-vis the Mediterranean and Iberian networks, as described by geographers, as well as tendencies of circulation as revealed by biographical dictionaries. This will shed light on the terrestrial and maritime transportation routes that bound Denia to its networks. In addition, analyses of documentary sources and material culture, including ceramics and numismatics, as an indicator of commercial exchange, as well as the political bonds that contributed to the establishment and the exploitation of these routes will supplement these findings. Thus, I will demonstrate how Denia was bound to Christian ports, such as Pisa and Barcelona, by means of violence, trade, and political interest. Principal exchange nevertheless occurred with al-Andalus and the Muslim Mediterranean, and I will analyze the networks by which Denia’s rulers bound their polity to those worlds.

Lastly, I examine the structures resulting from the Mediterranean and continental policies of Denia’s rulers. This will illuminate the basis for Mujāhid and
‘Ali’s political power and the definition of Denia’s political territory in terms of security, taxation, and communications, particularly with the establishment of governmental fortifications in the kingdom’s interior. I will then examine how the taifa’s maritime policies led to demographic changes and the increasing importance of coastal settlements. In addition to these physically palpable aspects, the sovereigns of Denia created structures of Islamic culture in their court with the establishment and the patronage of Islamic studies. Because of these structures, and the city’s resulting reputation, Denia became an essential hub in the network of Iberian and Mediterranean scholars. These physical and cultural structures were not only the effect of political decisions, but also the expression of the lasting place that Denia occupied in the Iberian and Mediterranean networks, and its role as binder and portal between those two spaces.

This dissertation will show that Denia’s rulers based their state on its liminal position between the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean, substituting networks and routes for territory and land. It will further demonstrate that traditional divisions applied to Iberian or Mediterranean history, including those based on religion, often oversimplify matters, imposing a priori interpretations. Denia’s complexity comes to light through its multiple connections built across various geographic, political, and cultural frontiers. In relation to Christian polities like Pisa and Barcelona, Denia’s rulers blended religious antagonism and intercultural exchange with the same political and economic ambition that influenced their policies towards other taifas and Muslim ports. Finally, I will demonstrate that the taifa of Denia illustrates the complex layers
of communications and exchange that defined in large part the medieval Mediterranean.

**TRANSLITERATION**

I have followed the *Studia islamica* simplified system of transliteration for transcribing Arabic into Latin letters. Nevertheless, I have also kept spelling for common and proper nouns regularly used in English to facilitate reading.

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CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY, SOCIETY, AND POLICY BEFORE THE *FITNA*

Denia’s history did not begin with the fall of the Cordovan caliphate and the rise of Mujahid. Political, social, and geographical antecedents played an essential role in determining how the taifa’s history would play out over the course of the century. The taifa of Denia developed in direct relation with the region’s maritime resources and in fact represents a continuation of many of the policies followed by the Umayyad and ‘Umairid regimes.

The Western Mediterranean underwent profound structural changes during the disintegration of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islam, provoking the isolation of coastal regions. The decline of centralized political powers allowed independent communities in the *Sharq al-Andalus* to reorient communications networks according to their own interests, based on piracy and maritime commerce with the North-African coast. After the Islamic conquest, Cordova sought over time to extend its control over maritime access and resources, especially after conflict began with the Fatimids, relying on existing social and political structures as a relay for the Umayyad regime. Military conquests played a role, but Cordova also extended its influence by simply recognizing authorities already in place and integrating them into administrative and governmental systems. Relations with North Africa and the Maghreb continued during this time among the communities of maritime merchants
and pirates whose interests remained tied to the sea and neighboring Mediterranean coasts.

Thus, at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century, when the fragmentation of the Umayyad caliphate liberated the cities of the Sharq al-Andalus from constraining centralized systems, regional elites found themselves, not on the periphery of the Umayyad-Iberian world, but at the meeting point between al-Andalus and the Mediterranean.

REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

Denia’s geographical setting profoundly influenced its maritime direction and the means by which it interacted with the outside world.¹ Its port and exceptional access to Mediterranean lanes, along with a hinterland that offered limited possibilities for expansion and development logically led to its maritime history. Denia’s development thus depended on its ability to impose itself as a redistribution point between the Mediterranean and Andalusī markets.

The Betic Cordillera, which culminates in the Montgó and the Balearic Islands, dominates Denia’s geography. Arcs of steep mountain ranges enclose narrow valleys form the Jibāl Balansiya. Waterways are rare and are usually

¹ In addition to personal observations, we consulted the following works for information concerning regional geography; E. Bermudez y Bermudez, M.P. Reus López, L. Soliveres Cholbi, Geografía de la Provincia de Alicante (Alicante, 1990); V. Castañeda y Alcover, Relaciones geográficas, topográficas y históricas del Reyno de Valencia, hechas en el siglo XVII a ruegos de D. Tomás López, 2 vols. (Alicante-Castellón de la Plana, 1919) (Valencia, 1998); A.T. Grove, O. Rackham, The Nature of Mediterranean Europe. An Ecological History (New Haven, 2001); J.J. Quereda Sala, Comarca de la Marina Alicante (Estudio de geografía regional) (Alicante, 1978).
seasonal torrents, while the few rivers – Serpis, Jalón and Gorgos – are not navigable. The climate is typically Mediterranean, cooler and rainier in the north, with favorable precipitation around Alcoy, and dryer and hotter in the south. The uneven terrain inhibits communication, and road networks depend heavily on the possibilities offered by valleys and mountain passes, isolating the region from the more Islamicized and urbanized zones of the interior. The regional population was thus concentrated in the coastal plains and the valleys that linked the coast with the interior. The south of the taifa, corresponding to northern Tudmīr, though mountainous, is less uneven than the Jibāl Balansiya. The Vinalopó and Segura valleys are irrigable, notably the Segura huerta, and act as major communications routes between the regions of Valencia and Murcia, as well as with the Peninsula’s interior plains.

The taifa of Denia thus had few peninsular resources. Powerful neighbors surrounded Denia to the north and south, so its rulers turned to the sea as their only real option for expansion. The coastline between Denia and Alicante is as uneven as the mountainous interior, with numerous ports and anchorages that could serve as relays in Denia’s maritime development. Denia’s port is sheltered by the massive Montgó, and readily accessible to the coastal plains. The small ports of Jávea, Moraira, Altea, Benidorm and Villajoyosa allow for shipping along the coast towards the south, while Alicante’s port acts as an extension of the routes following the Vinalopó and Segura. Extending out into the sea, at the end of the Betic Cordillera
and on the eastern tip of the Peninsula, Denia was only a day’s sail from the Balearic Islands, whose ports served as the first stops for ships traveling to points farther east.

The sea is an essential part of this region, demonstrated by the fact that it flourished only during times of intense maritime circulation. The decline of the Mediterranean towards the end of the Roman Empire and during the Early Middle Ages caused a corresponding decline in settlement and population density. The reversal of this decline, beginning during the later Umayyad emirate and early caliphate, allowed the rulers of Denia to build their state based on the renascent maritime resources of the *Sharq al-Andalus*.

**MARITIME POLICIES UNDER THE UMAYYAD EMIRATE**

Denia’s liminal position on the threshold between the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean sea lanes profoundly shaped the policies of its rulers. The *Sharq al-Andalus* was isolated from Cordovan political, cultural and economic networks before the fourth/tenth century. The early Umayyad emirate was content with the recognition offered by tributary payments from regional elites who favored their contacts with the other shores of the Western Mediterranean. Cordovan policies began to change in the late third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries, promoting Umayyad interests along the coast and appropriating the Peninsula’s maritime space. These policies improved links between with the sea, and laid the framework for the taifa of Denia, since Mujāhid and ‘Alī established and operated their state at the intersection of those two spheres. Mujāhid’s ambition and will were essential in
Denia’s rise at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century. It is also important, however, to underline the foundations laid by the Umayyad regime’s occupation of maritime space and the installation of maritime structures and ports in relation to caliphal ambitions and Mediterranean networks.

Mujāhid modeled his policies during the transitional period of the early fitna on those of the erstwhile caliphate. Eventual changes in taifal politics were conditioned by the regime’s own power, in correspondence with its unique place in the Iberian and Mediterranean contexts. The fall of the caliphate dismantled centralized continental networks at the same time that the economic weight of the Mediterranean was steadily increasing, allowing Denia’s rulers to consciously exploit their position between the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea.

The extension of Umayyad interests in the Western Mediterranean was a gradual process. Cordova initially abandoned the Sharq al-Andalus to relative provincial isolation, and expressed little interest in maritime affairs. The decline of Mediterranean relations towards the end of the classical era influenced the internalized development of roads and markets after the Islamic conquest. Mediterranean networks stimulated by economic exchange within the Roman Empire fell into obsolescence. In addition, the paralyzing weakness of the Umayyad regime between the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries limited any eventual interest in outlying coastal regions. Cordova only began to extend its reach into Denia’s region as part of an overall process of strengthening economic and political dynamics, coinciding with the renewal of Mediterranean networks. Communications began to
increase between older centers of exchange, superseded at times by more recent establishments.

**Maritime and population decline (third to eighth centuries)**

Henri Pirenne ascribed the breakdown in Mediterranean unity to the Islamic invasions of the seventh and eighth centuries. While Mediterranean communications did indeed decrease, the process had begun much earlier, starting in the third century and continuing until the eighth. The creation of a new religious, political and economic space through the Islamic conquests in fact reoriented and renewed communications networks, leading to new economic developments beginning in the ninth century.

This decline, though felt throughout the Mediterranean, was sharper in the West, far from the more prosperous Eastern markets, and especially along the Iberian coast. Maritime circulation did not end, but it did fall off substantially. At the same time, and in the same region, the number of occupied rural sites fell by sixty-three percent. This downward trend reflected similar trends in maritime exchange, and

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3 The decline and renewal of the early medieval European and Mediterranean economies is the subject of M. McCormick’s *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge, 2001).
rural settlement patterns were symptomatic of a larger crisis throughout the Western Mediterranean.

Pierre Guichard has noted urban degeneration accompanied by a “heavily affected demography” in the *Sharq al-Andalus*, including the region of Denia. This desertion of urban sites forms the basis for Guichard’s theory on the early “Berberization” of the Valencian region, where the social and geographic patterns had become so loose that new Arab-Berber elements were easily able to penetrate. Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret has likewise highlighted a similar dismantling of urban networks in the *kūra* of Tudmīr. The breakdown in urban-rural relations in Late Antiquity and

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the Early Middle Ages is visible in the appearance of agricultural production inside urban centers. The crisis became more aggravated during the first centuries of Muslim domination, especially during the Umayyad emirate, when the majority of Roman cities disappeared.

This process was more acute in the east than in the rest of al-Andalus, which Pierre Guichard relates to the region’s isolation vis-à-vis the interior and the economic, political and cultural heart of the Umayyad regime in Cordova. The abandonment of the coastal Via Augusta for the interior route linking Cordova to Zaragoza exacerbated the crisis even more. The Cordovan Umayyad regime in fact was established at the height of the Mediterranean crisis, and so favored interior peninsular roads. The coastal cities were excluded from the Umayyad networks and deprived of their economic role, only furthering their demise.

This isolation was moreover not only economic. The lower Segura region of Tudmīr in the fifth/eleventh century was known as the land of the muwalladūn, or neo-Muslims, indicating a late adoption of Islam. Regional construction materials and ceramics under the emirate demonstrate a remarkable lag in the process of Islamicization in comparison with other regions of al-Andalus. Christophe Picard noted an enduring cultural Christianity among maritime communities further south,

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9 S. Gutiérrez Lloret, La Cora de Tudmīr, 267.
10 S. Gutiérrez Lloret, La Cora de Tudmīr, 269.
11 P. Guichard, Structures, 192.
12 Al-'Udhri, 1.
while more than three hundred Christians were captured during an attack on Orihuela in 297/909-10.14

Biographical dictionaries, moreover, confirm the remoteness of the kūras of Tudmīr and Valencia. The origins and itineraries of ‘ulamā’ recorded at the end of the caliphal period by Ibn al-Faradī reflect the concentration of the Arab elite in interior cities such as Cordova, Toledo, and Zaragoza.15 Pierre Guichard noted nine scholars from the region of Valencia and about thirty from Tudmīr – Denia is never mentioned – but these figures are far below those for urban centers further inland. Tudmīr’s higher numbers are the result of ‘Abd al-Rāḥmān II’s establishment of Murcia as a governmental urban pole in the third/ninth century.16 Murcia was in fact an essential center for the diffusion of Islamic material culture beginning in the fourth/tenth century. The Islamicization of Tudmīr progressed at the same rhythm as the development of new urban networks, themselves symptomatic of the determination of the Umayyad state to finally extend its reach into the region.

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16 Al-‘Udhrī, 6/62-3.
Political neglect of the *Sharq al-Andalus*

The entire Andalusī eastern seaboard had been more or less autonomous since the Muslim conquest. Depending on the different treaties signed with the conquering Muslims, the region’s inhabitants kept their independence in exchange for tributary payments and recognition of Islamic authority. Instead of being integrated into the structures of the central regime, Tudmīr, Tortosa, and the Balearics were not only excluded from the major trunk roads, but were also without the political, economic, and cultural Muslim elite that would have been a driving force of Islamicization. The central Umayyad regime’s early satisfaction with tribute and promises of non-aggression thus accentuated the region’s isolation.


18 In his description of Pechina, al-Ḥimyarī writes that the port was settled by sailors who had fled the coast near Tortosa after having broken the pact that they had signed with the Umayyad emir: al-Ḥimyarī (1975), 80; J. Lirola Delgado, *El poder naval de al-Andalus en la época del Califato Omeya* (Granada, 1993), 388.

19 In 234/849, the emir ‘Abd al-Rahmān II sent 300 boats to the Balearics in retaliation for attacks against Muslims perpetrated in violation of the treaty signed between the inhabitants of the Islands and the Umayyad regime. After the punitive expedition, the emir once again granted peace to the Balearics and renewed the treaties in exchange for tributary payments and promises of loyalty: Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān*, 2:91.

Cordova did occasionally show interest in the Mediterranean, but did not have the resources necessary to maintain any kind of real presence there until the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. Umayyad access to naval resources was in fact sporadic at best until the fourth/tenth century. Andalusī maritime activity remained largely private until the later third/ninth century, when a series of crises persuaded the Umayyads of the need for a more active naval policy.

UMAYYAD MARITIME POLICY AND MEDITERRANEAN DEVELOPMENT

The Umayyad emirate did not have a permanent fleet, relying largely on requisitioned boats and private individuals for its naval needs. The first Umayyad caliph, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, was also the first to develop an official fleet with the accompanying maritime infrastructures. In response to a series of crises – Viking raids in 229/844 and 244/858, the rebellion of Ibn Ḥafsūn under Muḥammad I and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, and the Fatimid threat from North Africa – the Cordovan regime took notice of its coasts and the need to actively occupy and invest in them. After the Viking attacks, Seville became the site of the first dār al-ṣinā‘a (i.e. arsenal), armed forces were charged with watching the coast near Tortosa, and watchtowers (mahāris) were built near Almería.21 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III established a second dār al-ṣinā‘a in Algeciras during Ibn Ḥafsūn’s insurrection in order to better control the coast and maritime circulation in the Straits of Gibraltar.22

21 Ibn ‘Iḍhārī, Bayān, 2:97; Al-Ḥimyarī, 183/221; J. Lirola Delgado, El poder naval, 114.
22 E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:90.
Ibn Ḥāfsūn’s rebellion was symptomatic of the weaknesses of the Umayyad regime under Muḥammad I and his sons, but ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was able to face the Fatimids at the height of his power, strengthened by a reconquered al-Andalus. At the beginning of his reign, though, the Umayyad caliphate lacked the maritime infrastructures and political control of coastal regions necessary to secure the peninsula against the Fatimid threat.  

‘Abd al-Raḥmān III established a fleet at Algeciras in 301/914 to prevent Fatimid aid from reaching Ibn Ḥāfsūn. Pechina later became part of the caliphal maritime system, and served as the point of departure for the fleet beginning in 319/931.  

In 321/933, the caliph made sure that the governor of the kūra of Ilbīra had everything necessary to establish the caliphal fleet and shipyards in Almería, Pechina’s port. This transfer reflected in fact a change in the Umayyads’ naval ambitions and needs. The Fatimids had replaced the Vikings as the major maritime threat, and this new conflict implicated not only the Straits of Gibraltar, but also the Western Mediterranean, where Almería offered a better vantage than Algeciras. The port also offered the advantage of an experienced maritime community in the Bahriyyūn settled there since 271/884.  

‘Abd al-Raḥmān III had to respond to many aspects of the Fatimid threat, while also overseeing the development of his own caliphal state. The Fatimid threat centered mainly on the Maghreb, where their expansion endangered the peninsula’s supply of gold coming from Africa. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s policies, and especially his use of monetary emissions as a tangible sign of his caliphal legitimacy, necessitated a secure and continuous access to the sub-Saharan gold that made its way through Sijilmāsa and Fez before reaching the Maghrebi ports: J. Devisse, “La question d’Audaḡust,” in Tegdaoust I. Recherches sur Aoudaghost, ed. D. Robert, S. Robert and J. Devisse (Paris, 1970), 128.


26 Ch. Picard, La mer, 25.
problem committed Cordova to a more ambitious maritime policy, not only from a
defensive point of view, but also offensively, in order to secure its access to the routes
and roads of the Western Mediterranean. Umayyad maritime policy subsequently
was no longer a response to a crisis, but was built around the territorial unity of
Umayyad al-Andalus, an ensemble that now included and went beyond the heretofore
neglected coastal zones. The Umayyad caliphal accession thus symbolized the power
of a regime that was now ready to assimilate politically and economically the
Mediterranean into its own space.

Mediterranean policy and the assimilation of independent ports

The Andalusī maritime provinces rebounded after the crises of Late Antiquity and the
Early Middle Ages. Beginning in the third/ninth century, maritime traffic began to
revive in part through the establishment of modified networks by independent and
stateless communities between the Andalusī, African, Italian, and even Provençal
coasts. Piracy seems to have been one of the principal activities for Western
Mediterranean sailors, having left far more traces in the sources than commercial
exchange, though commerce certainly must have played a role in relations.
Mediterranean economic development, as well as the Umayyads’ progressive
assimilation of their coasts, made piracy into a state affair, integrated in the
caliphate’s maritime policies, while maritime structures were adapted to the needs of
the state. The assimilation of pirate-merchant networks into the Umayyad apparatus
thus contributed to the reintegration of the Iberian Peninsula in the dynamics of the Mediterranean.

Cordovan political disinterest in the *Sharq al-Andalus* was due in large part to the Mediterranean economic situation, the internalized orientation of Andalusī society, and the simple inability of the first Umayyads to cohesively dominate al-Andalus. This disinterest had allowed the fomentation of numerous regional revolts that Cordova could only clumsily handle as long as it lacked the necessary will and resources. The interference caused by these crises often accentuated the region’s isolation, but also promoted independent maritime development.

Pierre Guichard’s study of Andalusī piracy has shown how this activity grew through the cracks in the early Umayyad state.27 The near autonomy of the Valencian *kūra* permitted the development of corsair activities that contributed to the renewal of this maritime zone. The term “corsair” is consciously used here since, although third/ninth-century piracy stemmed from stateless dynamics, the Umayyad regime in many ways approved of these attacks against unbelievers and did not neglect to collect its share of the corsair booty. Indeed, Umayyad maritime policy at this time resembles a tacitly approved and vaguely directed *guerre de course*. Andalusīs may not have led the Saracen raids against Marseilles in 838, Ostia in 841, Arles in 842 and Rome in 846, but Ibn Rustih does write in the third/ninth century that the inhabitants of the Roman coast were plagued by Berber raids from al-Andalus and

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27 The rebellion of ‘Abd Allāh al-Balansī against his nephew al-Ḥakam I, and his subsequent move to Valencia in 796 promoted the expansion of maritime activities in this region since it led to the arrival of North-African sailors and ships come to support the rebel; P. Guichard, “Les débuts,” *passim.*
North Africa. In addition, southern-Italian sources claim Capua and Benevento often solicited Andalusī raiders during their conflict between 841 and 847. In 234/849, when Cordova orchestrated punitive actions against the Balearics, raids were also carried out against the Tuscan and Provençal coasts, and an official Umayyad representative was expedited to Valencia to ensure proper payment of the khums. These combined instances indicate an at least tacit participation by the Umayyad regime in the pirate activities associated with its coasts.

Commerce with the Latin West did exist and was an integral part of Mediterranean traffic, but Andalusī ships came away from Christian coasts more often laden with slaves and booty than peacefully attained merchandise. This piracy in fact increased over the following years, with the establishment of corsair colonies on the eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as along the African, Italian, and Provençal coasts. The nature of these colonies is at times ambiguous, acting


30 Annales Bertiniani, 57; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 2:91.

31 Piracy did not in fact stop maritime activity along the Carolingian coasts, and Saracen ships were not uniquely pirates. Notker Balbulus relates a story that indicates peaceful commercial exchange with the Christian West in the second half of the ninth century. During a trip to Narbonne, Charlemagne supposedly saw a ship arrive claiming to carry Jewish, African and Breton merchants; the emperor’s “wisdom” allowed him to see that they were really Norman pirates. Although the monk’s panegyric enthusiasm causes him to make chronological errors, and Charlemagne was in fact never confronted with Norman pirates, Vikings did attack the Carolingian coasts during Notker’s lifetime. Notker thus relates an admittedly doubtful historical anecdote, but one that must have seemed plausible to him during his own time. The presence of africanos, or Saracen, merchants in Narbonne’s port must not have been so rare as to seem implausible: Notker Balbulus, De gestis Caroli Magni libri duo, M.G.H. SS, t. 2, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hannover, 1824), 757.
simultaneously as “nests of bandits,” trading posts, and relay points in the Mediterranean networks.\textsuperscript{32} The Andalusī colonies were at first private, even renegade, but the Umayyad state slowly absorbed them in its gradual march to the sea.

\textbf{Pechina}

Members of the Yemenite Banū Sirāj established Pechina, augmented by Muslims in \textit{riḥāṭ} guarding the coast against Viking attacks.\textsuperscript{33} In 271/884, however, members of the \textit{Bahriyyūn} who had fled Tortosa settled in Pechina. Inadequate control of the coast during the last years of Muḥammad I’s reign had resulted in the proliferation of semi-autonomous maritime communities along the coast of the \textit{Sharq al-Andalus}. According to al-Ḥīmyarī and al-Bakrī, the “people of the sea” from Tortosa, Tudmīr, and Ilbīrā lived under a treaty signed with Cordova, indicating their status as \textit{muwalladān} and native \textit{dhimmī}.\textsuperscript{34} The renegade \textit{Bahriyyūn} had broken the terms of their treaty by attacking Marchena, and fled to the North-African coast where the inhabitants of Ténès invited them to develop a market. Ténès thus joined the list of Maghribī ports either occupied or founded as Andalusī colonies, along with

\textsuperscript{32} Ch. Picard, “\textit{Bahriyyūn, émirs et califes : l’origine des équipages des flottes musulmanes en Méditerranée occidentale (VIII\textsuperscript{e}-X\textsuperscript{e} siècle),” \textit{Medieval Encounters}, 13 (2007): 437-43; Ch. Picard, “Retour sur la piraterie sarrasine d’al-Andalus contre le monde latin (Italie et Provence) au IX\textsuperscript{e} et X\textsuperscript{e} siècle,” in \textit{Quel mar che la terra inghirlanda. In ricordo di Marco Tangheroni}, t. 2, ed. F. Cardini and M.L. Ceccarelli Lemut (Pisa, 2007), 591 and passim.

\textsuperscript{33} Al-Ḥīmyarī, 37/47, 183/221. On Pechina, see E. Lévi-Provençal, \textit{HEM}, 1:348-356.

Annaba, Bougie, Marsā al-Jujaj, and Banī Jallīdāsin.  

These *Bahriyyūn* and their Andalusī compatriots in fact carried out the circulation of commercial goods between al-Andalus and the Maghreb as much as they did piracy against Christian coasts. The scattering of Andalusī communities among the North African ports clearly indicates their role in maritime commerce and transport. It should be pointed out that even those who primarily practiced piracy were also merchants, since maritime theft is more or less coercive commercialization, and is lucrative only as long booty can be sold.

The community settled in Pechina, continuing its activities and maintaining its relations beyond the territorial and cultural confines of the Umayyad state. The *Bahriyyūn* of Pechina took advantage of ‘Abd Allāh’s accession in 276/889-90 to stabilize their precarious position, paying tribute and asking the new emir to approve their choice of governor. ‘Abd Allāh, weakened by numerous rebellions, acquiesced to their request, authorizing the fortification of Pechina and continued overseas commerce. The guarantees offered by Cordova did little more than sanction the reality of the situation, but did imply governmental power.

Pechina grew independently of state structures, and Cordovan approval of the *Bahriyyūn*’s governors passed through simple requests and ritual payments. The

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36 Members of the Ténès Andalusī community left after a series of epidemics, settling in Pechina near the watchtowers established by Muḥammad I in 244/858. The *Bahriyyūn* convinced the local Banū Sirāj to allow them to establish a market and built a more permanent city. Although under Muslim leadership, a number of the sailors were Christian, as shown by a statue of the Virgin placed over one of the city gates; Al-Bakrī, 62/129, 81/163; E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, 1:352; Ch. Picard, *La mer*, 14; al-Ḥimyarī, 38/48.
instability of the Umayyad regime at the end of the third/ninth century contributed to
the social and economic renewal of seafaring communities, of which Pechina was the
most important, along the Andalusí coast. Nevertheless, as Cordova reestablished its
power over outlying regions, these naval structures increasingly came to serve the
needs of the state. ‘Abd Allâh’s army used Pechina as a base of operations against
Ibn Ḥafṣûn in 297/909, indicating that Cordova was strengthening its ties with the
city.38 When ‘Abd al-Raḥmân III established the caliphal shipyards in Algeciras in
301/914, he further extended Umayyad control over the coast, enrolling local
elements to watch over maritime traffic.

Pechina did not however move immediately into the Cordovan sphere of
influence. Monetary emissions of fulûs (s. fals) in 303/915-6, 305/917-8 and
306/918-9, fictitiously minted under the authority of the defunct Aghlabid regime,
indicate that even after an unsuccessful rebellion in 303/915-6, Pechina’s relationship
with Cordova remained ambiguous.39 Moreover, the minting of fulûs modeled on
Aghlabid Ifrîqiyan coins indicates the strong commercial links between Pechina and
the North Africa coast. The Cordovan assimilation of the Bahriyyûn elite was in fact
a gradual process, first acknowledging their position within the community and then
including them in state affairs.

(Madrid: 1893), 33, no. 337 and 35, no. 44; F. Codera y Zaidin, Tratado de numismática arábigo-
española (Madrid: 1879), 69-74; R. Marin-Guzman, “Political Turmoil in Al-Andalus in the Time of
the Amîr ‘Abd Allâh (888-912): Study of the Revolt of Daysûm Ibn Isâq, Lord of Murcia and Lorca
otro. Una hipótesis sobre los ribâṭ-s del Magrib al-Aqṣâ (siglo IX – inicios del siglo XI),” in El ribâṭ
The port of Pechina officially entered the Umayyad state in 310/922, when the population submitted to the fiscal system of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who also named a loyal supporter as governor of the province. 40 From then on, Cordova increasingly relied on Pechina for its naval needs. The port’s piracy became a state-sponsored activity that Cordova learned to use as a political tool in its relations with both Christians and Muslims.

Indeed, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III used Pechina as the base port for a naval expedition against the opposite shores of the Strait in 319/929. 41 The Umayyad’s choice reflects a growing awareness of the need to occupy the waters of both the Strait and the Mediterranean. It also allowed Cordova to take advantage of the skills of Pechina’s naval community. In fact, during the 319/929 expedition, nine local dignitaries and their mercenary crews accompanied the fleet, accounting for one-seventh of the expedition’s total of 7,000 men. Piracy was one of the port’s primary activities, and the state’s involvement only increased the possibilities for booty. Almería became the seat of the caliphal shipyards two years later. In 321/933, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III ordered that the governor of Ilbīra receive all the means necessary to ensure that the fleet and dār al-ṣināʿa would be capable of fulfilling their mission. 42 Once prepared, part of the fleet was sent to police the waters around the Balearics before attacking the Christian coasts, while another squadron joined the Umayyad forces in Ceuta.

40 Muqtabis V, 181/141.
41 Muqtabis V, 312/236.
42 Muqtabis V, 323-4/243.
These missions illustrate the new role of the Umayyad fleet as an essential tool of territorial control. Cordova had become a maritime power, though not without lingering resistance. In the beginning, Cordova profited from the permeable line between privateering and piracy. The assimilation of these Bahriyyūn incorporated by extension their activities and networks into the state’s apparatus and policies. It is then difficult, and a bit irrelevant, to differentiate between the privateering activities of the caliphal fleet – augmented, it should be pointed out, by private individuals who would later become admirals – and the piracy practiced by those same elements outside the official Umayyad framework. Their attacks and raids were then linked to Umayyad ambitions, and especially the appropriation of the Mediterranean maritime space.

The Umayyad investing of Algeciras, then Pechina, coincided with advances in outlying regions that had heretofore profited from the anarchy of Muḥammad I’s reign. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s maritime policy then evolved according to the different crises – Ibn Ḥafṣūn, the Fatimids – but also according to the growing power that he held over his own maritime space. Almería, as well as secondary ports such as Tortosa and perhaps Denia, became an outpost on the maritime frontier. Cordova effectively used the private initiatives at the origin of Pechina’s naval structures to extend its influence over the sea. The Balearics and Fraxinetum were similarly assimilated, becoming maritime extensions of the Umayyad state and key points in its Mediterranean networks.
Fraxinetum

The Saracen colony at Fraxinetum began when a storm shipwrecked twenty sailors from al-Andalus on the peninsula near Saint-Tropez. The sailors set up camp, sending word back home of choice lands and locals who were weak and easy prey. The arrival of reinforcements solidified their settlement, and the colony quickly became involved in regional power struggles, selling its services to the different factions. It threatened the mountain passes that linked Italy and France, while also raiding up the Rhone valley. More importantly, and as shown by four shipwrecks in the waters between Marseilles and Cannes, Fraxinetum served as a relatively important harbor for Muslim ships in the fourth/tenth century, meriting references to the colony by Arabic geographers of the time.

The shipwrecked sailors and those who later joined them were most likely members of the Bahriyyūn community that had fled the Andalusī coast under Muḥammad I and later settled in Pechina. Al-Ḥimyarī in fact wrote that after their attack on Marchena, the Bahriyyūn moved from place to place, attacking the Frankish and other coasts. The chronology is plausible, and one of the ships found off the coast was carrying ceramic jars similar to those unearthed during an archeological campaign in Pechina. The Bahriyyūn from the Sharq al-Andalus had thus dispersed throughout the Western Mediterranean, establishing colonies on the Iberian,

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43 Liutprand of Cremona, Antapodosis, C.C., 156, Liudprandi Cremonensis, Opera Omnia, ed. P. Chiesa (Turnhout, 1998), 6-7. On Fraxinetum, see the numerous articles by Philippe Sénac, of which the most recent is “Le califat de Cordoue et la Méditerranée occidentale au Xe siècle : le Fraxinet des Maures,” in Castrum 7, 113-126.
45 Al-Ḥimyarī (1975), 80.
Provençal, and North African coasts, maintaining commercial contact, and creating a pirate network that operated largely outside state structures.

Fraxinetum maintained its illicit, or at least ambiguous status until sometime before 328/940, when its qāʾid, or military governor, appears in a document. This was probably similar to the early assimilation of Pechina, with the approval of a locally chosen agent, and not a qāʾid sent from the capital. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III had granted safe passage to ships travelling to al-Andalus from the kingdom of Hugh of Provence, and sent the terms of the treaty to the appropriate agents – most likely those who practiced piracy against Hugh’s subjects. Ibn Ḥayyān provides a list of those concerned, among whom was Naṣr b. Aḥmad, qāʾid of Fraxinetum (Farakhshinīṭ). The colony’s bellicose nature is indicated by the fact that the ranking Umayyad agent there was a qāʾid, while elsewhere the treaty was sent to administrative governors, ‘ummāl.

Ibn Ḥawqal describes agricultural production and fertile land in Fraxinetum, but the colony was neither urban nor stable, similar to the Saracen colony that occupied the mouth of the Garigliano until 915. Philippe Sénac has pointed out that no biographical dictionaries list intellectual figures in association with the colony. The four ships discovered along the coast belonged to the same milieu as the pirate-merchants of Pechina, and while they certainly practiced commerce, at least one was the victim of violence. The ships carried millstones as ballast, most likely replacing

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47 Muqtabis V, 454/341.
49 Traces of fire and injured bodies were found on at least one ship; Ph. Sénac, “Le califat de Cordoue,” 124.
(human) booty sold in Andalusī markets. Ibn Ḥawqal wrote that the colony was held by mujāhidīn who threatened the Franks with impunity.⁵⁰ A Greek fleet patrolling Mediterranean waters chased pirates back to Fraxinetum in 931.⁵¹ Fraxinetum was little more than a pirate haven and relay point between al-Andalus and the Italian and Provence coasts. As Cordova extended its reach into the Mediterranean, and adopted the guerre de course as a political tool, Fraxinetum was brought into the system, probably by way of its contacts with Pechina.

Umayyad interest in Fraxinetum’s privateering is perhaps evident in an expedition in 323/933, when a fleet was launched from Pechina, only to turn back at the Balearics because of harsh weather.⁵² The expedition may have been a response to the Byzantine attack on the colony two years earlier, and, as we shall see, the Balearics served as the staging point for naval raids in the Gulf of Lyon and Tyrrhenian Sea. A more successful expedition attacked Ampurias and the Catalan coasts in 325/935.⁵³ The retributive destruction of these expeditions, as well as the material and human booty that they generated, underline how the integration of the corsair colonies into the Umayyad state also led to an assimilation of their operations.

Umayyad maritime policy had clearly undergone a substantial change since the first Viking attacks in the third/ninth century. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II and Muḥammad I had worked to protect better the Andalusī coasts, but ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III had gone

⁵¹ Flodoard, Annales, M.G.H. SS, 3, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hannover, 1839), 379.
⁵² Muqtabis V, 323-4/243.
⁵³ Muqtabis V, 366-8/275-6; D. Bramon, De quan érem o no musulmans (Barcelona, 2000), 279, ns. 69, 70.
on the offensive. This policy was not simply a response to Fatimid threats or a move to conduct *jihād* against Christian coasts, but was an integral part of the appropriation of the coastal regions. The Cordovan court not only came into contact with the *Bahriyyūn* and their sometimes illicit activities, but it also adopted the *guerre de course* that resembled in many ways the yearly *suwāʿif* raids against the Christian north. Pechina and Fraxinetum became part of the Umayyad naval apparatus, including those who had led in the pursuit of piracy. As he expanded his interests into the Mediterranean, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III came to rely on the structures that he found along the way, namely the social, economic and political elite of the coastal communities. Muḥammad b. Rumāḥīs, who, as a private individual, had contributed his own resources to the first Umayyad naval expeditions out of Pechina, became admiral of the fleet and then governor of the *kūra* of Ilbīra in 328/940. He led a caliphal expedition in 331/943 that raided the Frankish coast as far as Marseilles, while another expedition a few years later targeted Byzantine interests in the central Mediterranean. 

This last expedition may have been in support of the colony at Fraxinetum. In 942, King Hugh of Provence attacked Fraxinetum in concert with a Byzantine fleet, initially seeking to eradicate the troublesome pirates and raiders. Hugh was victorious, but decided to send the Greeks away and sign a pact with the Saracens to use them against his rival, Beranger. The same year, Hugh avoided an invasion of

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Magyars by providing them with a guide to Spain, where Ibn Ḥayyān noted their destruction. Ibn Rumāhī’s 331/943 expedition seems then to have been retribution for Hugh’s actions, in support of Fraxinetum, while the Umayyad admiral took advantage of an expedition against Fatimid al-Mahdiya in 334/945 to also attack Byzantine targets. As late as 334/945 then, the Umayyad fleet was actively pursuing corsair activities in concert with the Bahriyyūn communities.

Fraxinetum and Pechina were not the only points in Cordova’s newly acquired network of Mediterranean regions and relays. The Umayyad regime had profitably applied the same policy of conciliating with cooperative private interests to the Balearics, definitively bringing the islands under its control through the process of recognition, assimilation, and appropriation.

The Balearic Islands

The Balearics had escaped direct Cordovan authority during the fitna at the end of the third/ninth century. After the 234/849 expedition, and the 235/850 treaty, integration into the Umayyad state was interrupted – if it had ever really begun – and the Balearics passed back into the dār al-ḥarb. Thus in 290/902, the emir ʿAbd

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56 Liutprand, Antapodosis, 134; Muqtabis V, 481/361.
57 Al-ʿUdhrī, 82. The Sefer ha-qabbalah mentions an expedition by Ibn Rumāhī against Byzantine territories, during which he captured a boat carrying four rabbis traveling from Bari to Palestine; Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 63.
Allāh authorized a privately-led jihād that brought the islands back under Cordova’s influence.⁵⁹

‘Iṣām al-Khiwalānī had solicited the emir for permission and aid in taking the islands, after having stopped there on his pilgrimage to Mecca. ‘Abd Allāh agreed, and the expedition resembled the one launched from Pechina around the same time, since Umayyad naval resources were augmented by the “rich people” accompanying al-Khiwalānī. Al-Khiwalānī in fact owned the boat he had taken on his hājj, and was most likely an analogous character to Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis. He belonged to the Mediterranean maritime culture, perhaps as a member of the Bahriyyūn community. Like Ibn Rumāḥis, al-Khiwalānī adapted to the new political situation, transitioning from private piracy to state-approved guerre de course, and received the governorship (wilāya) of the islands. The Umayyad state in return expanded its role in the licit pirate activities of the coast, while also extending its control over the maritime provinces.

Pierre Guichard wrote that Cordova’s reaction was the simple approval of a conquest that it would not have been able to carry out itself.⁶⁰ Ibn Khiwalānī’s private initiative was certainly rewarded with a government appointment, and Cordova probably did lack the ability or confidence to undertake such an effort, but ‘Abd Allāh did recognize and act on the opportunity when it was offered to him,

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investing his own resources to assure its success.\textsuperscript{61} ‘Abd Allāh’s contribution was most likely essential, since Ibn Khaldūn describes a long campaign during which al-Khiwalānī had to conquer the island ḥiṣn by ḥiṣn.\textsuperscript{62} Al-Khiwalānī disposed of considerable personal resources, but the conquest described was most likely beyond the means of isolated pirates and sailors. \textit{Jihād} necessitated caliphal approval, but al-Khiwalānī also needed ‘Abd Allāh’s help to assure a successful invasion. The Balearics, like Pechina and Fraxinetum, thus passed back under Cordova’s nominal authority.

Al-Khiwalānī’s work did not end with the conquest, and his efforts served his and Cordova’s interests. Ibn Khaldūn relates the island’s Islamicization through the construction of mosques and baths, while the establishment of merchant inns (\textit{funduq} / pl. \textit{fanādiq}) encouraged commerce. The Balearics were thus different from Fraxinetum, devoid as it was of urban structures, and the \textit{fanādiq} indicate a policy of integrating the islands into the Mediterranean commercial networks and not of relying solely on piracy.

The Umayyad regime also seems to have been more interested in the Balearics, perhaps in part because of their proximity. While Fraxinetum remained part of a military framework under its qā’id, al-Khiwalānī was named wālī of the islands, to be succeeded by his son who would exercise the wilāya until leaving for

\textsuperscript{61} This exploitation of private initiatives by the state is comparable to the early modern use of mercantile companies. As Joseph Strayer wrote, “The founding of colonies was a conspicuous example of well-to-do men performing a function that seemed desirable to, but beyond the resources of, early modern states”; \textit{On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State} (Princeton, 1970), 106.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibn Khaldūn, \textit{Kitāb al-‘ibar}, 4:353.
Moreover, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III underlined his interest by naming an ‘amil to the islands in 318/930-1. Indeed, although the term wālī can be ambiguous in terms of official responsibilities and subjugation to state authority, the ‘amil was a Cordovan fiscal agent, an official representative of Umayyad administration. Umayyad interest in the islands was not isolated, but was rather part of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s program to expand his influence in the Western Mediterranean and to consolidate his hold over the Sharq al-Andalus.

The Balearics served as a supply and meeting point for the caliphal fleet from then on, while also continuing its role as a major center for privateering. Majorca became the Umayyad Mediterranean outpost, linking Almería, the Sharq al-Andalus and Fraxinetum. In this role, the Balearics seem to have served along with Tortosa for Mediterranean campaigns against Christian coasts, and not in conjunction with attacks against Fatimid North Africa. Both the 321/933 and 323/935 campaigns against Frankish targets stopped over in Majorca. During the 323/935 campaign, the fleet completed preparations in Majorca, continued on to attack Ampurias and Barcelona, then passed through Tortosa on its return. The governor (‘amil) of Majorca was ordered to allow ships from Italy to pass in 328/940, and was probably among the “governors of the coasts” (‘ummāl al-sawāḥil) and “commanders of the fleet” (quwwād al-‘uṣṭūl) notified of peace with Barcelona the same year. Umayyad

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63 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
64 Muqtabis V, 285/215.
Mediterranean policy thus relied on the Balearics, and their incorporation into the state apparatus was essential for its success.

Cordovan control over the islands was not however without problems. When the new ‘amil was named in 321/933, a caliphal fleet was sent along as a preventive measure. The fleet was expedited again in 333/945 to accompany the new qāḍī, and Cordova sent an expedition in 366/947-8 to suppress an insurrection. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III named one of his own clients to replace al-Khiwalānī’s son as governor (wālī) when he left for the Orient in 350/961. Through his nomination of the qāḍī, ‘amil and wālī, the caliph thus reinforced his fiscal, administrative, military and juridical control over the islands. The wālī al-Muwaffaq invested considerable resources in the development of naval structures, and Ibn Khaldūn links the augmentation of the Balearic fleet with attacks on the Frankish coasts. The following lines in the Kitāb al-‘ibar describe a series of Umayyad clients and their Cordovan-supported jihād against the Christian Western Mediterranean. Although on the periphery of Cordova’s centralizing power, a situation that would facilitate their scission during the fitna, the Umayyad regime knew how to use the Balearics’ position on the maritime frontier to advance its presence in the Mediterranean.

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67 Muqtabis V, 331/249, 324/243.
69 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
70 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
Control over the *Sharq al-Andalus*

The Umayyad regime was able to impose its *mamlaka* on the coastal regions through a series of military actions and conquests. A series of caliphal fortifications at first allowed the state to keep the area under watch, facilitating then its integration into the Umayyad fiscal and tributary system. The installation of Umayyad power along the coast passed through the ports and shipyards. On a human level, Cordova was largely able to assimilate local elites into governmental structures, as seen in Pechina, Fraxinetum and the Balearics. This policy allowed Cordova to use the coastal communities to link continental and Mediterranean networks, to appropriate the possibilities they offered. Piracy became *guerre de course*, a source of profit and power, while awakening Christian ports offered new economic possibilities. Over time, the Umayyad then ‘Āmirid regimes intervened more and more in maritime affairs. Cordova relied on local elites, but also developed a real maritime policy practiced by its own agents.

**Campaigns of conquest and consolidation**

Umayyad power extended towards the coasts and Mediterranean networks along with the reconquest of neighboring dissident zones. Ibn Ḥafsūn’s revolt is the most well known, but at its nadir, Cordovan authority was limited to the city’s surrounding area. ‘Abd Allāh then ‘Abd al-Rahmān III had to face not only the famous *muwallad* rebel, but also revolts in the Algarve, the Middle and Upper
Marches, and the *Sharq al-Andalus*. The regional independence provoked by these rebellions allowed the development of private and non-state commercial and pirate networks among littoral and Mediterranean communities. Cordova adapted at first to these networks and the way they functioned. Recognizing de facto local powers gave the Umayyads a semblance of authority, while assimilating private initiatives allowed the regime to extend its influence into areas where its means were limited. Cordova practiced these methods together with real military and diplomatic campaigns, integrating the *Sharq al-Andalus* into the Andalusī system while also extending its reach into the Mediterranean.

Less than a century before the fall of the caliphate, the *Sharq al-Andalus* was still vacillating between Cordova and its own interests. The region was the first to loosen its political ties with Cordova, despite the capital’s efforts, conquests, urban and fortification networks. The *Sharq al-Andalus*’ entry into the Andalusī system under ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III’s caliphate offered the region better communications with the rest of the peninsula, without necessarily cutting its ties with the Mediterranean. Thus, when the caliphate disintegrated at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century, Denia and its neighboring taifas could separate from the Umayyad political structure, while still acting as intermediaries between the peninsula and the sea.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III brought local elites into the Umayyad system, implanting the system itself through a fiscal and political administration supported by

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fortifications and urban structures. Umayyad efforts to reclaim the *Sharq al-Andalus* advanced through three major campaigns: in 304/916-7, during the 312/924-5 expedition against Pamplona, and in 317/929-30. Cordova’s conquests secured its control over the Andalusī Mediterranean coastline along with its maritime access and networks. Organizational reforms and decrees in Tortosa’s districts in 312/924 complemented Pechina’s entry into the Umayyad state in 310/921-2. The defeat of the Banū al-Shaykh in the *kūra* of Tudmīr in 316-7/928-9, along with the repossession of Chinchilla and the *ḥiṣn* of Shant Bītar secured Cordovan access to the eastern ports. The following year’s expulsion of the Banū Jawshan from Sagunto, north of Valencia, and Játiva finalized the new caliph’s hold over the *Sharq al-Andalus*.

The caliphal assimilation of this region, either through conquest or approbation of *faits accomplis*, as in the case of Pechina or the Balearics, was furthered by the nomination of governors (*ummāl*) in 317/929-30 and 318/930-1. Ibn Hayyān provides a list of provincial governors for the year 317/929 including the *kūra/s* of Tortosa, Valencia and Játiva, Tudmīr and Ilbīra, and mentions the nomination of a new *ʿamil* for the Balearics in 318/930-1. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III was thus pursuing a double policy, using non-state structures already in place, adapting

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72 The emir ʿAbd Allāh had previously attempted to bring Tudmīr under control when faced with the revolt of Daysām b. Ishāq: R. Marín-Guzmán, “Political Turmoil,” 159-60; *Muqtabis III*, 114-118; al-ʿUdhri, 12/77; *Bayān*, 2:138.


74 *Muqtabis V*, 249-50; *Crónica de ʿArīb*, 212; *Bayān*, 2:216; *Crónica anónima de ʿAbd al-Rahman III*, 82.

75 *Muqtabis V*, 253-4, 330-1.
them to his caliphal maritime ambitions, while also imposing Umayyad agents through which he could govern the provinces. Political and fiscal administration passed through agents supported by urban and rural structures, sometimes fortified, while the construction of ports, shipyards and maritime fortifications extended rule to the shores of the Mediterranean.

The ribāṭ of Guardamar and the assimilation of networks

Aḥmad b. Bahlūl b. Zarb ordered the construction of a mosque on the site of a ribāṭ near Guardamar in 333/944. The mosque’s construction coincided in fact with a radical modification of the site. The ribāṭ, heretofore only seasonal and intermittently occupied, was partially destroyed and replaced by a permanent, more monumental and religious structure. Ceramic indicators demonstrate moreover a close commercial relationship between the ribāṭ and regional zones of urban production during this second phase. The ribāṭ of Guardamar reflects the spread of Cordovan influence through local elites as well as the concomitant urbanization and Islamicization of the kūra of Tudmīr.

The recently published definitive study of the caliphal ribāṭ of Guardamar reevaluates the role of these structures in the religious, commercial and political life of the Mediterranean coasts. Long seen as a means of improving coastal

78 El ribāṭ califal.
surveillance through the establishment of pious warrior communities, these sites were in fact initially built through private commercial and religious initiatives.\textsuperscript{79} An analysis of the different known \textit{ribât}s in the Western Mediterranean points to their commercial functions, indicated by their position at the junction of land and maritime communications. The maritime communities handily exploited the mercantile possibilities of sites like Guardamar and San Carles de la Ràpita near Tortosa, both of which were at the mouth of rivers: the Segura for Guardamar and the Ebro for San Carles.\textsuperscript{80} During a period of limited urbanization, these \textit{ribât}s served as centers of exchange for rural communities without access to the commercial structures typical of the urban world. Gutiérrez Lloret in fact linked the extinction of Guardamar with the abandonment of \textit{qurâ} in the Lower Segura following the restructuration of the region around the city of Orihuela, a pole of Umayyad caliphal urban society.\textsuperscript{81}

\textit{Ribât}s also played an active role in the Islamicization of littoral zones. While the cultural Islamicization of the Lower Segura preceded the \textit{ribât} of Guardamar, Gutiérrez Lloret ties its “important religious significance” to its role in regional proselytism.\textsuperscript{82} In fact, from the beginning Guardamar was characterized by decidedly devotional grouped settlements whose religious nature only increased over time.\textsuperscript{83} As

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\item \textsuperscript{80} R. Azuar Ruiz, “De \textit{ribâth} a rábita,” 225.
\item \textsuperscript{81} S. Gutiérrez Lloret, “El \textit{ribâth} antes del \textit{ribâth}. El contexto material y social del \textit{ribâth} antiguo,” \textit{El ribâth califal}, 86.
\item \textsuperscript{82} S. Gutiérrez Lloret, “El \textit{ribâth} antes del \textit{ribâth},” 85.
\item \textsuperscript{83} R. Azuar Ruiz, “De \textit{ribâth} a rábita,” 225, 230.
\end{itemize}
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R. Azuar Ruiz succinctly explains, the *ribāṭ* was simultaneously mercantile and religious, dedicated to commerce and the expansion of Islam.

State dynamics did not establish the *ribāṭ*, rather it was part of the “development of routes and commercial relays that characterized the coasts of al-Andalus at the end of the third/ninth and beginning of the fourth/tenth centuries.”84 This pious and mercantile settlement was thus part of the same dynamic that saw the establishment of communities in Ténès, Pechina and Fraxinetum. Moreover, as with Pechina and Fraxinetum, the Umayyad state assimilated these private independent structures by including members of the *Bahriyyūn* elite in the Cordovan system.

Cordova seems to have followed a specific policy in its relations with the maritime communities of Pechina and Guardamar. This policy becomes clear in light of hypotheses presented by Patrice Cressier concerning the Banū Bahlūl.85 Cressier is able to reconstruct the clan, linking the founder of the third/ninth-century mosque at the Maghribī *ribāṭ* in Māssa, Bahlūl, with two Cordovan market inspectors between 302/914-5 and 313/925-6, Aḥmad b. Ḥabīb b. Bahlūl and Aḥmad b. Bahlūl, the Ibn Bahlūl who minted imitation Aghlabid *fulūs* in Pechina in 303/915-6, 305/917-8 and 306/918-9, and finally the Aḥmad b. Bahlūl b. Zarb who ordered the restoration of the Guardamar mosque in 333/944.86 Cressier points out the difficulty of clearly linking on the one hand the possibly Shiite Bahlūl from Māssa and Aḥmad b. Bahlūl b. Zarb’s “unorthodox” *ribāṭ* with the Cordovan *ṣāḥib/s al-sūq* dependent on the

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Umayyad regime on the other. Nevertheless, he explains that this hypothesis does coincide with the “progressive expansion of the Cordovan state’s control over a group of initiatives and processes created outside its own environment.”

Indeed, Cordova’s engagement with local elements under ‘Abd Alläh and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was a blend of both public and private, and its control over outlying regions remained imprecise. The Banū Bahlūl provide in fact an example of how the Umayyad state managed its relations with these networks and gradually incorporated them into its own dynamics.

The link between the ribāṭ of Māssa, a pious and commercial settlement, and the port of Pechina, itself founded on the site of a ribāṭ by merchant sailors, makes sense given relations between Western Mediterranean maritime communities. Like Ténès, Guardamar was established as a seasonal colony on a site chosen for its commercial potential. Tudmīr maintained closer economic and even religious relations with North Africa than with Cordova: under ‘Abd Alläh and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, the ‘ulamā’ of the region studied not in Cordova, but in Qayrawān, Miṣr, and Medina. There was thus a communications network that included the ribāṭ/s and ports of Māssa, Pechina and Guardamar, along with Fraxinetum, Mayūrqa and the different Andalusī colonies along the African coast. It remains to be seen, however, how the state was able to recuperate this network created beyond its reach by independent maritime communities.

87 P. Cressier, “De un ribāṭ a otro,” 217.
‘Abd Allāh’s approval of the Bahriyyūn choice for governor in 276/889-90 shows perhaps Cordova’s inability to install its own agent in Pechina. Nevertheless, it also marks a renewal of Umayyad involvement in littoral matters. Cordova was able to gradually appropriate regional power by accepting the governors nominated by the Bahriyyūn and intervening in local affairs when requested. In this way, the networks built by coastal communities remained intact, while local elites, such as Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis, kept their power while also integrating Andalusī political society.

This process explains the dispersion of, and roles played by, members of the Banū Bahlūl from Māssa to Pechina, Cordova, and Guardamar. Bahlūl, possibly descended from an Islamicized family from the Upper March, was important enough to found the mosque in Māssa.89 Circulation between Māssa and Pechina would have been logical, especially given the mercantile nature of both sites. In fact, this circulation, involving the Maghrībī, Ifrīqiyan, and Andalusī coasts, explains the imitation Aghlabid fulūs minted at Pechina by Ibn Bahlūl between 303/915-6 and 306/918-9. Pechina was not necessarily rejecting Umayyad rule with these pieces – no rebellions are mentioned for Pechina after 303/915-690 – but was simply responding to local fiduciary needs. Despite its growing political ties with Cordova, Pechina was still part of an economic zone dominated by Mediterranean markets, in which Ifrīqiyan coins were the common currency.

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89 Cressier tentatively relates Bahlūl to Bahlūl b. Marzuk, who had rebelled against al-Ḥakam I in the Upper March around 184/800; P. Cressier, “De un ribāt a otro,” 216, n. 76; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 1: 154-6.
90 Muqtabis V, 111-2.
The relationship between the Ibn Bahlūl whose name appears on the Pechina fulūs and the two Cordovan market inspectors mentioned in 302/914-5 and 313/925-6 is not evident. However, one of the chief responsibilities of the šāhib al-sūq was monetary vigilance, involving an awareness of mercantile needs and monetary supply. Market inspectors could also head the official mint (al-sikka), as in the case of Yahyā b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūnis al-Murādī under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. It is possible then, as suggested by Patrice Cressier and S. Fontenla Ballesta, that the Ibn Bahlūl on the Pechina fulūs is in fact the Aḥmad b. Bahlūl named as market inspector in Cordova in 313/925-6.

This member of the Banū Bahlūl acted then as an intermediary between the Umayyad and Mediterranean worlds. His authority was probably similar to the governor’s, chosen by the local elite and approved by Cordova. Aḥmad b. Bahlūl illustrates then the independence of coastal communities, but also the way in which Cordova could lean on and assimilate the leaders of those communities, thereby absorbing their human and material resources.

Aḥmad b. Bahlūl continued to combine the interests of Cordova and his own milieu after quitting his functions as market inspector. We can most likely identify him with the person of the same name who ordered the reconstruction of the mosque at Guardamar in 333/944. Coinciding radical modifications transformed the ribāṭ from a simple seasonal trading and religious post to a pole for the spread of Islamic

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material and urban culture. The homogenous ceramic material from this second phase of occupation points to close commercial ties with workshops in Murcia and Elche.\textsuperscript{94} Sonia Gutiérrez Lloret notes in fact a technological and decorative standardization throughout Tudmîr at this time, and associates it with the integration of rural communities in urban networks as part of the overall process of caliphal expansion.\textsuperscript{95} Thus through Aḥmad b. Bahūl’s intermediary status between the state and maritime communities, Guardamar was brought into the Umayyad commercial and cultural network, serving even as a point of diffusion for the extension of Cordovan interests in the region.

Guardamar’s reconstruction was probably also part of Umayyad maritime policy, linked to the need to watch over the Andalusî coasts. Even if the site was originally established for non-strategic commercial and religious reasons, the second phase of occupation coincides with important changes in Cordova’s relationship with the sea. The \textit{ribāṭ} itself was not fortified, but it did occupy an ideal site for coastal surveillance at a time when the caliphate was moving to counter Fatimid power in the Mediterranean. Without denying its civilian mercantile functions, the \textit{ribāṭ} could serve a strategic purpose. Christophe Picard underlines the general association between these structures and the need to defend ports and estuaries in correlation with


the Viking threat, the Fatimids, and expansionist Umayyad policies for North Africa.96

Guardamar seems in fact to have been part of a larger program of Umayyad maritime policy aimed at recuperating independent coastal sites for use in its Mediterranean campaigns. The same year that Aḥmad b. Bahlūl began construction on the mosque, most likely acting under Umayyad authority, the shipyards in Tortosa were expanded and brought under caliphal authority.97 These actions themselves coincide with a period of intense maritime conflict with the Fatimids in which navies from both sides captured ships and raided principal ports.98 Guardamar’s reconstruction was then a defensive component in a larger offensive maritime policy against the Fatimids.

The Banū Bahlūl and the Banū Rumāḥis underline Cordova’s flexible use of local notable families in a policy that largely blurred the line between public and private affairs. Thus, Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis had led private Bahriyyūn elements in Umayyad expeditions before leading those same elements as admiral and governor of the kūra of Ilbīra. In the same way, the reconstruction of the ribāṭ of Guardamar was sponsored by another member of this maritime elite who had also served in an important post in the caliphal administration. Aḥmad b. Bahlūl’s action no doubt

96 C. Picard, La mer, 149-151; R. Azuar Ruiz, “Atalayas, almenaras y rābitas,” in Al-Andalus y el Mediterráneo (Málaga, 1995), 74.  
served personal needs, but he was also aware of Cordova’s strategic interests in the site.

The Umayyad caliphate under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III developed then an ambitious policy that brought the coastal provinces under its authority, maintaining them as an active frontier against Christendom and the Fatimid threat and exploiting their commercial potential.

Commercial Policy and Treaties with the Christian West

The coastal fortifications and shipyards, in conjunction with the different expeditions against the Christian coasts give a first impression of a policy of violence based on religious and sectarian conflict. Yet, towards the middle of the century, Cordovan aims began to shift. Now stable in the Sharq al-Andalus, the Umayyad regime moved to exploit the economic resources of the coastal zones. This meant in part continuing the naval raids against Christendom, a source of booty and especially slaves, but it also meant a move towards commercial exchange with those same regions. The expansion of Umayyad power in the Western Mediterranean through coastal installations, the Balearics and Fraxinetum gave Cordova the power to dictate treaties to Christian powers seeking access to Mediterranean sea lanes and Iberian markets. The caliphate thus doubly profited from its newly developed maritime infrastructures, imposing Islamic hegemony over the sea while also encouraging the integration of Andalusī ports in Mediterranean economic networks.

This new economic policy set in gradually, and did not in fact halt jihād and maritime raids against Christian coasts. Nevertheless, there is a clear pattern of
accommodation with the West, and a desire to protect burgeoning relations between Andalusī and Christian markets. Thus, even while continuing to expand its maritime presence through military and naval actions, Cordova was also defining its frontiers and political space through treaties.

Peace treaties

‘Abd al-Raḥmān III seems to have developed this double policy from fairly early on in his caliphate. Once Umayyad naval power was established, he did not solely seek to use it as an offensive tool, but consciously applied it to impose beneficial diplomatic relations. The caliph ordered the fleet to anchor off the coast of Barcelona in 328/940 to help encourage the count Suñer to negotiate peace with Cordova. 99 The same year, Abd al-Raḥmān III received a delegation from Hugh of Provence in seeking safe-conduct for his merchants to conduct business in al-Andalus.100 The possible reading of “Arles” for the delegation’s provenance underlines the considerable effects of Fraxinetum’s pirate activities along the coast of Provence, explaining the specific mention of the colony’s qāʿid among those concerned by the negotiations.101 The caliph ordered his coastal governors, those responsible for pursuing the guerre de course against the Christian coasts, to allow Hugh’s merchants and ships peaceful access to al-Andalus. He also commanded his

99 Muqtabis V, 454.
100 It is not clear whether Hugh’s agents were already in Barcelona and profited from the situation to negotiate their own treaty, or whether this involved separate diplomatic efforts.
101 Muqtabis V, 454, n. 3. Hugh’s attack two years later on Fraxinetum indicates that the qāʿid Naṣr b. Ḍārūḍ was in fact not honoring the terms of the treaty.
naval forces to avoid Suñer’s lands and honor the peace signed with his subjects.\textsuperscript{102} While negotiations with Barcelona equally concerned Iberian politics and the need to manage recalcitrant Pamplona, Ibn Ḥayyān highlights the commercial implications of the treaty with Hugh: “Their boats began to come to al-Andalus from that time, and they profited greatly.”\textsuperscript{103}

‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s desire to balance naval aggression and maritime commerce is again evident in the arrival at the caliphal court of merchants from Amalfi in 330/942.\textsuperscript{104} Ibn Ḥayyān writes that such a thing would have been impossible before the caliph’s reign, and that all involved, both the merchants and the caliph, benefited from the relations codified by the treaty. Amalfitan merchants became so common in al-Andalus in fact that Ibn Ḥayyān designates them by name, \textit{Malfīyyīn} or \textit{Mafṭāḥīn}, and not simply \textit{Rūm}. Thus, only two years before establishing the caliphal shipyards in Tortosa and the \textit{ribāṭ} in Guardamar, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III was defining the acceptable limits for Andalusī pirates.

The Amalfitans were not the only merchants to benefit from Cordova’s new policy. An ambassador from Sardinia accompanied another Amalfitan group in August of 330/942 to ask for peace and friendship from the Umayyad court.\textsuperscript{105} Sardinia was one of the principal points of passage for ships in the Western

\textsuperscript{102} The treaty signed with Barcelona was most likely not restricted to maritime affairs. Elsewhere, the count specifically received income from transhumances between Catalan lands and Tortosa: “\textit{Et iterum donoque ego Sunarius comes, de ipsum deum directum quod ego debeo recipere de ipsas raficas in Tortuosa, omnem decimam…}.” \textit{Diplomatari de la catedral de Barcelona. Documents dels anys 844-1000}, ed A. Fabrega i Grau (Barcelona, 1995), 224, no. 30.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Proto arabic} text deferred to the end of aExists, is the Arabian text deferred to the end of a double column.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Muqtabis V}, 478.

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Muqtabis V}, 485.
Mediterranean, connecting al-Andalus and Sicily and linking the Tyrrhenian and Provençal ports. The island was thus a common target for both North-African and Andalusī pirates who regularly disrupted Christian navigation along its sea-lanes. The Fatimid fleet, for example, attacked the island on its way back from an expedition against Genoa in 323/934-5, harassing Rūm ships coming from Spain.106 A few years earlier, a Byzantine fleet chased pirates from Fraxinetum back to their homeport, having probably encountered them in Sard waters.107 With their safe-conduct pass, the Amalfitans would have passed through Sardinia on their way to al-Andalus, easily convincing the Sards of the advantages of signing a treaty with Cordova.

Cordova continued to define diplomatically its dominant position in the Western Mediterranean, signing treaties with Guy of Tuscany and the Pope (ṣāhib Rūma).108 The Tuscan embassy illustrates not only the geographic extent of the Andalusī pirates, but also the renewal of maritime activities in ports such as Pisa that would later play an essential role in Denia’s commercial networks. The Pisans in fact began their reintegration of Mediterranean shipping as early as the beginning of the tenth century, since one of the first events mentioned in the city’s annals is the expulsion of the Saracen colony at Garigliano in 915.109 Following the coast to the lucrative Sicilian and Calabrian markets, the Pisans necessarily had to face the Garigliano pirates, and their elimination certainly facilitated Pisan maritime

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106 Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh, 4:568/52; Idrīs, Tārīkh al-khulafā‘, 262; Liudprand, Antapodosis, 98.
107 Flodoard, Annales, 379.
108 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:143.
109 Annales pisani, 238.
commerce. Guy’s delegate to Cordova may have been seeking protection from Fraxinetum’s pirates, but Pisan commercial ambitions for Andalusī markets may have also played a role.\footnote{The papal delegation seems to have been in Cordova to secure relics. Al-‘Udhrī (p. 7) mentions a papal envoy in 350/960-1 asking for access to an olive tree that flowered every Christmas.}

Philippe Sénac has highlighted the convergence of treaties and diplomatic envoys in the Cordovan court in the last years of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s reign.\footnote{Ph. Sénac, “Contribution à l’étude des relations diplomatiques entre l’Espagne musulmane et l’Europe au Xᵉ siècle : le règne de ‘Abd Ar-Raḥmān III (912-961),” Studia islamica, 61 (1985): 45-55; Ph. Sénac, “Note sur les relations diplomatiques entre les comtes de Barcelone et le califat de Cordoue au Xᵉ siècle,” in Histoire et archéologie des terres catalanes au Moyen Age, ed. Ph. Sénac (Perpignan, 1995), 87-102.} In addition to those mentioned, embassies were also exchanged with Constantinople and the court of Otto I. Sénac argues for an evolution in Cordova’s maritime policy, and a choice to favor commercial relations over piracy.\footnote{Ph. Sénac, “Contribution,” 54-5.} While this may be true, and traces of Andalusī pirate activities in the second half of the fourth/tenth century are scant, the expansion of Cordova’s naval capacity, and its use of the fleet in conjunction with diplomatic negotiations indicates that more than commerce was involved. The agreement signed in 328/940 with Suñer for example was coerced, and the presence of the caliphal fleet in Barcelona’s harbor convinced the Catalan count that it was in his best interests to cooperate. The treaty signed was not simply commercial, allowing Catalan merchants to circulate, but imposed a regular tribute payment and the cancellation of a marital alliance with Pamplona. The treaty signed with Hugh of Provence is not as explicitly described, but ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III most likely demanded tributary payments in exchange for allowing Hugh’s ships to
circulate unmolested, as was likely the case with Guy of Tuscany as well. The Umayyad regime was allowing Christian merchants access to its markets, but it was also asserting its dominant position and the dominant position of Islam, relegating the Christian powers of the Western Mediterranean to tributary status.

The treaties do not signify, moreover, that the *guerre de course* against Christian shipping stopped. Negotiations involved the subjects and ships of specific polities, and did not in any way involve blanket protection for merchants or other sailors. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III ordered his governors and fleet commanders to respect Suñer’s people and territory, while Ibn Ḥayyān’s description of the treaty signed with Hugh implies only safe-conduct for merchants peacefully entering al-Andalus. These terms in fact recall a third/ninth-century *fatwā* published by Mohamed Talbi:

As for Christian ships that come [towards us], whether they be near or far from port, it is not permitted to capture them if they are known to have commercial relations with Muslims, unless they are in their own waters or are heading towards a land that is not Islamic. If the ship is not publicly known to specialize in commerce with Muslims, its capture is licit.113

Abd al-Raḥmān III’s diplomacy then did not end piracy, but incorporated it as a tool in his greater Mediterranean policy of Umayyad hegemony, both political and economic.

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Piracy, guerre de course, and commerce

Fraxinetum continued to operate as a corsair colony until 974, despite Cordova’s assurances and directives. One of the colony’s most famous actions in fact was the capture of the Abbot Maieul of Cluny in 972. \(^{114}\) ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III considered in fact a request by Otto I around 950 for friendship and an end to Fraxinetum’s activities as an insult to his court and to Islam, though he may have later accepted the German emperor’s offer. \(^{115}\) It is also possible that the embassies sent by Constantinople and Otto II to al-Ḥakam II’s court in 361/972 and 363/974 were in relation to the colony’s continued perturbation of roads and sea-lanes. \(^{116}\) At the least, they must have sought the renewal of the maritime agreements implicating Fraxinetum signed under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III.

Latin sources do not mention Saracen raids in the second half of the fourth/tenth century, but this does not mean that Cordova abandoned piracy as a state tool. Ibn Khaldūn lists a series of governors for the Balearics beginning in 350/961 until the fitna, with each actively pursuing maritime jihād. \(^{117}\) The central regime may have sought to promote mercantile exchange with the Christians, but the provincial governors seem to have exercised an at least limited margin of choice. In addition, an eighth/fourteenth century text cites the ṣāḥib al-bahr, or admiral of the fleet, as one of


\(^{115}\) E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:160-2.


\(^{117}\) Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
the three most important men in the caliphate, sharing royal power along with the
qādī of Cordova and the governor of the Upper March.\textsuperscript{118} Such power would not
come from a purely defensive role, no more than the governor of the Upper March
only sought to defend his borders against the Christian North. Despite the treaties
signed, the caliphal fleet most likely still carried out maritime raids analogous to the
yearly suwāʿif led against the Spanish Christian territories to assure their continued
cooperation and tributary status. The absence of data on this period, and especially
on any major excursions like those in 324/935 and 328/940 would, however, indicate
that Cordova selectively applied its naval force, aiming principally at ships on the
high seas or non-tributary targets.

Moreover, even after signing the treaty with Barcelona and Hugh of Provence,
‘Abd al-Raḥmān III ordered the expansion of the naval facilities in Tortosa in
333/944-5, illustrating the balanced use of maritime coercion. An inscription built
into the Tortosa cathedral walls commemorates the establishment there of a caliphal
dār al-ṣināʿa.\textsuperscript{119} Tortosa was only a secondary port, and its qāʿid was subject to the
authority of Almería, but it did play an important role in maritime relations with the
Christian coasts. The port had already served for the expeditions in 321/932-3 and
323/934-5, and continued in this role for the expedition that supported negotiations
with Barcelona in 328/939-40. Muḥammad b. Rūmah left Almería with only two
ships, but was joined in Tortosa by ten war ships, two galleons and two other boats.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} E. Lévi-Provençal, \textit{L’Espagne musulmane au X\textsuperscript{e} siècle} (Paris, 1932), 85; Ibn Samāk, \textit{al-Zahrāt al-
manthūra fi al-nukat al-akhbār al-māʿ thārah}, ed. M. Makkī (Cairo, 2003), 129.
\textsuperscript{119} E. Lévi-Provençal, \textit{Inscriptions}, 83.
\textsuperscript{120} Al-ʿUdhrī, 81.
The following year, the people of Tortosa petitioned the caliph to reduce their fiscal contributions because of their active role on the frontier with the Christians.\textsuperscript{121} Tortosa was in fact ideally located for this role. The plentiful supply of wood in Tortosa’s hinterland helps explain the caliphal shipyards, while al-Rāzī confirms that the port was on the main sea route between al-Andalus and the Franks.\textsuperscript{122} Cordova thus continued to develop its naval power over the course of the century, but channeled its use to support political ambitions that did not necessarily always involve conflict with its Christian counterparts. Caliphal shipyards and fleets could enforce as well as participate in the new political and commercial order.

The Umayyad regime supported the development of local coastal facilities between Almería and Tortosa, continuing to extend state control over maritime elements in less important ports. The treaties signed in 328/940 implicated the commanders of the fleet and governors of the coastal ports, but do not specifically mention Denia. Al-Rāzī did write however in the fourth/tenth century that Denia’s port was “very good and very old”, indicating that it may have been among the ports included in the ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s missive.\textsuperscript{123} Nevertheless, there is no sign of any real development of Denia’s port or any other improvement in its infrastructures before the fifth/eleventh century. Ships passing through Denia probably anchored in what was left of the Roman port, the same port that acted as a maritime outlet for Ondara and its hinterland. The taifa of Denia was thus built on an ensemble of

\textsuperscript{121} Muqtabis V, 468.
\textsuperscript{122} Al-Rāzī, 72.
\textsuperscript{123} Al-Rāzī, 71.
regional elements developed by the caliphate, but necessitated nevertheless the convergence of those elements under Mujāhid’s political ambitions.
CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF THE ‘ĀMIRIDS AND BIRTH OF THE MULŪK AL-TAWĀ‘IF

The ‘Āmirids, al-Manṣūr b. Abī ‘Amīr and his sons, did not radically change the policies developed under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Ḥakam II. The ḥājib al-Manṣūr was careful to maintain a continuity that would legitimize his position and effective usurpation of power, preserving the balance between commerce and guerre de course but also relegating maritime affairs to secondary status. Nevertheless, over the course of the ‘Āmirid regime, certain developments directly affected the future taifa of Denia. First of all, al-Manṣūr extended his regime’s control over the Sharq al-Andalus and strategic maritime structures, making way for the ‘Āmirids’ own Ṣaqāliba clients, placing them in key positions, notably in the Sharq al-Andalus. Mujāhid was one of the most important of the ‘Āmirid clients under al-Manṣūr and ‘Abd al-Malik, and his actions at the beginning of the fitna were a continuation of his responsibilities under the erstwhile regime. Mujāhid was able to construct a new polity out of the fallen caliphate, but he also had to contend with his former ‘Āmirid companions and the internal dynamics of the Ṣiqālibī group partly determined the long-term development and survival of his taifa. Lastly, the fragmentation of caliphal power and territory during the fitna led to profound issues of legitimacy for the taifa kingdoms that inherited that power, influencing traditional views of the state and political territory.
Coastal resources and territorial control

The ‘Āmirid regime, like the Umayyad administration whose power it usurped, was primarily land-based, and the sea remained a peripheral, though non-negligible, concern. The death of al-Ḥakam II, and the minority of his son Hishām II, opened the way for al-Manṣūr’s carefully orchestrated seizure of effective power. As part of this plan, the ḥājib used a combination of client administrators and loyal local notables for regional maritime activities, taking particular caution in regards to the position of the qā‘id al-bahr.

Al-Manṣūr’s poisoning of the admiral ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Rumāḥis in 369/980 was in fact one in a series of similar actions that followed Hishām II’s ascension in 365/976.¹ The Banū Rumāḥis were part of the Andalusī Arab elite, and had consciously used their position as ship owners and outfitters to tie their destiny to the Umayyad regime and its maritime policies.² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rumāḥis’s position at the summit of state power must have threatened al-Manṣūr’s plans on more than one level. The Kitāb al-Zahrāt al-manthūra describes the qā‘id al-bahr as one of the three most influential members of the caliphal administration, ascribing to

him almost exclusive authority over maritime activities.\(^3\) In addition, the Banū Rumāḥis were fervent supporters of the Umayyads and members of the Arab military aristocracy that al-Manṣūr wished to oust from power to preserve his own. Thus, and like the generals Ja‘far b. al-Muṣḥafī and Ghālib b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān whom al-Manṣūr eliminated, Ibn Rumāḥis was a potential obstacle.\(^4\) The admiral’s assassination thus removed a potential rival and opened the post to a trusted ‘Āmirid sympathizer.

Al-Manṣūr entrusted Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Arūs with Ibn Rumāḥis’ responsibilities.\(^5\) Ibn ‘Arūs had been qāḍī of Ecija, then saḥib al-shurṭa, when he saved the young Hishām II’s life during an attack organized by al-Manṣūr’s enemies in 368/979.\(^6\) Named as qā‘id al-bahr the following year, Ibn ‘Arūs also received the Banū Rumāḥis’ fortune, effectively ending the clan’s access to power.\(^7\) Ibn ‘Ābī ‘Āmir thus ensured the loyal cooperation of one of the most important caliphal vizierates, thereby gaining essential control over the caliphal fleet.

Al-Manṣūr notably used the fleet on two occasions in his raids against the Christian North. The fleet had been necessary to transport troops and supplies from Alcacer do Sal to Porto during the famous expedition against Santiago de Compostela in 387/997, although the fleet did not serve in the attack itself.\(^8\) Ten years earlier, al-

\(^3\) Ibn Samāk, al-Zahrāt al-manthūra fī al-nukat al-akhbār al-mā‘thūrah, 129; E. Lévi-Provençal, Espagne musulmane au X\(^{\text{e}}\) siècle, 85
\(^4\) On the elimination of these two generals, see E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:212-220, 222-233.
\(^5\) Fragments historiques sur les Berbères, 19
\(^7\) Fragments historiques sur les Berbères, 19.
\(^8\) Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 2:295/492; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:246-50.
Manṣūr used the fleet in an equally spectacular raid against Barcelona, whose port provided access for the ships and the troops they transported.9

The Barcelona expedition did not follow the most direct route from Cordova through Medinaceli and the Upper March, but instead passed through the *Sharq al-Andalus*. There are no indications of regional dissent at this time, but just as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III’s passage had in 312/924 on the way to Pamplona, al-Manṣūr’s path allowed him to solidify regional support for his rule. While in Tudmīr, the ḥājib, his entourage and army were sumptuously received by a local dignitary, Ibn Khaṭṭāb, for two or three weeks.10 The Banū Khaṭṭāb were perhaps descendants of Theodomir himself, and their Visigothic ancestry demonstrates the persistent existence of a local elite that had preserved its power by playing on Cordova’s distance vis-à-vis the region.11 Ibn Khaṭṭāb was a Marwānid client, but his generosity towards al-Manṣūr shows an ability to adapt to changing times. His exceptional generosity attracted the ḥājib’s favor and convinced him of his loyalty. Al-Manṣūr compensated Ibn Khaṭṭāb by placing the ʿummāl of the kūra of Tudmīr under his authority, and naming his son, Abū al-ʿĀṣbagh Müsā b. Khaṭṭāb, qāḍī of Valencia, Ondara, Tortosa, and the Balearics.12 Müsā reaffirmed his family’s loyalty a few years later when he

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11 Ibn Khaṭṭāb’s ancestor, ʿAbd al-Jabbār b. Khaṭṭāb b. Nadīr, an Umayyad client, had arranged the marriage between his son and the daughter of Theodomir; al-ʿUdhrī, 15.

welcomed with equal generosity Taraka, ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar’s client. Al-
Manṣūr’s passage through the Sharq al-Andalus was thus the occasion to solicit the
recognition of the local aristocracy for his power and dynasty before enrolling them
in his administration.

Ṣaqāliba: agents of ʿĀmirid policy

Al-Manṣūr did not however rely uniquely on the cooperation of local elites for his
governmental needs. Over the course of his reign, and through those of his sons, Slav
slaves and clients or Ṣaqāliba, performed many of the essential roles in the ʿĀmirid
regime. The Umayyads, then al-Manṣūr, despite his initial apprehensions,
increasingly relied on loyal client servants in key positions of power. Palace Ṣaqāliba
had opposed Ibn ʿAbī ʿĀmir’s move to usurp the young caliph, Hishām II’s political
power and the ḥājib subsequently relied principally on his Berber allies. After a time
however, al-Manṣūr began to build his own group of loyal Slav servants, first at
Madīnat al-Zahira, then in strategic and sensitive positions throughout al-Andalus.¹³
These clients were particularly important in the Sharq al-Andalus, where al-Manṣūr
and especially his sons used Slav agents to execute their rule in these outlying regions
with a history of equivocal ties to Cordova.

Al-Manṣūr assigned the wilāya over the Balearics to one of his own mawālī, Muqāṭīl, knowing that the Islands’ distance from the capital and recent Islamicization

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¹³ E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:279.
necessitated a strong state presence. 14 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III had replaced ‘Abd Allāh, the son of ‘Īṣām al-Khiwalānī, with his own mawlā, al-Muwaffaq, in 350/961-2, and al-Ḥakam II named his client, Kawthar, to the post in 358/958-9. Kawthar’s death in 389/998-9 opened the way for the ‘Āmirid client Muqātil, who governed the Islands until the early part of the fitna.

Muqātil’s governorship coincided with an upsurge in maritime aggression, and indicates the ‘Āmirids’ use of their mawālī administrators to implement military and political policy. The Balearic Islands, especially after the fall of Fraxinetum, represented an Andalusī outpost on the maritime frontier. As in the continental frontier provinces, the Balearic governors were probably charged with leading jihād under their own initiative within limits set by Cordova. 15 These governors thus practiced a policy of maritime jihād, though perhaps hampered by the treaties signed with Christian envoys. Ibn Khaldūn notes, moreover, that Muqātil enjoyed the support of al-Manṣūr and his son in his jihād. 16 A few years later, in 396/1006, ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar received a Byzantine embassy that presented him with Andalusī sailors taken prisoner off the coasts of Sardinia and Corsica carrying out the guerre de course ordered by al-Muẓaffar and commanded by Muqātil. 17 The sailors’ capture may, in fact, be linked with a Saracen attack on Pisa in 1004 mentioned in the town annals, indicating how far afield Andalusī pirates ventured. 18

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14 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
15 Note that al-Mawardī cites this as one of the responsibilities of frontier emirs; Les Statuts gouvernementaux, French trans. E. Fagnan (Algiers, 1915), 65.
16 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
17 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:63-4; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:289-90.
18 Annales pisani a. 1004-1175, M.G.H. SS, t. 19, ed. K. Pertz (Hannover, 1866), 238.
Basil II’s Rūm embassy to ‘Abd al-Malik sheds light in fact on the multiple facets of ‘Āmirid maritime policy, guided by economic, diplomatic, and military interests. Ibn Ḥayyān states that the envoy requested a peaceful alliance, a request that greatly pleased ‘Abd al-Malik, and so we can assume that the peace treaty was granted. The treaty signed with the Sardinian representative in 330/942 is mentioned above, and embassies were exchanged between Constantinople and Cordova between 336/947-8 and 343/954-5, and again in 360/972.\(^\text{19}\) Treaties signed with Byzantium may have been allowed to lapse, and the 396/1006 envoy seems to have been intended to renew them. It would seem then that the ‘Āmirids continued Cordova’s policy of balancing the profits from protecting trade through treaties, with the political and military benefits of naval aggression.

The ‘Āmirids trusted their Ṣaqāliba agents to carry out this policy and impose their regime as provincial governors and administrators. Muqāṭīl was not the only ‘Āmirid client entrusted with these responsibilities: at his death, al-Manṣūr counted on seven principal officers, while his son, ‘Abd al-Malik, raised that number to twenty-six.\(^\text{20}\) Among these, many of the more important were at one time or another dispatched to the Sharq al-Andalus. Notably, Wāḍih governed in Játiva, Mujāhid in Tortosa and Valencia, and Khayrān in Almería.\(^\text{21}\) In Valencia, the ‘Āmirid mawālī


Mużaffar and Mubarak oversaw the irrigation system under the regional vizier, while another Ṣiqlābī, Ā flaḥ, served in Almería in conjunction with a Marwānid governor. Thus, Ṣaqāliba clients occupied palatine, administrative, and military posts throughout the Andalusī territories, and especially in the East, working with local officials and reinforcing the regime’s presence in outlying provinces.

**Mujāhid al-‘Āmīrī on the eve of the fitna**

Mujāhid’s role under the ‘Āmirids seems to have been akin to šāhib al-shurṭa al-ulyā and qā’id in the kūras of Tortosa and Valencia. Hishām b. Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān occupied that post under al-Ḥakam II, and the two provinces along with Tudmīr were responsible for supplying military requisitions to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis, whose authority over the regions stemmed perhaps from their maritime nature. Thus, the later Umayyad regime at times treated the Sharq al-Andalus as a single administrative unit.

Al-Manṣūr had named Ibn ‘Arūs to replace Ibn Rumāḥis as qā’id al-bahr, but the loyal ‘Āmirid supporter may have been the victim of a subsequent purge, since Ibn Ḥazm writes that he fell into disgrace. Extant sources do not indicate who replaced Ibn ‘Arūs, nor who served as šāhib al-shurṭa al-ulyā for Tortosa and Valencia.

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22 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:15; al-‘Udhri, 82.
23 Muqtabis IV, 21, 46, 47, 216. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis was charged with collecting horses for the summer raids from Tortosa, Valencia and Tudmīr. The role of Ibn Rumāḥis, who was both šāhib al-shurṭa al-ulyā and qā’id al-bahr, would moreover seem to indicate that the two kūras fell somehow under naval administration.
24 Ibn Ḥazm, Naqṭ al-‘urūs, 173/133.
Valencia after the destitution of Hishām b. Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān.25 Nevertheless, the double phenomena of purges and the increasing reliance on Slav clients indicate that these responsibilities would have been given over to Ṣaqaṭiba hands, as was the case on some levels in Játiva, Valencia, and Almería.

Ibn ʿIdhārī writes that Mujāhid took control in Denia at the beginning of the fitna because of his position at the head of the ʿĀmirid ḥītān, while Ibn Khaldūn, al-Qalqashandī, and the anonymous authors of the Dhikr bilād al-Andalus and the Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawāʾif ascribe duties to him in Tortosa and Valencia.26 This conforms not only with what we know of ʿĀmirid administration, but also with Mujāhid’s childhood training and education. Mujāhid grew alongside al-Manṣūr’s own sons, benefiting from the same intellectual and martial education.27 He was thus destined for an advanced position within the ʿĀmirid regime, as a principal officer, with both civil and military responsibilities. Mujāhid’s role seems then to have been similar to Wāḍīḥ’s in the Upper March, though in the kūras of Tortosa and Valencia.

He thus implemented ʿĀmirid policy in the eastern maritime provinces, and was in a position at the beginning of the fitna to adapt it to the realities of a fractured al-Andalus, profiting from the structures built up by the Umayyad and ʿĀmirid regimes.

25 Hishām b. Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān was a vizier and head of the cavalry under Hishām II (cumulating those responsibilities with his role as ṣāḥib al-shuṭṭa al-ulā?), and was “the fiercest opponent” of al-Manṣūr: Ibn ʿIdhārī, Bayān, 2:268/444.
26 Ibn ʿIdhārī, Bayān, 3:155; Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-ʿibar, 4:355; al-Qalqashandī, 256; Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawāʾif, 301-2; Dhikr bilād al-Andalus, 217/229.
27 Dhikr bilād al-Andalus, 217/229.
The Andalusí fitna is commonly approached through a model of ethnic factions seeking to appropriate the remnants of caliphal power. Cohesive group awareness is a fundamental factor in this idea, designated as ‘aṣabiyya, the driving historical force identified by Ibn Khaldūn. The members of each faction would have considered themselves as such, and their internal solidarity split Andalusí society.

This interpretation results in part from the analyses of authors contemporary to the taifas, such as Ibn Ḫayyān, who developed the term al-fitna al-barbāriyya, imputing the conflict to the Berbers.²⁸ Fifth/eleventh-century Arab historians were bitter and cynical, faced with their own fallen status and a fractured al-Andalus, and so idealized the fallen Umayyad caliphate while scorning the *mulāk al-ṭawā‘if*.

Most of these authors were descendants of erstwhile Umayyad clients. They identified themselves as being of Arab stock, and blamed the fitna on the recent arrival of Berbers under al-Manṣūr’s military reforms. The Maghribī historian Ibn ‘Idhārī is a notable exception, and while he does use the term fitna al-barbāriyya, he designates the Umayyad pretender Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār as the “door of the fitna.”³⁰ Accounts of this period thus characteristically present opposing ethnic groups, well-defined in the case of the recently arrived Berbers, and more amorphous

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for the Andalusis and Saqāliba. Historical authors thus present the fitna as a three-way conflict among the Berber and Slav ʿĀmirids looking to preserve and expand their political power, and the Marwānīds, who sought to reinvigorate caliphal power after years of ʿĀmirid usurpation. Modern authors likewise reproduce this model, applying it to the entire taifa century. David Wasserstein, who rejects the idea of a coherent ʿĀmirid party and highlights the social conflicts underlying the fitna, nevertheless writes that the sources give the impression of a mainly ethnic conflict. Not only are the events of the fitna explained in terms of ethnic conflict, but the taifas themselves are also organized according to the supposed ethnic origins of their leaders. The numismatist Antonio Prieto y Vives structured his study of the taifa kings according to this idea, and was implicitly followed in this by George C. Miles. Even Peter Scales, who argued for a more nuanced version of this model, divided his study on the fall of Cordova – subtitled Berbers and Andalusis in Conflict – into chapters on the Marwāniyya, Saqāliba, and Barbariyya. There are, however, a few exceptions to this trend: François Clément notes that the importance of ethnic-cultural origins is “overestimated” and sheds light on the cultural identity common to the majority of the mulūk al-ṭawāʾif. Similarly, Mohammed Benaboud has

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31 For the Berbers, should be noted the differentiation between new arrivals, the source of the problem, and those who had settled after the conquest and more or less integrated Andaluši society.
32 D. Wasserstein, Rise and Fall, 56, 102.
34 P. Scales, The Fall.
demonstrated that social currents, and notably divisions between the elite, khāssa, and the lower classes, ‘āmma, were as influential as any ethnic divisions.36

The fragile cohesion of the Ṣaqāliba

It is important to examine this debate from the point of view of the Ṣaqāliba for this study, and specifically the ‘Āmirids of Denia. The Slavs had become a dominant force within the ‘Āmirid regime.37 Like the English “slave,” the term Ṣaqāliba (s. Ṣiqlābī) comes from the lumping together of the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe, and the human trafficking of those same groups. In al-Andalus, it refers in general to servile persons of European origin.38 The emir al-Ḥakam I was guarded by “mute” Slavs, so-called because they did not speak Arabic, but large-scale administrative and military use of Ṣaqāliba did not begin until the caliphate. In its campaign to limit the potential threat of the elite Arab and Andalusī families, the caliphate employed men without tribal attachments and who were directly tied to the caliph through patronage or walā’. Over the course of the century, Ṣaqāliba who were captured or bought at a young age then educated for state service came to form the body of the caliphal administration. In general, those destined for domestic or palatine service were

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38 E. Lévi-Provenčal, HEM, 2:123.
eunuchs, as opposed to military officers. According to Evariste Lévi-Provençal, their number in Cordova rose from 3,750 under ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III to 13,750 at the end of the caliphate. 39 They were powerful enough under al-Ḥakam II to consider manipulating the dynastic succession to protect their situation against Muḥammad b. ‘Abī ‘Āmir’s own vying for power. As a result, al-Manṣūr initially preferred to rely on Berber elements brought over from North Africa, but the need to counterbalance the Berbers and the Andalusī aristocracy imposed the creation of a servile body of supporters. These agents were not limited to domestic service, and occupied key administrative and military positions. Al-Manṣūr sought to create an army and state structure loyal to him and independent of Andalusī aristocratic interests, and so replaced the system of territorial concessions with monthly payments. 40 The ‘Āmirid Ṣaqāliba clients were thus made loyal to the regime, but they were also able to profit from the system, with the main fityān creating even their own groups of Slav mawāṭi. 41 The power provided by these positions allowed the Ṣaqāliba to assert their independence at the fall of the ‘Āmirid regime and to establish the Sharq al-Andalus taifas.

The fitna is often read as an opposition between the ‘Āmirids, the Berbers and the Andalusīs, with each aspiring for the position of ḥājiib in the shadow of a puppet caliph. 42 However, even if there were a certain initial cohesiveness among the Ṣaqāliba, the ‘Āmirid group rapidly split into several parts, with its members building

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alliances according to their own individual interests. This limits the idea of any internal *esprit de corps*. Peter Scales countered David Wasserstein’s idea that the survival of the ‘Āmirid regime itself did not interest its officers, affirming the existence of an ‘Āmirid party. He argued that each of these *fītyān* sought to reproduce the ‘Āmirid state model, with a puppet caliph manipulated by a *ḥājib* who held the real power. Nevertheless, there was no consistent cooperation between the ‘Āmirid family and its clients towards a common goal beyond occasional convergences of personal interests. The *Ṣaqāliba* did not seek to place a member of the ‘Āmirid family in the role of *ḥājib* and followed the Manṣūrid model only so long as it allowed them to codify and protect their own individual power. In addition, the group itself showed little cohesion and its supposed members were not systematically hostile to the Berbers.

The *Ṣaqāliba* themselves had no common tribal or ethnic ties. The term designates clients of European origin, but these could have been Slaves, Franks, Basques, Galicians, Italians, or, as perhaps in the case of Mujāhid, Sards. Their number and origin varied according to vagaries of raids and markets. Moreover, they were often taken young and educated in al-Andalus, and so retained little of their original cultures. In addition, although some distinction is made to differentiate between European and African slaves, the latter referred to as simply ‘*abid* or slaves, there was little real division between them, and the terms seem at times

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They thus could have had no tribal or ethnic solidarity. It is true that the ephemeral *shuʿubīyya* movement, illustrated by Abū ʿĀmir Aḥmad b. García, indicates claims of a non-exclusively Arab culture, and it is probably not an accident this polemicist was employed in Denia’s court; but the debate surrounding his *risāla* was so short-lived it has been seen as simple literary provocation. Any group solidarity among the Ṣaqāliba could only have been a social construct, with their position and social function generating a temporary common interest.

The ʿĀmirid group itself began to splinter even before the *fitna*, contributing to the collapse of the regime. Ibn al-Khaṭīb notably lists the names of ʿAbd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar’s twenty-six chief *fityān*, and not those of his brother and successor, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo. The Ṣaqāliba must have sworn the *bayʿa* towards ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, or they would not have been able to keep their positions during the period immediately preceding the *fitna*. Nevertheless, many of the ʿĀmirid officers did not support their master’s supposed assassin. Historians use the terms “Marwānid” or “Andalusī” to describe the coalition that brought down ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo, substituting as it did Hishām II with Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār to oust the ʿĀmirids and restore Umayyad power, but the movement itself was

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44 E. Lévi-Provençal, *HEM*, 2:125. The ʿĀmirid elite in Játiva and Valencia are referred to as ʿabīd, while Mubarak and Muzaﬀar, considered members of the Slav group, are also called ʿabīd. Ibn ʿIdhārī includes the Ṣīqlābī Khayrān in a group of ʿabīd; Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra*, 3:15; *Akhbār duwwal mulāk al-tawāʾif*, 301; Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Bayān*, 3:96.


financed by al-Dalfā, ‘Abd al-Malik’s widow. Many of the ‘Āmirid mawālī in fact supported the movement from the beginning. Ibn ‘Idhārī wrote that Wāḍiḥ, governor of the Upper March and al-Manṣūr’s principal mawlā, was the first to betray Sanchuelo, and that the ‘Āmirid Ṣaqāliba abandoned him before he arrived in Cordova to try to regain his power. Moreover, according to Ibn Bassām, Muḥammad al-Mahdī confirmed Mujāhid’s position in Denia and the Balearics in exchange for his betrayal of his patron, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

Once the fitna had begun, dividing lines between the different factions were in fact ill defined and unclear. In the following months, the Cordovan populace attacked the ‘Āmirid Berbers and al-Mahdī expelled a number of Ṣaqāliba from the capital. Nevertheless, the ‘Āmirid mawlā Wāḍiḥ became chamberlain, and was able to negotiate for peace with the Berbers and their Cordovan caliph, Sulaymān b. al-Ḥakam, and Wāḍiḥ himself had a bodyguard of 400 Berber horsemen. Al-Mahdī’s rejection of former the ‘Āmirid clients explains why an ephemeral rebellion around the caliphal candidate Hishām b. Sulaymān included both Berbers and a group of ‘Āmirid Slavs. It is true that a Berber party crystallized around Sulaymān b. al-Ḥakam, and was opposed by the principal Slav leaders, but, once again, there was no uniformity. Even though Wāḍiḥ was the chief ‘Āmirid mawlā, he retained his position as governor of the Upper March after Sulaymān b. al-Ḥakam (imām of the

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47 E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:297-8; D. Wasserstein, Rise and Fall, 60-1; P. Scales, The Fall, passim; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:52.
48 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:69, 71.
49 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:171.
50 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:85.
51 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:79.
Berbers) overthrew Muḥammad al-Mahdī. Later, during al-Mahdī’s second reign, Sulaymān and his partisans escaped to Játiva, where the ‘Āmirid fityān had fled after their earlier expulsion and which would become a focal point for the Ṣaqāliba taifas in the Sharq al-Andalus. Finally, Ibn ‘Idhārī describes the coup d’état that replaced al-Mahdī with Hishām II as the work of a party of ‘Āmirid clients, ṭā’ifa min al-ʻabīd al-ʻāmiriyin, though Ibn Khaldūn writes that it provoked Mujāhid’s dissension and flight for the Sharq al-Andalus.

Historians also present Hishām II’s second caliphate as a period of factional tension, specifically between the Berbers, on the one hand, and the Slavs and Andalusīs on the other. Indeed, the siege of Cordova by Sulaymān al-Mustā‘in, “imām of the Berbers” did divide Andalusī society, especially since a number of the principal fityān supported Hishām II’s regime. Nevertheless, the actual ethnic dimensions of the conflict have been exaggerated: the ‘Āmirid Ṣiqlābī party still lacked coherence, and the Berbers were not as monolithic as may seem. It is true that a number of the so-called “Slav” taifas appeared during Hishām II’s second caliphate, perhaps in part to safeguard those territories against Berber expansion. In addition to Mujāhid, Mubārak and Muẓaffar established their rule in Valencia around 401/1010-1, and Āflaḥ took control of Almería the following year. We should note that in both cases, the ‘Āmirid officers appropriated for themselves power that they were meant to

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52 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:83, 93.
54 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:96, 100; Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-ʻibar, 4:354.
share with a non-Slav agent named by Hishām II.\textsuperscript{55} Since Wādiḥ held the office of hāجيب under Hishām II, and was supported by the fityān Khayrān and ‘Anbār, it is possible that the Ṣaqaḥība intended to oust the remaining Andalusīs from the state apparatus, thereby establishing a kind of mamiliki regime. Nevertheless, while Slav ambitions certainly played a role, these maneuverings were more the result of the Cordovan regime’s growing weakness and inability to rule beyond its own walls.

There are some signs of conflict with the Berbers in the Sharq al-Andalus during this period. The older Berber populations settled in the region since the earliest days of the conquest did not have any effect on the arrival of ‘Āmirid factions, especially given that the “older” Berbers did not act in concert with the “neo-Berbers,” nor did they show signs of ethnic solidarity with them.\textsuperscript{56} A series of Berber raids did however target the region during Hishām II’s second reign, but their actions do not seem to have been politically or ethnically motivated. An attack on Ondara, near Denia, destroyed the city, while the Valencian region was decimated in 401/1010-1.\textsuperscript{57} Two different sources provide the details for these attacks, one for Ondara and the other for Valencia, describing perhaps the same attack in both cases. Ondara’s destruction, in any case, led to a flight towards Denia’s more easily defended hilltop, isolated between the sea and coastal swamps. The attack on

\textsuperscript{55} Āflaḥ was in place in Almería alongside the governor ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Rawish by 400/1009-10, before taking power in 402/1010-2: Al-‘Udhrī, 82. Muẓaffar and Mubārak were in charge of the Valencian irrigation system by 401/1010-1, after having served in Madīnat al-Zahra. Two years later, in 403/1012-3, a few months before the Berbers entered Cordova the two ḥābiqān shared power over Valencia, and were powerful enough to refuse entry to the former vizier; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:15, 18; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:159.

\textsuperscript{56} D. Wasserstein, \textit{Rise and Fall}, 57.

\textsuperscript{57} Al-Ḥimyarī, 31/39; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:105.
Valencia originated in Jaén, and brought back horses belonging to the “sulṭān,” three hundred soldiers, kuttāb and ‘ulamā’, most likely Cordovan refugees. While Ṣaqlāṭa officers did represent the Hishāmid regime in the region, the Berber raids do not seem to have been part of a larger strategic plan, and there was no concerted ethnic opposition. In fact, during the conflict between Āflāḥ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rawish over the control of Almería, the Hishāmid governor turned to Berber mercenaries for support.\(^{58}\) There is thus a distinction between, on the one hand, the political clash between Sulaymān al-Mustā‘in, supported by Berber clans, and the Ṣaqlāṭa-dominated regime of Hishām II, and, on the other, the actions taken by Berbers forced to replace their erstwhile monthly payments with booty.

The fall of Cordova to Sulaymān in 403/1013 caused a second ‘Āmirid exodus towards the Sharq al-Andalus. Khayrān, among others, chased the Berbers from Tūmdīr to establish his own power in the region.\(^{59}\) Khayrān’s importance among the former ‘Āmirid officers had grown since the death of Wāḍiḥ, and he became the de facto leader of the amorphous group. Despite this, he chose to support ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd in his move to expel Sulaymān from Cordova, even though the Ḥammūdīds were among the Berbers who had originally contributed to the fall of Hishām II and Wāḍiḥ.\(^{60}\) Khayrān, moreover, was not the only Ṣīqlābī to follow ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd, since Mubārak and Muẓaffar minted dirhams in his name in 407/1016-7.\(^{61}\) He only abandoned the Banū Ḥammūd when he understood how little influence he would

\(^{58}\) Al-‘Udhri, 82.

\(^{59}\) Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:115; Al-‘Udhri, 16. Note that during his flight from Cordova, Khayrān was aided by a Berber after being injured: Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fi-l-tārikh, 9:269/420-1.

\(^{60}\) Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:116; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’l-māl al-a’lām, 141.

\(^{61}\) A. Prieto 138, 139; A. Vives 805, 806.
exercise in their caliphate. We should also note that when the “Āmirid party,” including Khayrān, Mubārak and Muẓaffār, propped up al-Murtaḍā to oppose the Banū Ḥammūd, they attempted to win the Berber Ṣinhāja of Granada to their cause.\(^\text{62}\)

While Ibn Ḥayyān writes that this episode marked the definitive end of Andalusī unity, and that afterwards no one joined with the Berbers, Ibn al-Aṭhir reports a reconciliation between Qāsim b. Ḥammūd and the ‘Āmirids, including Khayrān.\(^\text{63}\) In addition, Qāsim confirmed al-Manṣūr’s grandson, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, as ruler of Valencia, as well as Zuhayr as Khayrān’s successor in Almería (Zuhayr moreover counted the Ṣinhāja of Granada among his allies for most of his reign).\(^\text{64}\)

\(Ṣiqlābī\) and ‘Āmirid coalitions did exist, opposing even “Berber” caliphal regimes, but the cohesion and motivations of these groups were not the result of any kind of ethnic identity. The ‘Āmirids drew together because of personal interests, and did not hesitate to ally themselves with Berber elements or even to oppose other ‘Āmirids. Despite this, ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar’s erstwhile officers do at times seem to have followed a communitarian logic based on relations built during their ‘Āmirid service, and even Mujāhid, the most independent of the group, participated in the network of former fītyān.


Mujāhid and the ‘Āmirid fityān

Mujāhid’s role vis-à-vis the other ‘Āmirid officers during the fitna is not clear, and he seems to have distanced himself from them from the beginning. Ibn Bassām writes that he left the group of ‘Āmirid clients and that he did not ask their help in anything that he subsequently undertook.⁶⁵ Mujāhid had been one of the chief fityān, and as such must have amassed considerable wealth and power that allowed him to build his own network of clients.⁶⁶ Félix Retamero has remarked that fifth/eleventh-century political power was comprised of itinerant groups, and Mujāhid arrived in Denia accompanied by “many men.”⁶⁷ Mujāhid was explicitly among those who betrayed his patron, the ḥājib ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo, and was ambivalent towards Hishām II’s second caliphate and Wāḍiḥ’s hijāba. He minted dirhams in Hishām II’s name, but the fact that he fled Cordova after Muḥammad al-Mahdī’s death indicates dissent with the new regime.⁶⁸ Indeed, for Mujāhid, the ‘Āmirid regime, in the form of a ḥājib from the Banū ‘Āmir manipulating a puppet caliph and supported by a military and administrative organization comprised of Ṣaqāliba and Berbers, was dead. Peter Scales’s interpretation then that the Ṣaqāliba belonged to an ‘Āmirid faction because they wanted to perpetuate that model is not correct, since that would

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⁶⁵ Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:171
⁶⁶ P. Scales, The Fall, 135; M.J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 47.
imply a member of the Banū ‘Āmir as the *de facto* head of state. 69 Mujāhid’s regime, like Wāḍīh’s, and probably Khayrān’s under al-Murtaḍā, was a *mamlūk* regime. 70 The state was in fact a governmental structure maintained by political personnel composed of *mawālī* who contributed directly to its functioning and participated in the succession of power (although dynastic succession did occur in Denia). Significantly, the last remaining vestiges of the taifa of Denia after its fall to the Banū Hūd were in Majorca and Segura, both of which were under the authority of *mawālī* of Mujāhid’s house. 71 In addition, at least two of Mujāhid’s *mawālī* remained in important positions under his son, ‘Alī, since they both served as witnesses for a treaty signed with Barcelona in 450/1058. 72 Mujāhid thus sought a position analogous to the principal frontier families, such as the Tujībids in Zaragoza, which would have given him *de facto* independence from Cordova in exchange for formal though superficial recognition.

Ibn Bassām’s description seems somewhat exaggerated, motivated in part by his judgment of Mujāhid’s support of Muḥammad al-Mahdī, but Mujāhid was often in conflict with his Andalusī and ‘Āmirid counterparts, more often than he was with any of the Berber taifas. Fraternal ‘Āmirid sentiments do not seem to have often

69 P. Scales, *The Fall*, 9, n. 37.
70 A 404/1013 dirham from Almeria features the names of Khayrān, Hishām II and a certain ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, possibly al-Manṣūr’s grandson, and so may indicate a persistent loyalty towards the ‘Āmirid house. However, even if Khayrān was trying to bolster his shaky power by referring to both the ‘Āmirid and Marwānid dynasties, he made no move to submit to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz after his ascension in 411/1021-2. A. Canto García, T. b. H. Ibrāhīm, “Suplemento a las monedas de los Reinos de Taifas,” appendix to the re-edition of A. Prieto y Vives, *Los Reyes de Taifas* (Madrid: 2003), 132, no. 26.
72 Their names were ‘Alām and Salama; J. Baucells i Reig, *Diplomatari*, vol. 3, doc. 977, pp. 1554-1558.
determined Mujāhid’s politics. While he did use the relations that he had built during his time as an ʿĀmirid ḥālā, it was only according to his own needs. Mujāhid’s alliances and conflicts resulted more from his own objectives, especially his vision of maritime dominance and the need to control the redistribution of Mediterranean and Andalusī resources through his port. The ʿĀmirid question was even less important under ʿAlī, since by the second generation there were fewer representatives with fewer mutual ties. ʿAlī thus developed his policies and diplomatic relations according to geopolitical choices, directed by Denia’s ports, roads, and maritime networks.
CHAPTER III

POLITY, TERRITORY, AND MATTERS OF STATE

Generational continuity through governmental structures implies the existence of a state, and stable dynastic succession occurred in Denia, as well as other taifas.\(^1\) Yet power during the taifa period eludes in many ways standard definitions of a state. Can we say that Denia was a state? Was it sovereign? In fact, modern Western political concepts do not readily apply to medieval Islam, while Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s political positions do not really fit within the framework of contemporary Arab-Muslim political and juridical theory. These rulers’ constant concerns about their own legitimacy highlights the ambiguity of their position, not only for Denia, but also for the taifa kingdoms as a whole, and this despite the real power that they held through governmental and even state-like structures. The transition from the Cordovan caliphate to the regimes of the \textit{mulūk al-tawā’if} seriously tested the political and juridical ideas of the time, forcing rulers to adapt while observing the letter of the law.

Taifa power is one of the principal themes of Pierre Guichard’s recent work on the period.\(^2\) Guichard is very cautious in his use of such terms as “kingdom,”

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\(^1\) By stable succession, we are not forgetting the conflicts that could and did arise over who would succeed, but merely emphasizing the continuity ensured by supporting administrative and governmental structures, regardless who reigned in the end.

“state,” and “sovereign,” since, even though historical lexical usage imposes their use, his analyses question their pertinence or accuracy for the taifas. Indeed, he defines them as regional powers, not states, political entities “without recognized borders or specific institutions” whose rulers do not necessarily claim sovereignty. Guichard’s analyses in fact echo those of Henri Terrasse who insisted on the aggregative nature of the taifas, and the absence of fixed borders: the taifas were capitals and not clearly delimited territories, and yet, according to Max Weber, one of the principal notions of the state is its territoriality.

Political territory is, however, an ambiguous concept, one that is ill applied to pre-modern states. In fact, Weberian or Westphalian concepts of the state, with notions of cohesive territory and frontiers that are stable in time and space and within which the exercise of power is unitary are simply not relevant to medieval and especially medieval Islamic polities. This is especially true for Denia, where the typically fragmented taifal territory was spread over both land and sea networks.

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6 L. Benton’s analysis of early modern imperial territories, and especially maritime empires, is particularly relevant to this study, given the intangible aspects of both. As Benton states, territorial control in this context “was exercised mainly over narrow bands, or corridors, of territory and over enclaves of various sizes and situations.” L. Benton, “Legal Spaces of Empire : Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism,” *Comparative Studies of Society and History*, 47.4 (2005): 700, 706 and passim.
Understanding Denia as a political entity thus entails a broad approach, examining notions of state and territory alongside political mechanisms and apparatuses, from tax systems and monetary production to the administration and its agents.

THE STATE DURING THE TAIFA PERIOD

Political legitimacy according to Islamic jurists

Denia’s specifically maritime nature eludes in many ways traditional ideas of land-based territoriality with fixed borders, but a detailed analysis of the taifa in its political, social, and religious contexts justifies in fact characterizing it as a state. Before beginning this discussion, however, we should point out the semantic inaccuracies of the terms used, knowing that these inaccuracies derive in part from anachronistically applying modern Western concepts to medieval Islamic realities. There is no state in Islam, not in the political and territorial sense commonly understood in Westphalian terms. The state is a community, and that community is a single unit. Unique states ruling over distinct groups cannot exist anymore than political boundaries between those groups. The state is one, a power ruling over an indivisible community, and the taifas could only be emanations of that power.

Patricia Crone recently explicated the idea that from the beginning, the umma, or community of believers, was simultaneously a congregation and a political organization whose members were both believers and citizens ruled by the Prophet.7

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Bertrand Badie juxtaposed the evolution of political models in the medieval and modern West and in the Muslim World. He noted the emergence in the West of an “autonomous space of power […] beyond the limits of the religious order,” while in the Islamic world “the two categories of political space and frontier made no sense.”

Works on the religious nature of Islamic power abound, and generally reiterate the absence of a delimited political space within the early Islamic world: politics, in the Muslim juridical system, existed only to serve the community of believers or as a tool of religious implementation. According to Crone, the legacy left to the Prophet’s calphal successors was the responsibility of giving legal existence to the umma and for providing leadership on the path to salvation. This does not mean that the caliph did not hold temporal power, nor that secular power did not exist, only that the basis for that power was couched in religious terms.

The numerous civil wars and sectarian divisions of the first centuries of the Hegira shook the Islamic theory of political-religious legitimacy, stretched further by the increasing separation between the spiritual and profane aspects of Islamic government. Scholars have noted the polarization between politics and religion from

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11 M. Abbès’s recent work on political philosophy in classical Islam argues against what Abbès calls the Weberian schema of political Islam and the view that political power in Islam derived from religious foundations. Unfortunately, Abbès oversimplifies recent historical works that demonstrate the religious foundations of political power in Islam, glossing over chronological analyses that allow for a secularization of power within a religious framework over time. Abbès’s work then proceeds to more or less ignore religion to emphasize secular aspects of power, avoiding the initial problems posed. See M. Abbès, *Islam et politique à l’âge classique* (Paris, 2009).
the early ‘Abbasid caliphate, the divorce between legal and political authority.  

Nevertheless, the principal of the caliphate and the universal law that it represented was never questioned. The Prophet’s successor, alternatively or concomitantly called imām, caliph, or amīr al-mu’minīn, “commander of the believers,” was thus the sole legitimate sovereign, and any ruler’s right to exercise power derived from the imām’s recognition or mandate.

This was at least the theory at the base of the Islamic political system. Over time, however, and because of political and religious schisms within the Islamic world, the concepts of an indivisible community and legitimate sovereignty evolved. Jurists integrated fragmented power into their analyses on the imāmate and political society. Certain jurists, though not the majority, even questioned the idea of a unique imām, arguing that a barrier between two regions, such as a sea, could justify the existence of two imāms. Ibn Khaldūn even notes that in the Muslim West, jurists belonging to the otherwise conservative Malikī school of law opted for this opinion, citing those who swore oaths to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III.

The increasing importance of the ‘ulamā’, along with the loss of juridical and religious competence of the ‘Abbasid caliphs, and the rising power of regional emirs, led some jurists to distinguish between the religious and political domains. The

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13 A. Lambton, State and Government, xvi; F. Clément, Pouvoir et légitimité, 22.
14 P. Crone, God’s Rule, 273-4.
15 Ibn Khaldūn, Prolégomènes, 1:391. Ibn Ḥazm, on the other hand, rejected this idea because it could lead the community into anarchy; in M. Asín Palacios, Abenházam de Córdoba y su historia crítica de las ideas religiosas (Madrid, 1932), 5:9-10.
fifth/eleventh-century Persian historian Abu al-Faḍl Bayhaqī wrote that God “has given one power to the prophets and another power to kings; and He has made it incumbent upon the people of the earth that they should submit themselves to the two powers and should acknowledge the true way laid down by God.”¹⁶ As many historians note, this is very close to the medieval European dualist view of power, to Pope Gelasius’ *auctoritas* and *potestas*.¹⁷ Similarly, in an anecdote transmitted by ‘Alī b. Abī Ḥāfs al-Iṣfahānī, the famous fifth/eleventh-century jurist al-Juwaynī defended the idea that “it was incumbent on the ‘ulamā’ to obey the sultan in whatever fell under the latter’s authority, but that in whatever fell under the authority of the ‘ulamā’ it was incumbent on the sultans to obey them.”¹⁸

The fragmentation of political society in the East gravely weakened the caliph’s temporal authority. Indeed, since 334/945, the ‘Abbasid caliphs had been under the domination of the Būyids whose own power was divided among several emirs. The arrival of the Ghaznavids towards the end of the century only made the situation worse. The *šarī‘a* was no longer implemented by the imām but by those who had usurped his power. Jurists thus had to reintegrate political power into a legitimizing juridical structure in order to ensure the continued cohesion of the community. Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) is the most famous of the jurists who addressed the issue, and his *Kitāb al-ḥkām al-ṣulṭānīyya* dominates

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¹⁸ Quoted in L. Marlow, “Kings, Prophets and the ‘Ulamā’ in Mediaeval Islamic Advice Literature,” *Studia Islamica*, 81 (1995): 118-9. Marlow’s study shows that by the thirteenth century, the division between law and politics, *šarī‘a* and *siyāsa*, was a common subject in court literature.
historical analysis on the subject. Al-Māwardī reaffirmed the necessity of a sole and unique caliph. He conservatively goes over electoral procedures and the caliph’s responsibilities, insisting on his religious, juridical and administrative obligations. Al-Māwardī’s innovation lies in his treatment of authority for emirs, and especially the legalization of power acquired through conquest or usurpation. He considered that the regularization of usurped political authority was all the more important since it was necessary to legalize the decisions of governors and qādīs, as well as the imposition of canonical taxes and punishments. Al-Māwardī thus defined regional rulers as the caliph’s governors drawing their legitimacy from his recognition and acting as his agents.

Al-Māwardī extended this legitimacy, including not only those emirs named directly by the caliph, but also those who had usurped their power, imārat al-istilā’, in order to regularize “unlawful” situations. Thus, if a usurper recognizes the imām’s authority and acts in accordance with the law, “his investiture is mandatory and he has the power to handle both religious and worldly affairs.” A generation later, al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) wrote that this authorization was implicit, and that any ruler who recognized the caliph in the khutba and on his money “is the sultan whose decision and judgment must be carried out in the provinces.”

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20 H.A.R. Gibb theorized that al-Māwardī wrote his treatise for one of the ‘Abbasid caliphs, either al-Qādir or his son, al-Qā’im, to help them against the Būyid emirs: “Al-Mawardi’s Theory,” 152.
21 P. Crone, God’s Rule, 233.
23 Al-Māwardī, Les Statuts gouvernementaux, 68.
24 P. Crone, God’s Rule, 244, citing al-Ghazālī, Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn (Cairo, 1282), 2:116 and 1:6.
Legitimizing taifal power

The fall of the Cordovan caliphate resulted in a similarly fragmented political situation, leading to a transfer of power to the regional level and the creation of several polities, the taifas, who inherited political authority without however enjoying caliphal legitimacy. In addition, while the caliph’s political authority was divided among regional rulers, the imāmate itself was disputed by multiple factions and candidates before eventually disappearing. Legitimacy thus became an essential question for all involved, with caliphal candidates and the mulūk al-ṭawāʾif offering mutual recognition to consolidate each other’s claims to power. The evolution of this system may have benefited from the contemporary debate in the East, and over time, rulers and jurists seem to arrive at a similar consensus.25 Thus, the fact that Ibn Ḥazm, one of the mulūk al-ṭawāʾif’s more famous detractors, treats as villainous or impious those jurists who support them implies that at least some of the fuqahā (s. faqīh) cooperated in legalizing the taifas.26 The mulūk thus recognized, when possible, one of the caliphal candidates through the bayʿa, khūṭba, and their coinage,

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25 Given the contemporaneity of the Andalusī fitna and the writing of al-Māwardī’s texts, it is improbable that his Kitāb al-aḥkām al-sulṭāniyya had any kind of profound effect on the debate in al-Andalus at this time. Nevertheless, José Maria Forneas has retraced the diffusion of Ashʿarī works in al-Andalus during the fifth/eleventh century, notably those of al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) and al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), who borrowed many elements from al-Māwardī; J.M. Forneas, “De la transmisión de algunas obras de tendencia ašʿarī en al-Andalus,” Awraq, 1 (1978): 4-11; J.M. Forneas, “Al-Tamhūd de al-Bāqillānī y su transmisión en al-Andalus,” Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicos, 27-28 (1977-9): 433-40.

and received in exchange approbation to exercise their *de facto* power.\textsuperscript{27} Mujāhid himself chose to break with the Cordovan candidates, proclaiming in Denia the caliphate of ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu‘ayṭī in 405/1013, performing the *bay‘a*, declaring his name in the *khṭba*, and issuing coinage carrying his name.\textsuperscript{28} Al-Mu‘ayṭī was largely recognized throughout the *Sharq al-Andalus*, despite the division between Mujāhid and his ‘Āmirid peers, though members of the group soon turned to al-Murtaḍā as their candidate.\textsuperscript{29} While none of these caliphates lasted long, and most were ended by their instigators, they nevertheless provided transitory legitimacy to the regional rulers in exchange for few real obligations.

The unstable political situation and tensions between Ḥammūdid and Marwānid factions nevertheless limited the normalizing effects of these caliphates, and most of the *mulūk al-ṭawā‘if* preferred not to test the limits, avoiding, for example, producing coinage.\textsuperscript{30} When the last Cordovan caliph was deposed in 422/1031, and the Ḥammūdid caliphs had lost their shine for all but a few, it became

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} Thus, for example, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Mansūr of Valencia, Zuhayr of Murcia, Khayrān of Almería and Mundhir b. Yahyā of Zaragoza recognized the caliphate of Qāsim b. Hammūd, who subsequently confirmed them; Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān*, 3:164-5, 190-1; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a‘māl al-‘ālām*, 163, 225.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Coinage and monetary production as a whole, including mercantile, legitimizing and fiscal aspects, are treated *infra* this chapter. Coinage could be used to recognize a caliph, but it was above all else a fiscal tool. Only the imām, or his representative, had the right to issue coinage and collect canonical taxes. While the *mulūk al-ṭawā‘if* are known for their fiscal greed, they avoided doubly affirming their legitimacy by collecting taxes with coins carrying their names as caliphal representatives. This no doubt explains the high number of anonymous coins minted during this period; P. Guichard, B. Soravia, *Les royaumes de taifas*, 48-50.
\end{itemize}
difficult for the taifa rulers to legally couch their power. The solution was to invent a caliph to whom they could swear oaths and from whom they could derive legitimacy. Ibn ‘Abbād thus declared in 427/1035 that he had found Hishām II, supposedly dead for the last twenty-two years, and proclaimed him caliph in Seville.31 A large number of the mulūk al-tāwā’if took advantage of this improbable announcement to recognize the old/new caliph and normalize their own situations, normalization often symbolized by a reprisal of monetary production.32 The transition between this false Hishām II, incarnated by a real person, and a completely fictitious imām was an easy one, first for Seville’s adversaries – namely Toledo and Badajoz – then after Hishām II’s death was announced around 451/1059-60 or 455/1063 when his name was replaced on coins with the intentionally vague al-imām ‘Abd Allāh.33 The taifa rulers thus anticipated and even went beyond al-Ghazālī’s ideas, offering themselves the right to issue coinage in the name of an imām who existed solely for that reason, implicitly communicating their own legitimacy.34 This practice spread to almost all of the taifas producing coinage, presumably for fiscal reasons, indicating that a

31 Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-tawā’if, 315; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:190.
32 This false Hishām II was first recognized by the rulers of Valencia, Tortosa, Denia, and Cordova. Over time, the taifas of Zaragoza, Almería, Badajoz, Toledo, Carmona and a number of minor kingdoms joined the list; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:190, 219. Zaragoza minted in Hishām II’s name beginning in 423, and he was also on named coins from Alpuente, Calatayud, Denia, Lerida, Seville, Toledo, Tortosa, Tudela and Valencia; A. Prieto y Vives, Reyes, 198, no. 225, and passim. See also D. Wassserstein’s discussion in his Rise and Fall, 155-60.
33 This imām ‘Abd Allāh appears on coins in Denia, Seville, Badajoz, Almería, Valencia, Toledo, Zaragoza, and Majorca; A. Vives y Escudero, Monedas, 448.
34 F. Clément has noted that the titles used on these coins, notably ḥājib, tied the ruler to the imām, confirming the right to rule in the caliph’s absence; Pouvoir et légitimité, 250.
consensus existed between the rulers and the fuqahā’ working to normalize the evolving nature of public authority.35

François Clément has demonstrated, with more detail, the “de facto power of the Andalusī princes.”36 The taifas modeled themselves on the Umayyad state, copying within the limits of their resources the Cordovan caliphate.37 The mulūk al-ṭawā’if considered themselves to be legitimate rulers, and covered themselves with the appropriate accompanying symbols and devices. Among these, the bay’a was essential, signifying “a reciprocal engagement between the new sovereign and his subjects,” without which the ruler could not claim legitimate power.38 Even if legitimate power derived from the imām, receiving the bay’a translated a claim to autonomous authority that was recognized by leading figures.39 Both Mujāhid and ʿAlī used the bay’a ceremony as a political tool to normalize their power. The Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawā’if is missing the sections concerning Denia, but its anonymous author showed particular attention to the importance of this ceremony, and noted that the Ṣaqāliba in Játiva and Valencia pronounced the ḥuwba in Mujāhid’s name, indicating a previous bay’a.40 Mujāhid’s men swore oaths to ʿAlī, who later called on his governors to renew their oaths after he repressed his brother’s

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35 We should also note that the fuqahā and especially qāḍīs derived part of their own legitimacy from being themselves recognized by the secular rulers. Despite their independence vis-à-vis political power, judicial nominations were a state affair. It was thus in interests of all involved to come to a regularizing consensus; P. Guichard, B. Soravia, Les royaumes de taifas, 220-1.
36 F. Clément, Pouvoir et légitimité, 203 for the quote and ch. 4, 203-281, for his analysis.
40 Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawā’if, 302; P. Guichard, B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 53
attempted coup d’État.\footnote{Ibn Bassām, \textit{Dhakhīra}, 3:130; \textit{Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān}, 3:158.} There was thus administrative and governmental continuity between Mujāhid and ‘Alī, since the men who recognized his power through their oaths supported and served him as the representative of his dynasty to which they had sworn loyalty.

\textit{Mamlaka, dawla and the Taifa State}

The vocabulary and terms that the taifa rulers used to define their power can shed light on how they understood it themselves. The majority of contemporary sources are hostile to the \textit{mulūk al-tawā‘if}, but the memoires of ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, last ruler of the taifa of Granada, offer a different view of the period.\footnote{‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, \textit{Kitāb al-tibiyān li-l-āmīr ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn ākhīr umarā‘ banī zīrī bi-Gharnātā}, ed. A. T. Ṭibī (Rabat, 1995).} ‘Abd Allāh may have simply been seeking to vindicate himself before his Almoravid jailers, but his \textit{Tibyān} does provide a unique first-person political and governmental view. Granada did function somewhat differently from Denia, influenced as it was by Berber traditions, but the fundamental concepts of power and territory presented by this text apply also to the other taifas.

‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn principally employed two political terms when referring to his taifa: \textit{dawla} and \textit{mamlaka}. Neither term clearly indicates the state, and both have different meanings in different contexts. The first term’s root, \textit{d-w-l}, signifies turning or alternating, but over time \textit{dawla} came to mean a period of time or
power, then “dynasty.”  

In the *Tibyān*, *dawla* indicates governmental administration or political organization: ‘Abd Allāh mentions ministers (*wazirā’ al-dawla*) and refers to *wazira’ wa mudabbirī al-dawla*, “the ministers and administrators of the *dawla*.”

The notion of territoriality seems tied to the term when al-Muẓaffar chooses ‘Abd Allāh as his successor and, in order to teach him about affairs of state – *āmūr al-dawla* – advises him to make note of everything that happens in his *dawla* during times of crisis – *mā yangaḏī fī dawlatī āyām al-fitan*. The link between polity and territory is clearer when ‘Abd Allāh writes that his grandfather’s recovery of lands previously lost to Ibn Sumādiḥ of Almeria “consolidated his *dawla*.” Together, these different uses of the term *dawla* draw out not only the abstract notion of the Zirīd dynasty, but also the polity and territory over which it reigned.

*Mamlaka* similarly communicates the concept of a state, but with a stronger affirmation of power and territory. The root *m-l-k* signifies possession, giving derivatives such as *mulk*, power, and *malik* (pl. *mulūk*), a possessor and so also ruler. This governmental sense contrasts with *imāma*, since the *malik* exercises only secular power. *Malik* often designated non-Muslim rulers during the first centuries of the Hegira, but it eventually found its way into the Islamic political lexicon without losing its secular connotations. Palatine ceramics in the Cordovan caliphal court, for

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example, bore the term *al-mulk*, referring to both the regime and its power.\(^{49}\) This is in fact similar to the term *sultân*, which evokes power and authority along with the person that exercises them.\(^ {50}\) In the *Tibyân*, ‘Abd Allâh associates *mamlaka* with both the exercise of power and area in which power is applied. ‘Abd Allâh uses it to refer to the royal family, both Umayyad, when he writes that al-Manšûr was not from the royal house, *lam yakunu min āhl bayt al-mamlaka*, and his own family.\(^ {51}\) He says that his grandfather was *murashshahân li-l-mamlaka*, “raised to reign” or “destined for the succession of the kingdom.”\(^ {52}\) ‘Abd Allâh was infuriated when he learned of a tax revolt, since “the exercise of royalty” – perhaps even “the administration of a kingdom” – was impossible under such circumstances, *lâ tatammu bi-hi mamlakatun*.\(^ {53}\) He also accuses Ibn Dhū-l-Nūn of Toledo of acting against him as Alfonso I of Castile’s agent, since he “was waiting for my kingdom [mamlakatnâ] to fall so that he could take it for himself.”\(^ {54}\)

\(^{49}\) M. Barceló, “*Al-Mulk*, el verde y el blanco. La vajilla califal omeya de Madînat al-Zahrâ’,” in *El sol que salió por Occidente. Estudios sobre el estado Omeya en al-Andalus* (Jaén, 1997), 187-194.


\(^{51}\) ‘Abd Allâh uses the terms *āhl bayt al-mamlaka* and *āhl al-mamlaka*; *Tibyân*, 54, 55, 56, 65.

\(^{52}\) A.T. Tībî translates this phrase as “nominated as the successor to the throne of the kingdom”; *The Tibyân: Memoirs of ‘Abd Allâh b. Buluqqîn, Last Zîrid Amîr of Granada* (Leiden, 1986), 41.


Tax systems and territorial models

Historians have questioned the sovereignty of these taifas because of their lack of marked or fixed boundaries, but that does not mean that their territoriality was not defined. Fixed linear political borders could not exist inside the dār al-Islām, and geographic divisions between political entities corresponded more with transitions between sovereignty zones. The Muslim vision of political territory translated more as an emanation from a center rather than a regular presence within borders. For Ralph Brauer, these divisions reflected fiscal dominance, and the borders between states existed in the zones where the flow of taxes gradually changed directions.55 Similarly, Pierre Guichard, in adapting Samir Amin’s model of the tributary state to al-Andalus, argued that tribute was the principal link between state structures and local communities.56

Political fragmentation could then translate into territorial divisions, without necessarily imposing clear linear limits. Following Brauer’s example, taxes do seem a useful indicator of territorial dominion. Collecting canonical and non-canonical taxes does in fact translate a claim to political legitimacy, especially when the surplus, after paying the army and other local administrative costs, is not forwarded on to a higher power. The geographer Ibn Ḥawqal uses this same approach,

56 P. Guichard, Musulmans de Valence, 1:20.
associating fiscal and territorial authority when he writes that the Idrīsids control Tangiers because they receive the taxes.\(^{57}\)

This same relation between fiscal and political and territorial dominion is evident in al-Andalus under the early Umayyad caliphate. When ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III brought the Bahriyyūn of Pechina under his direct control in 310/922, he imposed a tributary payment while naming a governor to administer their lands.\(^{58}\) Later, under the taifa regimes, political powers still expressed their hold over territories through fiscal coercion. Murcia’s independence or submission during the taifa period is seldom clear, falling at imprecise times under Almería, Valencia, and Denia. Ibn al-Abbār, however, makes clear the city’s submission to Valencia, at least for a time, when he writes that the Banū Ṭāhir, who ran the city, sent their tax surplus to the Valencian emirs.\(^{59}\)

Brauer’s analysis presents a model of territorial division through fiscal dominance, and while this model coincides with taifal territoriality, an accompanying illustration showing homogenous cores with surrounding territories fading into each other still perpetuates the idea of contiguous territory. Another model, advanced by the anthropologist Monica Smith, uses the circulation of resources within a certain

\(^{57}\) Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-ārd*, 81/77.


\(^{59}\) Ibn al-Abbār, *Kitāb al-hulla al-siyarā*, 2:116. The fact that ports, among the few places where entry into a political territory was clear, were principal points for tax collection also demonstrates this link between fiscal and political territory; R. Brauer, *Boundaries*, 14, 33-4. Goitein notes moreover that ports were considered border crossings, and that *al-thagẖr* was readily applied to ports such as Alexandria and al-Mahdiya; *Mediterranean Society*, 1:376; Geniza TS 8 J 6 13; Geniza TS 20.127. Ibn Jubayr complains that he and his companions had to pay the zakat upon arriving in Alexandria, while Ibn Hawqal notes on numerous occasions that ports were places for collecting canonical taxes, as well as customs duties on imports and exports; Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla* (Beirut, 1988), 38-9; Ibn Hawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-ārd*, 70, 73, 74-5, 96-7, 107-8; Ch. Picard, *La mer*, 160-3.
area to define a reticular political territory. This approach seems better suited to pre-modern polities based more on corridors and connecting points than homogenous expanses of land. Smith’s model, however, maintains the idea of a delimiting border, or at least the idea of a state that acts within its own specific delimited space and boundaries.

In the case of the Andalusī taifas, and especially Denia, fragmentation excludes a cohesive or contiguous territory. The taifas were more or less coherent aggregates defined by their tax systems, but not linear borders. Specific locations under taifal authority were naturally denser around the capital, but became more sporadic farther out, mingling with other taifas’ possessions. Components and networks thus become the key terms for understanding taifal political space.

Political territory under the taifas

Historical works on al-Andalus in the fifth/eleventh century often contrast the imagined unity of the erstwhile Umayyad caliphate with the fragmentation of taifal society. Henri Terrasse insisted on the taifa kings’ regionalism and lack of cohesion, labeling their polities “agglomerates of military fiefs.” Pierre Guichard wrote that the taifas were more “centers of power” than states. Nevertheless, even though the taifas may have lacked the homogeneity often attributed to the Cordovan caliphate,

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their territories were no less defined. Moreover, even the caliphate had been composed of territories and regions tied to the state through treaties and oaths, sometimes under Cordova’s direct administration, but sometimes also semi-independent in exchange for tributary payment, while its internal and external borders constantly evolved.

The *fitna*, however, did exacerbate this instability, which became a prime characteristic of the taifas. The structures that had transmitted and enforced political power were reduced to a regional scale, while civil wars and limited resources meant that the imposition of power coming out of the new centers was intermittent at best. Taifal territory thus became a zone or sphere of influence, with a core authority around the capital and supporting points scattering out and overlapping neighboring networks.

**Division and definition**

Henri Terrasse cited the frequent loss, retaking and sometimes exchange of fortifications as a sign of taifal territorial instability, as a demonstration of their lack of borders.63 A lack of linear borders, however, does not automatically translate into a lack of territorial definition, as shown by ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn’s account of a conflict between Granada and Almería in which border *quwwād* were battling over certain *ḥuṣūn* in the district of Fiñana.64 Although there was not a linear border or a clear division between the two taifas, ‘Abd Allāh maintained control of this territory

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by building or restoring ḥuṣūn which he garrisoned. ‘Abd Allāh’s description shows that the mulūk al-ṭawā‘if exercised their power over territories that were mutually distinct, and that they could use force to protect that power.

The events that led to Denia’s fall to Zaragoza indicate a similar territorial structure. According to Ibn Bassām, al-Muqtadir wished to annex to the taifa of Tortosa fortresses (qilā‘) that were under Denia’s authority.\(^\text{65}\) After some hesitation, ‘Alī b. Mujāhid ordered his governors (‘ummāl) to fortify and defend the sites against Ibn Hūd. These fortifications were far from the core of Denia’s authority, separated from the capital by fortifications belonging to other taifas – between Denia and Tortosa there were four centers of taifa power – and yet they remained tied to the regime through a political and administrative system. As in the conflict between Granada and Almería, even though these sites were impermanent and militarily occupied only when threatened, al-Muqtadir’s request and ‘Alī’s response show that despite their dispersal they constituted part of each taifas’ defined political territory.

Political territory as an aggregate of districts and regions

These conflicts shed light on the administrative structure of al-Andalus. The taifas had inherited the caliphal system under which the peninsula had been divided into circumscriptions (kūra), and further divided into districts (iqlīm and/or juz‘).\(^\text{66}\) Other terms could apply to these districts, depending on their administrative function and

\(^{65}\) Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:184.

\(^{66}\) E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 3:47-8; J. Vallvé Bermejo, La division territorial de la España musulmana (Madrid, 1986), 235-8.
their place within the hierarchy of territorial division: ‘amal, hawz, nazār, jiha and nāhiya. Depending on the sources and time period, these terms could be more or less precise. The qarya/hiṣn binomial was the basic element in this system, forming either a juz’ or iqīm, which then formed an ‘amal.67 Andalusī territory was thus a mosaic of circumscriptions and districts. The kūras were both administrative and military, but subdivisions, when they had a governmental and not just geographic signification, mostly indicate fiscal organization.68 Iqīm clearly designated a fiscal division, and al-‘Udhrī, al-Bakrī, and the anonymous author of the Dhikr bilād al-Andalus each provide tax figures for specific iqīms.69 On a larger scale, the ‘āmil, or governor of an ‘amal, could have military responsibilities, but was more often associated with collecting taxes.70

The fall of the Umayyad caliphate exaggerated these territorial divisions, not only by further dividing territory between the different taifa kingdoms, but through the disintegration of political control within these polities. The territorial base of the mulūk al-ṭawā’if was in fact punctual, relying on fortresses and districts and depending on the individual adherence of each. Rulers could aspire to a territorially cohesive whole, but their vision of their kingdoms was fragmented and composite. An analysis of ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn’s Tibyān brings this vision to light. Ibn Buluqqīn sometimes writes of his mamlaka as a whole, using balda or nazār, but when addressing specifically territorial questions, the emir more often speaks in terms

67 A. Bazzana, P. Cressier and P. Guichard, Châteaux, 132.
68 Besides the kūra, there were also the Marches, or thaghr, the military role of which resulted from their location alongside the Christian North; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 3:55-9.
69 Al-Himyarī, 250-1; Dhikr bilād al-Andalus, 1:41; Al-‘Udhrī, 124-7.
70 J. Vallvé Bermejo, División, 229; EI², “‘āmil,” 1:435a.
of pieces. He conquers and invests bilād, never using a term that denotes discrete unity. He handles the affairs of his subjects and his lands, writing bilād and thinking probably down to the individual provincial components of his kingdom.\(^{71}\) In the section about his confrontation with Almería, the conflict erupts in a region (naẓar), but implicates individual districts (jihāt). Ibn Buluqqīn uses jihāt in his description of measures taken to consolidate his hold on the area, writing that his fortifications “formed a protective line for our districts (jihāt), limiting access to them, and threatening the jihāt of Almería.”\(^{72}\) This term can be translated with a linear concept, as a boundary, but its use in the text also indicates a composite aspect.\(^{73}\)

It would seem even that Ibn Buluqqīn uses jiha in the place of juz’. The Tibyān does not employ the political-administrative vocabulary typical of other contemporary sources, and terms such as iqālīm, kūra, and juz’ are absent from the text. The absence of this last term is surprising since al-‘Udhrī only uses it for the kūra/s of Balansiya, al-Jazīra, and Ilbīra, Ibn Buluqqīn’s own region, and he specifically uses it for Fiñana.\(^{74}\) Reinhardt Dozy, moreover, highlighted uses of jiha in liaison with taxes and resources.\(^{75}\) Ibn Buluqqīn thus thought of his territory in terms of administrative and fiscal components at a local level, and while they may have formed a composite whole, each piece remained distinct.

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\(^{74}\) Al-‘Udhrī, 20, 90-3, 120.

The taifa of Granada’s administrative structure was typical of fifth/eleventh-century al-Andalus, and Denia shows the same territorial logic. There is no source comparable to the *Tibyān* for Denia, but some texts do indicate a similar relationship between the taifa and its territory. For example, the account of Denia’s fall to the Banū Hūd of Zaragoza mentions this same system of fragmented territorial administration.⁷⁶ Al-Muqtadir b. Hūd thus sought to annex certain fortifications, not a territory, and ‘Alī ordered his governors to abandon those areas (*bilād*). Ibn Bassām uses ‘*ummāl* (s. ‘*āmil*) for the governors acting under ‘Alī. Whereas a *qā’id* acted as a military governor, the ‘*āmil* served primarily in administrative functions related to tax collection. The fortifications coveted by Ibn Hūd were thus the physical markers for the taifa’s fiscal districts, or *a’māl*.

This same concept comes through in the 1058 treaty signed by Denia and Barcelona.⁷⁷ The treaty is treated in detail below in a chapter on relations between Denia and the Christian Mediterranean, but it is pertinent also to this discussion. The Arabic text of the treaty states that the Christians in all of ‘Alī’s territories, *a’māl*, should recognize his sovereignty in their churches. The text thus reflects an administrative organization, and probably the fact that ‘Alī would order each of his governors to implement in their districts the measures described in the treaty.

The taifa of Denia thus communicated through a network of administrative agents who governed and collected taxes in their respective districts. Denia exercised

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its authority over not only its hinterland, but also over scattered points far from the territorial core. In addition to towns such as Orihuela, Elche, and Murcia, sources also place under Denia’s authority at imprecise times towns and fortifications as far and dispersed as Lorca, Baza, Baeza, Jodar, and Segura. This last town was under the direct control of ‘Ali’s son, Muḥammad Sirāj al-Dawla, until the dynasty’s fall, while Granada had to invest heavily in its campaign to take Baeza. Thus, despite their distance and isolation from the capital, these sites were still integral parts of Denia’s political territory. In fact, in the conflict that led to Denia’s demise, Ibn Hūd wanted to annex the fortifications to the taifa of Tortosa. Between the two capitals, however, there were at least two, even three or four centers of taifal power. The fortifications were thus scattered beyond the territorial core of either taifa, possibly separated from the two by fortifications belonging to other taifas. Nevertheless, the taifa’s political network tied them to the capital.

**Reticular Territories and the Taifa of Denia**

Denia’s scattered territorial structure responded to the very logic that underlay the taifa itself. Denia’s principal asset was its liminal place between the Mediterranean Sea and the Iberian Peninsula, the traffic between which circulated through its port and represented its prime resource. Denia’s port became a major transfer point

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79 Muḥammad Sirāj al-Dawla even minted dirhams from Segura after Denia’s fall: A. Canto García, *T. b. Ḥ. Ibrāhīm*, “Suplemento,” 157, no. 91
between inland and sea networks, and Mujāhid worked to ensure its place in the economic redistribution between al-Andalus and the Mediterranean. The sea lanes leading out from the capital became extensions of the taifa itself, while access to the routes that fed its port and drained economic resources as far as Toledo and Seville required active attention. Denia’s rulers were conscious of the importance of these networks, allowing them to structure their polity and dictate policy.

Road networks

Denia’s establishment under the Greeks resulted from the possibilities offered by its port and relations with its immediate hinterland. The site itself, however, was isolated, cut off from the main road networks by the last sections of the Betic Cordillera whose peaks to the south and west of Denia were impracticable for wheeled vehicles. Thus, the Roman road that linked the Latin capital with its Iberian possessions bypassed the Jibāl Balansiya to the north of Denia, passing from Valencia to Alcira and Játiva, branching off towards either Cartagena or the peninsular interior and Cádiz. As Denia grew, however, it became better integrated into the communications networks, bending routes towards its port.

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Denia began to transform in the first century CE from a redistribution center for imported products to a port exporting its hinterland’s agricultural surplus. A secondary branch of the Via Augusta deviated from Alcira, passing through Cullera, to serve Denia’s port: al-‘Udhri and Idrisi describe this road as the town’s principal land access during the Islamic period. A second route linked Denia with the peninsular interior and Játiva through Orba and Bairén. R. Azuar Ruiz has likewise shown that a network of secondary routes not mentioned by the sources linked Islamic Denia with the towns and villages of this mountainous region, and by extension with the principal lines of communications.

Part of this road network served Denia’s port and its hinterland before the caliphate’s fall. Denia itself fell into desuetude at the end of Antiquity, its population moving inland to Ondara without abandoning use of the town’s port. Archeological discoveries from the later emirate and early caliphate show settlements along the roads linking with the coast and Játiva. The fortified site of Almiserát (fourth/tenth century), perched above the entrance to the Gallinera valley, bears witness to the need to watch over active roads. This valley permitted communications with interior settlements, notably those concentrated around Cocentaina and Alcoy, as well as

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85 Al-‘Udhri, 20; Idrisi, Caminos, 66.
86 R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 354-7.
those along the road leading to the Vinalopó valley.\textsuperscript{88} The limited nature of these roads reflects the sparse population density of this region; nevertheless, they integrated Denia into the peninsular networks.

Both M.J. Rubiera Mata and R. Azaúr Ruiz have remarked that Denia’s rulers sought to control road networks through conquest and the acquisition of strategic points.\textsuperscript{89} The taifa’s geographic evolution over the course of the century incorporated the roads that fed its port. Denia’s conquests and diplomacy were often the result of a need to control and ensure access to the paths that linked the taifa with Andalusī markets. The taifa’s expansion followed two directions that allowed its rulers to master at least part of the principal networks and liaisons in the \textit{Sharq al-Andalus}. Towards the south, the conquest of Tudmīr brought the \textit{Via Augusta} from Lorca and Murcia to Játiva under Mujāhid’s power. Control over Baeza and Segura in the modern province of Jaén gave Denia the “caliphal” road, sometimes referred to as the \textit{Camino de Aníbal}, which linked Valencia and Cordova, probably including Jinjāla, Chinchilla, the junction for roads leading to Toledo.\textsuperscript{90}

Denia’s expansion along the Andalusī roads dates from Mujāhid’s reign. The taifa was most likely limited to its hinterland and the \textit{Jibāl Balansiya} until Zuhayr’s death in 429/1038. Mujāhid pursued a double campaign of conquest and negotiation against Zuhayr’s heir, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr, ruler of Valencia and then also Tudmīr and Almería. He invaded ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s lands in 433/1042, provoking a

\textsuperscript{88} R. Azaúr Ruiz, \textit{Denia islámica}, 80-1, 411-3; A. Bazzana, \textit{Maisons}, 1:400.


\textsuperscript{90} Al-'Udhrī, \textit{Nasīs 'an al-Andalus} (10), briefly mentions this road from Valencia to Cordoba. For Jinjāla; Idrīsī, \textit{Caminos}, 65-6.
rebellion by Ibn Ṣumādiḥ in Almería, as well as the governors of several ḥuṣūn, including Lorca, Játiva, and Jodar.91 ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was able to recover Játiva, but ceded Almería to Ibn Ṣumādiḥ and the rest of Tudmīr to Denia.92 Rubiera Mata notes that this was probably the moment when ‘Abd al-‘Azīz lost control over his most western territories, since Baeza and Segura are later mentioned under Denia’s power.93 Rather than by outright military conquest, these territories most likely fell to Denia through a change of allegiance by the fortifications’ respective governors. We should note that Ibn ‘Idhārī still places the governor of Segura, Sa‘īd b. Rufayl (or Sa‘īd b. Aḥmad b. Zanfil al-Jumānī according to Ibn al-Khaṭīb) under ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s authority two years later, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb describes him at one point as being in rebellion.94 This insurrection may have been an intermediary step between recognizing Valencia and submitting to Denia. In any case, Mujāhid transformed his taifa through these military and political interventions. On his death in 436/1044, ‘Alī inherited ensured access to Andalusī road networks, and control over many of those roads through strategic points, from Lorca almost to the gates of Cordova.

In fact, a comparison of the sites specifically mentioned as being under Denia’s authority and the principal regional roads clearly shows that these networks fundamentally structured the taifa’s territory. Denia controlled the Via Augusta from Játiva to Lorca, and the Camino de Anibal that linked Játiva with Cordova and that

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91 Akhbār duwwal mulāk al-tawā‘if, 302. The anonymous author of this chronicle may have chosen these towns to illustrate the breadth of the rebellion, the three sites corresponding with the geographic limits of Zuhayr’s territories.

92 Al-‘Udhrī, 16; Akhbār duwwal mulāk al-tawā‘if, 302.


allowed the Betic taifas an access to the Mediterranean that circumvented hostile Zīrid Granada. Denia was also in communications with the taifas of Alpuente and Toledo through Chinchilla, and its ports became maritime outlets for the principal Andalusī markets. Ceramics from Toledo discovered in the region of Denia indicate regular commercial relations, while al-‘Udhrī notes that Játiva exported its products as far as Ghana and the Bilād al-Sudān, most likely beginning the journey along the road to Denia. The peninsular roads likewise led Andalusī ‘ulamā’ to Denia’s port, which became the second port of embarkation for pilgrims and voyagers heading east.

The taifa’s ports, notably Denia and Alicante, served as hubs between the Mediterranean maritime and the Andalusī road networks. Maintaining roads and ensuring unhindered circulation were among an Islamic ruler’s responsibilities, and Denia’s rulers would have been doubly motivated by the taxes generated by both goods transiting through their ports and markets and tolls exacted from travelers. Roads also acted as fiscal conduits, allowing state revenues from outlying and rural areas to make their way to the ruler’s court. The road network itself thus became a resource, without which the taifa’s port could not function and its coffers would remain empty.

95 M.J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 24.
96 Relations with Toledo are discussed in further detail in chapter 6. R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 415-6; R. Azuar Ruiz, “Al-Andalus y el comercio mediterráneo del siglo XI, según la dispersión y distribución de las producciones cerámicas,” in La Península ibérica y el Mediterráneo entre los siglos XI y XII, Codex Aquilarenensis, 13, vol. 1 (Aguilar de Campo, 1998), 58; Al-‘Udhrī, 19.
97 See table in appendix.
98 Al-Māwardī notes that the imām should name an emir to pursue brigands and highwaymen, treating them like war criminals, while ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn takes pride in the safety of his grandfather’s roads; al-Māwardī, Les Status gouvernementaux, 123; ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, Tibyān, 64.
Denia’s peninsular interests were in fact so tied to these roads that on the eve of the taifa’s collapse, ‘Alī was readily willing to cede territories that were not directly related to them. Ibn Bassām and ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn both ascribe Denia’s fall to ‘Alī’s greed, his love of money and luxuries, as well as his negligence of military affairs. Ibn Bassām specifies even that he was especially interested in commerce and taxes. When Ibn Hūd sought to annex some of Denia’s fortresses to the taifa of Tortosa, ‘Alī’s first reaction was to order his governors to abandon those lands, since, according to Ibn Bassām, he only cared about roads. Ibn Bassām writes that two types of roads kept ‘Alī’s attention, those through the valleys and those through the mountains. Both types of roads were essential for the circulation of commercial goods and their transportation to Denia’s port, and control of them would also offer revenue from tolls. A loss of territory that did not disrupt the taifa’s fiscal and commercial interests was not worth the expenditure of resources of an armed conflict. Linear boundaries did not delimit taifal territories; rather, networks of loyalties and fortifications did; for ‘Alī his polity was in essence an economic machine structured by the means of communication.

Maritime routes

The peninsular road network structured Denia’s Iberian territory, drawing part of the taifa’s interests inland. However, those roads gained importance precisely because of their role in the economic redistribution between al-Andalus and the Mediterranean.

100 Ibn Bassām specifically refers to ضياء الجياد, “horse paths,” and ضياء الصعود, “paths of those who climb.”
They were essential as the peninsular response to the maritime routes that linked Denia’s ports to the Mediterranean world. Mujāhid concentrated throughout his reign on controlling the means of circulation necessary to ensure Denia’s place as a major port. As a mirror to the inland routes, maritime lanes became tools for implementing Mujāhid’s policies, to the point of becoming dynamic extensions of the taifa itself.

Mujāhid chose Denia as his capital because of its strategic place in the traffic between the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. The taifa ruler’s early campaigns were closely tied to the western Mediterranean lanes, and while his peninsular holdings clung to the roads, Mujāhid’s maritime conquests were determined by the “route of the islands” that ran from Denia to the Italian and Ibrīqiyān coasts.

Christian Courtois first described an island route that ships in the Early Middle Ages followed between Africa and Gaul, skirting Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica. Courtois’s term came to encompass an ensemble of routes across the Western Mediterranean, and especially the transversal axis that included the Balearics and Sardinia. This was not the only possible route for maritime vessels, and sources indicate traffic along the North African shores, but an ensemble of factors – topography, winds and currents – made the island route the fastest and safest. The

103 O.R. Constable, “At the Edge of the West: International Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain (1000-1250)” (Ph.D. diss, Princeton University, 1989), 78.
control of this route became an increasingly high stake over the course of the fifth/eleventh century, as both Muslim and Christian shipping increased within the Western Mediterranean and beyond.

The Balearic Islands offered the first key to controlling naval traffic between al-Andalus and the Christian coasts. The Umayyads had understood this strategic position, and used Majorca as a staging point for their raids against Frankish targets in 321/933 and 323/935.\(^\text{104}\) The fourth/tenth-century geographer al-Rāzī wrote that ships travelling from Europe (*al-arḍ al-kabīra*) to al-Andalus had to pass between the Balearics and the continent.\(^\text{105}\) This remained true in the sixth/twelfth century, when a Genoese ship sailing from Almería followed this same route home.\(^\text{106}\) Denia was only one sailing day from the Islands, and Arabic geographers almost invariably link them.\(^\text{107}\) Control over Denia and the Balearics thus offered Mujāhid control over an essential maritime passage.

Renewed Mediterranean relations in the fourth/tenth century attest to Sardinia’s key role in this route. Sardinia was an essential intersection for the ships coming from al-Andalus and those travelling along the North-South axis from Ifrīqiya to Provence. A Sard ambassador accompanied Amalfitan traders to Cordova in

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\(^{105}\) Al-Rāzī, 60; al-Bakrī (2003), 382-3.


330/942, seeking *amān* from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III. The Fatimid fleet that attacked Genoa in 323/934 harassed *Rūm* ships along the Sardinian coast returning from al-Andalus. Sardinia would remain an important navigational point throughout the Middle Ages. A scholar travelling from Ifrīqiya to al-Andalus in 436/1044-5 died en route in Sardinia, while a century later another ‘*alīm* returning to al-Andalus from the Orient wintered on the island. Ibn Jubayr’s sixth/twelfth-century pilgrimage to the East aboard a Genoese ship travelled from Denia’s coast to the Balearics to Sardinia, and he followed a similar route on his return voyage. The ruler who mastered these points exercised cohesive control over the maritime routes of the Western Mediterranean, able to protect his own ships and limit access for others.

Mujāhid chose Denia as the capital and starting point of this thalassocracy in large part due to its place vis-à-vis this maritime route. Idrīsī’s description of the path leading from al-Andalus to Italy follows the axis from Denia to Majorca, passing by Ibiza and Minorca, continuing then for four days to Sardinia. Ships travelling from there could then carry on to the Ifrīqiyan coast after two days, or to Italy, which was even closer.

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112 O.R. Constable, *At the Edge of the West*, 388.
113 Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 582.
Mujāhid’s first military action after declaring the caliphate of al-Mu‘ayṭī in 405/1014 was thus the conquest of Mayūrqa and the Balearic Islands. 115 This conquest led shortly thereafter to the invasion of Sardinia. Mujāhid’s hold over Sardinia lasted only a short while, and the violent reaction by Genoa and Pisa illustrates the underlying motivations for these conquests. Mujāhid’s goal was not the simple conquest of islands, but the dominance of the Western Mediterranean’s maritime networks, for which the Balearics and Sardinia were key factors.

Mujāhid’s defeat at the hands of the Genoese and Pisan fleets deprived him of outright control over the ensemble of Western Mediterranean networks. He could nevertheless exercise substantial sway over the transversal routes through the Balearics. In addition, while Denia’s rulers did use the islands to attack Christian vessels, Majorca likewise served as a stopover for the commercial traffic circulating between al-Andalus and the other—Muslim and Christian—Mediterranean ports.

Direct connections also linked Denia and its other ports with the North African coasts. In fact, the Maghribī and Alicante coasts were so close that geographers such as Ibn Hawqāl and al-Bakrī considered them the two banks of the same river. 116 Arabic geographers directly linked Denia’s continental ports with the central Maghreb, from Ténès to Algiers, while Maḍīnat Mayūrqa faced Bidhāya (Bougie). 117 Maritime itineraries do not mention Denia’s port before the fifth/eleventh century, but at the time of the taifa it was described as being six days

117 Al-Bakrī, 81-2/164-6; al-Ḥimyarī, 188/228; Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 582.
from Marsā Janābiya – nears Algiers – and three days from Ténès. These descriptions should not be taken too literally, however, and we should not think that ships leaving Denia’s port necessarily sailed directly for Marsā Janābiya. They seem more indications of trends, coupled with sequential cartographic descriptions of ports along the two coasts.\textsuperscript{118}

The maritime routes described by Arabic geographers were neither the sole, nor the most important in the networks that linked Denia with the Muslim Mediterranean. In addition to the Central Maghreb, sources indicate direct exchange with Ifrīqiya and even Alexandria. S.D. Goitein wrote that the route linking al-Andalus, Ifrīqiya, and Egypt was the “golden rule” of Mediterranean traffic.\textsuperscript{119} Muslim ships as early as the third/ninth century were sailing directly from Ifrīqiya to al-Andalus. The scholar Yahyā b. ʿUmar wrote that boats travelled directly by sea between Tunis and al-Andalus, ‘alā al-bahr, and the geographer Ibn Khurradādhbih indicates that six days separated Tunis and al-Andalus.\textsuperscript{120} Pechina/Almería was the principal port during this period, and would continue to dominate networks during the fifth/eleventh century, but Denia would also make a place for itself in relations with al-Mahdiya. Chapter six will further develop this theme, but archeological and

\textsuperscript{118} See infra, ch. 6 for further discussion of relations between Denia and the North African coasts.
\textsuperscript{120} O.R. Constable, Trade and Traders, 32; Ch. Picard, La mer, 174; Ibn Khurradādhbih, Kitāb al-masālik wa al-mamālik, ed. M.J. de Goeje, B.G.A., v. 6 (Leiden, 1967), 87.
textual sources bear witness to regular economic, intellectual and diplomatic relations with Ifrīqiya made possible by the direct maritime links between the two coasts.\footnote{121 See infra, ch. 6, for further discussion and bibliographical references.}

The character of Mediterranean maritime traffic evolved over the course of the century. The central Maghreb and Ifrīqiya went through periods of decline, and the Mediterranean’s economic center shifted more towards the East.\footnote{122 S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:56; O.R. Constable, At the Edge of the West, 90-1; N.A. Stillman, “The Eleventh Century Merchant House of Ibn ‘Awkal (a Geniza study),” JESHO, 16.1 (1973): 82. Studies by authors such as Bernard Doumerc and Dominique Valérian demonstrate nevertheless that the central Mediterranean retained some economic importance throughout the Middle Ages; B. Doumerc, Venise et l’émirate hafside de Tunis (1231-1535) (Paris, 1999); D. Valérian, Bougie, port maghrébin, 1067-1510 (Rome, 2006).} In a letter during the second quarter of the century, a man congratulates his friend for moving to Egypt, for “the whole [Muslim] West is not worth a thing these days.”\footnote{123 S.D. Goitein, “La Tunisie,” 569; S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:56. Moshe Gil likewise documents a large number of Jewish families moving eastward beginning in the early fifth/eleventh century; Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages (Leiden, 2004), 676-9.} Markets that were more lucrative drew ships in the latter fifth/eleventh century directly to the Eastern Mediterranean. The sixth/twelfth-century geographer Idrīsī wrote that there were thirty-six days of maritime travel between al-Andalus and Antioch, while also including far fewer routes for the Maghreb than his predecessor al-Bakrī.\footnote{124 Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 582.} Idrīsī also writes that ships left Denia for the “farthest” Orient, following perhaps the routes between al-Andalus and Tripoli indicated by Naṣīr-i Khosraw.\footnote{125 Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 557; Ch. Picard, La mer, 33; Nāṣīr-i Khosraw, Safarnāma (Book of Travels), English trans. W.M. Thackston, Jr. (New York, 1986), 13.} Geniza documents show that ships from Denia, specifically those owned by ‘Alī b. Mujāhid, were
among those travelling these routes, sometimes without stopping at all between their port and Alexandria.\textsuperscript{126}

Denia’s ships could thus follow the islands to carry maritime violence against the Italian and Provençal coasts, while its ports and markets could attract merchants from those same coasts. John Pryor has moreover underlined the essential importance of these networks in the evolution of Christian Mediterranean shipping.\textsuperscript{127} In controlling passage between the continent and the Balearics, Mujâhid and ‘Alî held a major advantage, not only over the Christian ports, but over their taifa neighbors as well. Ships from Tortosa and Barcelona necessarily traversed Denia’s waters, explaining no doubt in part the mutual benevolence that characterized their relations with Denia throughout the century.

Mujâhid understood the importance of these maritime networks before even creating the taifa of Denia and, just as with the continental networks, he structured his policies in order to integrate and exploit them better. These routes were themselves tools for Mujâhid and ‘Alî’s Mediterranean ambitions. In fact, even though their specific policies differed on certain points, they both worked to increase the taifa’s influence through the communications networks that became quasi-extensions of the taifa itself.

\textsuperscript{126} See \textit{infra}, ch. 6, for references and further discussion of relations between Denia and Egypt. \\
\textsuperscript{127} J. Pryor, \textit{Geography, technology, and war}, 91.
Piracy, state finances and maritime territoriality

The sea was not solely a source of non-violent exchange. Ships may have left Denia to commerce with the Eastern ports, but Idrīsī also writes that the fleet that menaced Christian shipping and coasts harbored in the taifa’s port. Mujāhid and ‘Alī invested heavily in naval infrastructures, as we shall see below, notably to launch and maintain this fleet. The taifa began with the invasion of Sardinia and raids against Pisa and the Tuscan coast, and piracy remained one of its principal activities throughout the century. Barcelona was forced to engage Norman mercenaries to limit Mujāhid’s tribute-exacting incursions, while monks kidnapped as human booty from the monastery of Lérins were quickly found in Denia’s slave markets. Majorca was likewise a hub for pirates, to the point that Ibn Khaldūn describes its governors’ activities as a “maritime jihād.”

Emily Sohmer Tai has advanced the idea that the privateering that emerged over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth century was a form of territorial occupation. Specifically, she writes that Genoa, Pisa, and Barcelona, in trying to monopolize the means of maritime violence to protect their economic interests, were in fact territorializing those waters. Letters of marque did not exist for the...

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128 Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 5:557
129 *Infra*, chapter 4 for a thorough discussion of Denia’s piracy against Christian targets.
130 Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘ibar*, 4:355; *infra*, chapter 4 as well.
fifth/eleventh century, but the maritime policy of Denia’s rulers came through in the *guerre de course* conveyed through their port. Piracy was a state affair, filling its coffers and financing its existence. Denia did not have a monopoly on maritime violence, nor did it seek to during most of its history, but there was a real link between its maritime territory and policies. Denia’s ships, in fact, are comparable to fortifications built inland. Ibn Ṣumādiḥ wrote to ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn that territories can only be held by building fortresses and occupying them.132 A few centuries later, the jurist Hugo Grotius (d. 1645), who was particularly interested in maritime law and warfare, wrote that sovereignty over a particular part of the sea came with the simple presence of a fleet.133 This translates into an admittedly ephemeral notion of territoriality, but one that agrees with the reticular structure of Denia’s own territory. Mujāhid held not only the principal strategic points in the Western Mediterranean, but he also extended his territory through ships launched from his arsenals and ports.

Henri Terrasse was correct, and Denia had no borders, but this was not specific to Denia. The absence of real political borders within the medieval Islamic world requires an nuanced view of sovereign territory. As we have seen, political territory was in many ways a fiscal matter, expressed through districts and governors. In the absence of clear political borders, the taifa states can be seen as zones of fiscal

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133 “[S]overeignty over a part of the seas is acquitted in the same way as sovereignty elsewhere, that is […] through the instrumentality of persons […] It is gained through the instrumentality of persons if, for example, a fleet, which is an army afloat, is stationed at some point of the sea;” L. Benton, “Legal Spaces,” 705-6, quoting A. Rubin, *The Law of Piracy* (Newport, 1988), 23, 30. We consulted the recent French edition: Hugo Grotius, *Le droit de la guerre et de la paix*, trans. P. Pradier-Fodéré, ed. D. Alland and S. Goyard-Fabre (Paris, 2005), 212.
authority enforced by military coercion. Other criteria can help clarify these limits; the ability to name judges, for example, was an exclusive privilege of legitimate and sovereign power.\textsuperscript{134} Nevertheless, a state exercises its authority over a territory from which it can raise taxes in one form or another, and it is sovereign in those areas from which it can extract revenue without having to forward the surplus on to a higher power. Thus, while fixed lines do not necessarily separate states, fiscal circulation is fundamental. A state’s territory can evolve. It does not have to be contiguous and can even be intermixed with that of another state, one that is not necessarily even neighboring. Sites under a taifa’s authority are denser around the capital and become more dispersed farther out. This territory is reticular but remains the territorial base for a political power. As in Granada, in Denia there was a dynasty, \textit{dawla}, that functioned as a legitimate polity attached to a territory over which it imposed its coercive power, \textit{mamlaka}, through agents and the use of force.

All of the taifas fit to some degree within this description, and the absence of real political borders was a common characteristic. Nevertheless, Denia seems especially ill fitted with the idea of a territorially homogenous state because of its policies of territorial occupation and its specifically maritime nature. The territories over which Denia’s rulers exercised their authority or from which they extracted revenue were particularly fragmented and constantly evolving. Denia’s territorial nature was all the more unique since the majority of its resources came from the sea,

\textsuperscript{134} Dominique Valérian has argued that tribal loyalties as evidenced by \textit{bay’a} oaths and the attribution of \textit{'iqtā’} contributed to the delineation of political space in later medieval North Africa; “Frontières et territoire dans le Maghreb de la fin du Moyen Age : les marches occidentals du sultanat hafside,” \textit{Correspondances}, 73 (2002-3): 3-8.
perhaps the most fragmented and slackest of territories. The taifa was based on expansion across Mediterranean lanes. The conquest of the Balearics and then Sardinia involved the sea and maritime lanes as much as the islands themselves. Those lanes should be viewed as a dynamic extension of its fiscal territory, especially given Denia’s dominance of them in the first years of its existence. Denia’s ships were of course not collecting taxes, but how much do they differ from tax-collecting military expeditions sent by rulers to uncooperative zones that they clearly considered under their authority? Maritime booty furnished the majority of the taifa’s financial means during its first years, later augmented by commercial shipping and international exchange. Denia, the Balearic Islands and, for a time, Sardinia were the focal points for Denia’s Western Mediterranean network, while its ships can be seen as ḥuṣūn through which it exercised its fiscal policy.

The taifa of Denia does not correspond to traditional notions of a state, seated on a precise and fixed territory. Nevertheless, Mujāhid and ‘Alī exercised sovereign power over their fragmented lands. Governmental, fiscal, administrative and military organizations continued from one reign to the next, imposing their authority and enacting their policies. Their peers, religious authorities and foreign embassies recognized their dawla and the sovereignty of their state. This recognition and their

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136 Note that ships were often described in panegyric works in terms usually associated with fortifications. See for example Ibn Bassām, Dhakhira, 3: 522.
capacity to exercise ultimate authority within a delimited, though fragmented, space contribute to a larger view of government and the Islamic state in the taifa period.

STATECRAFT AND MONETARY PRODUCTION

Monetary production supported almost all facets of the taifa’s existence. Money was a financial, fiscal and political tool for Mujāhid and ‘Alī, although their production was intermittent and dictated by punctual and fluctuating circumstances. Most taifas did not issue money, relying on already circulating coins and non-monetary financial tools; many rulers, in fact, were reticent before such an open affirmation of power.137 The decision by Denia’s rulers to mint coins thus illustrates an ambitious conception of their state. Monetary emission demonstrates not only an understanding of the financial needs associated with maritime commerce, but also an idea of distinct and legitimate sovereignty with a fiscal policy to match.

Money: a commercial tool

Legal tender was a common concept in the medieval Mediterranean, and local money was the normal means of payment.138 In his ḥisba treatise written in early sixth/twelfth-century Seville, Ibn ‘Abdūn specifies that only local money (sikkat al-

balad) should be used in the marketplace. Goitein notes that changing money was so common that merchants adapted the verb jawwaza, “to render licit,” to mean “convert to legal tender.” They use the term jawz al-balad to refer to local money. Most port cities, in fact, operated mints to satisfy, and exploit, foreign merchants’ need for local coins, just as the taifa ports of Tortosa, Valencia, Madīnat Mayūrqa, Denia and Almería all minted coins at least sporadically. The large percentage of demonetized Fatimid pieces in regional coin hoards indicates that Sharq al-Andalus taifas issued coins in part for monetary exchange. Merchants generally paid a 10% customs fee on the value of their merchandise, and requiring payment in local tender would have brought the state a double profit, from the tax itself and the exchange fees. Carolina Doménech Belda has noted that the Fatimid pieces from the area show signs of perforation, cutting and fragmentation like local coins. This treatment may in fact indicate that the coins were exchanged for local tender for customs duties, since Alberto Canto has shown that coin perforation was

143 O.R. Constable, Trade and Traders, 128.
144 C. Doménech Belda, “La moneda fatimi,” 341.
probably tied to demonetization, making the coins useless for the payment of public
debts.\textsuperscript{145}

We should note, however, that perforated coins could still serve for daily or
mercantile transactions.\textsuperscript{146} Fatimid coins in regional coin hoards were not only
pierced, but also often cut or fragmented, a sign of financial use based on weight and
not the monetary value of a coin.\textsuperscript{147} Thus, even though the Fatimid coins were not
legal tender, they could still serve as a private, non-monetary means of payment.

The link between these Fatimid coins and local taifal emissions goes beyond
simple exchange, and helps explain some of the larger mechanisms behind Andalusī
monetary production. In fact, dates for imported Fatimid coins do not coincide with
the main periods of taifa production. The last Sicilian and Ifrīqiyan dirhams imported
to al-Andalus were produced under the caliph al-Ẓāhir (411-427/1021-36), and dinars
ceased arriving after Fatimid production stopped in the Maghreb around the middle of
the century.\textsuperscript{148} Production in Denia did not begin in earnest until 4432/1040-1,
towards the same period as most other taifa mints.\textsuperscript{149} The circulating monetary mass
at the beginning of the century – a combination of caliphal, Ḥammādīd and Fatimid
coins – had sufficed for commercial needs.\textsuperscript{150} However, when Fatimid importations

\textsuperscript{145} A. Canto García, “Perforations in coins of the Andalusian Umayyad Caliphate: a form of
demonetization?,” in Problems of Medieval Coinage in the Iberian Area, 2, eds. M. Gomes Marques
\textsuperscript{146} A. Canto García, “Perforations,” 356.
\textsuperscript{147} F. Rétamero, “Mercados silencios. Arqueología de un mercado rural andalusí (Sant Rafe, isla de
Ibiza),” in II Congreso de arqueología peninsular. Zamora, del 24 al 27 de septiembre de 1996, t. 4
(Alcalá: 1999), 704; F. Rétamero, “El Estado de la moneda en al-Andalus. A propósito de una obra
\textsuperscript{148} C. Doménech Belda, “La moneda fatimí,” 343; C. Martínez Salvador, “Moneda fatimí,” 139.
\textsuperscript{149} A. Prieto, Los reyes de taifas, 182-96; F. Clément, Pouvoir et légitimité, 231-4.
\textsuperscript{150} F. Clément, Pouvoir et légitimité, 234, 267.
diminished during the second quarter of the century, taifa rulers faced a lack of specie for mercantile exchange that they tried to correct with their own emissions. Denia’s was not the most prolific taifa mint, but the quantity of dirhams and dinars produced there does indicate commercial use. Indeed, the fragmentation or cutting of a majority of Denia’s remaining coins indicates their role in local commercial exchange.151

Money: a legitimizing tool

Commerce, however, does not seem to have been the principal reason for monetary production in Denia. Recent historiography has shown the instrumental role played by coins in legitimizing and defining power.152 Coin production was a state privilege, and any decision to mint money “was fundamentally a political act.” François Clément and Pierre Guichard have both pointed out the close ties between minting and regal titles, a prime tool for communicating political legitimacy. Mujāhid and ‘Alī both used semi-caliphal honorific titles, respectively al-Muwaffaq and Iqbal al-

151 It is not clear whether Denia (or any other taifa) exported its coins beyond the peninsula. No numismatic publication mentions taifa coins in Italian collections, whether on the continent or Sicily, and inquiries to North-African collections have produced similar results. Religious differences would not have hindered the circulation of Umayyad or taifa coins in North Africa, especially since a Geniza document (c. 1005-1035) notes that the price of silver in Qayrawān was dictated by the large number of Andalusī dirhams on the market: wa-siʿr al-fidda hāḥunā yā sayyiḍī al-maḥbūt 17 ghaʿr dānīq liʿann darāḥim al-Andalus kathāra wa-kull al-asʿār taqīf ʿalayhā. S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:370, n. 5; Geniza TS 12.282.


Dawla, and the inclusion of those titles, or *laqab*, on monetary inscriptions underlined their role as political propaganda.\(^{154}\) We should also note that Mujāhid’s mintings coincided with transitional moments in his reign, when he needed to define and support his power. Thus, when Berbers besieged Hishām II in Cordova in 402/1011-2 and 403/1012-3, Mujāhid produced coins in the Umayyad caliph’s name bearing the mint name الوفة, Alūṭa.\(^{155}\) Mujāhid had established his independence vis-à-vis Cordova partly in reaction to the Berber threat, but he still considered himself an officer and servant of the Umayyad regime that had granted him the power he possessed. The Alūṭa emissions thus reiterated his support for Hishām II, while also associating his power with the Cordovan caliphate.

Mujāhid used this same form of monetary propaganda when he declared the caliphate of ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu‘ayṭī in 405/1013. A dirham from that year, also from Alūṭa, associates Mujāhid with the imām ‘Abd Allāh, *amīr al-mū’minīn*, “commander of the believers.”\(^{156}\) Ibn al-Khaṭīb associates this minting with the oath that Mujāhid ordered the people of Denia and Mallorca to swear to the new caliph, as well as his use of the *laqab* al-Muṣṭanṣir bi-Llāh in his official communications.\(^{157}\) There was thus an ensemble of actions calculated to establish the new regime’s legitimate power, and for which numismatics was an “effective means of advertising.”\(^{158}\)

\(^{154}\) ‘Alī used his *laqab* on all his coins, while al-Muwaffaq appears only once. See appendix.


Likewise, Ibn al-Khaṭīb and Ibn Khaldūn write that ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu’ayṭī rebelled against Mujāhid while he was in Sardinia, and dirhams from that time carry only the name of ‘Abd Allāh.¹⁵⁹

Felix Retamero recently argued that these monetary emissions from Denia were also a means to establish dynastic succession.¹⁶⁰ Thus, the 405/1013-4 dirham carries the names of ‘Abd Allāh and Mujāhid on the reverse, while the obverse carries the name ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.¹⁶¹ Ibn Bashkuwāl writes, in fact, that ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu’ayṭī’s son was named ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.¹⁶² Retamero explains that ‘Āmirid numismatic protocol placed the names of the caliph and the highest court dignitary on the reverse, while Sulaymān al-Mustaʿīn bi-Llāh and the Banū Ḥammād inscribed the caliphal successor on the obverse. The Alūṭa dirham combines the different protocols to communicate an ensemble of messages: al-Mu’ayṭī’s caliphate, Mujāhid’s hijāba, and the stability of a regime with an established succession.¹⁶³ Mujāhid employed this same technique towards the end of his reign to establish a stable dynastic parity between his two sons, ‘Alī and Ḥasan. Ibn ‘Idhārī affirms that Mujāhid had originally


¹⁶⁰ F. Retamero, “La formalización del poder,” *passim*.


¹⁶² Ibn Bashkuwāl (1989), 412, no. 598.

¹⁶³ F. Retamero, “La formalización del poder,” 419-21. We should note, however, that the dirhams carrying only al-Mu’ayṭī’s name also omit ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s. In addition, while Ibn Bashkuwāl does indeed give Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān as al-Mu’ayṭī’s *kunya*, Retamero also cites a passage by Ibn al-Khaṭīb that we were unable to verify. Retamero writes that “según recogió Ibn al-Jaṭīb, Mujāhid hizo constar el nombre del hijo de al-Mu’ayṭī, que se llamaba ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, en las monedas y en los estandartes,” (p. 420), but Ibn al-Khaṭīb makes no mention of al-Mu’ayṭī’s son. In fact, Ibn al-Khaṭīb (p. 252-3, cited *supra*) clearly writes that Mujāhid took these actions in the name of al-Mu’ayṭī himself. The related footnote refers only to an article by F. Codera that cites a variant to the published text and which in fact contradicts Retamero’s analysis.
chosen Ḥasan to succeed him, a fact confirmed by dirhams minted in Denia and Madīnat Mayūrqa between 430/1038-9 and 432/1040-1. These coins carry Ḥasan’s name and, on one occasion, Mujāhīd’s laqab, al-Muwaffaq. The brothers’ shared succession was later expressed through dinars and dirhams minted in 435/1043-4 and 436/1044-5 and that bore their names on the obverse and their father’s on the reverse. On his ascension, ‘Alī produced coins with his own name, and his son’s, Muḥammad, thus underlining not only unshared sovereignty, but also Ḥasan’s exclusion from the succession. ‘Alī thus associated his son with his power until the end of his reign, and rendered his role as heir-apparent even more explicit in the last years, inscribing the title al-fātā along with Muḥammad’s laqab, Mu’izz al-Dawla. Finally, when al-Muqtadir b. Hūd took Denia in 468/1076, ‘Alī’s son, Mujāhīd Sirāj

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Monetary production thus served to bolster the legitimacy of Denia’s dawla, or dynasty. The coins, together with other symbols of a legitimate Islamic regime, such as pronouncing the khutba in the ruler’s name, communicated stability and inspired the loyalty of regional governors and respect from other taifa rulers. The simple circulation of Denia’s coins beyond its borders, as far as Catalonia and Cordova, reinforced the regime’s place in peninsular networks. In addition, payment of public debts with the taifa’s dirhams and dinars implicated recognition of the state, if only because of its ability to impose its fiscal policy by means of force. We should also note that these coins financed and supported state policies and projects. The Alūṭa emissions, for example, not only served as propaganda, but also helped cover the costs for Mujāhid’s Mediterranean campaigns against the Balearics and especially Sardinia. Mujāhid paid five “dirhams of dinars” for each foal requisitioned from Mallorca, and he logically would have paid with the Alūṭa coins bearing the name of the caliph in whose name he exercised that same authority.\footnote{Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 251.} Those dirhams thus symbolized the political power that held the Islands, while also serving to equip the thousand-strong army that was preparing to invade Sardinia.
Money: a fiscal tool

This last point leads to the principal reason for monetary emissions under the taifa regimes. Money contributed to commercial circulation, stimulating mercantile transactions. It was also an effective form of political propaganda. Above all, however, money was a fiscal tool, intended to generate income for the state. Miquel Barceló raised this point in his analysis of a fatwā by Ibn Ḥazm, who condemned monetizing by the *mulk al-tawā‘if*170 Ibn Ḥazm considered taifa coins tools for rulers to extort their subjects through illegitimate taxes, financing their armies and reinforcing their ill-gotten authority. He complained of an al-Andalus ruled by highwaymen who unleashed their armies on the people to impose illicit contributions and tributes (*mukās, jiziyā, and ḍarība*).171 Ibn Khaldūn specifically cites the Andalusī taifas in his chapter on entry fees and market tolls, explaining that dying regimes had to rely on illicit taxes to finance their armies and luxurious habits.172

Alfred-Louis de Prémare and Pierre Guichard together pointed out the effects of an aggressive tax program developed by Muẓaffar and Mubārak, the Slav rulers of Valencia.173 Ibn Ḥayyān writes that the two *fītūn* imposed increasingly onerous taxes on their subjects, in part with help from the *Ṣaqqāliba* mercenaries that had

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171 Ibn Ḥazm, “Un codice,” 35/38. We have followed M. Asín Palacios, who translates *muḥārib*, warrior or bellicose, by *salteador de caminos*.


settled in Valencia at the beginning of the fitna. Local populations abandoned their lands to avoid taxes, while those same lands were redistributed among members of the court-favored elite. Fiscal policy may not have been as aggressive in other taifas, but we can note that Valencia, Denia and Almería all struck dirhams during this same period. These dirhams helped define and bolster the fragile new taifa regimes, but they also would have facilitated taxation at a time when monetary supply from Cordova was unstable at best.

Rulers could require payment for public debts in official local specie, and subjects would be required to change their money, bullion or goods for the regime’s coins. This process could result in substantial additional income for the state, due to monetization fees of around 1.75% for gold and 3% for silver. Intermittent minting was thus probably linked to punctual needs for income, just as the Alūṭa dirhams coincided with Mujāhid’s Balearic and Sardinia campaigns. This fiscal aspect likewise explains in part the timing for Mujāhid’s two waves of monetary production, as well as his son’s subsequent issues. The coins were intended for use as payment for public debts, but only the imām, or his representative, had the right to collect

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177 E. Lévi-Provençal notes these figures for fourteenth-century Fez, and considers that early medieval fees would have been similar: HEM, 3:42. Monetization was among the chief complaints advanced by Ibn Ḥazm, who considered that Muslims should eschew the corrupt taifa rulers’ coins for bullion.
canonical taxes. A regime that could not show caliphal recognition on its coins would have had little legal basis for imposing taxes via those same coins. Thus, Denia struck coins only when its rulers also recognized a caliphal candidate, thereby implicitly receiving recognition of their own power. Mujāhid thus initially minted under Hisham II, then al-Mu‘ayṭī. The consensus among Mujāhid’s peers concerning the false Hishām II in Seville in the 430s/1040s allowed Denia to collect taxes with coins struck in his name. In the second half of the century, the mulūk al-ṭawā‘if were faced with increasing financial demands and an absent caliph, leading them to recognize a fictitious imām, ‘Abd Allāh, in order to produce coins and collect taxes in his name. ‘Alī followed this example until the end of this reign.

Finally, the fiscal importance of monetary production was a direct response to the financial needs of the state, especially under ‘Alī. In fact, the more or less continuous production under ‘Alī points not only to a fiscal program, but to a change in the taifa’s maritime politics. The run of extent coins from ‘Alī’s reign is intermittent, with pieces missing for 444-5/1052-4, 451-4/1059-63, 456/1063-4 et 458-66/1065-74, but Denia remains one of the most prolific taifa mints. Felix Retamero counted 144 overall pieces for the taifa, with 120 for ‘Alī. He also noted

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180 See annex. Note that we include the mint at Madinat Mayūrqa, also under ‘Alī, in this analysis.
that almost 25% of Denia’s coins had been pierced. Alberto Canto’s study of the Spanish National Archeological Museum’s numismatic collection demonstrated that only ‘Abbadid coins show similar perforation rates, while other taifas remain between 0% and 9%. As noted above, perforation was a form of demonetization, forcing subjects and travelers to change their coins for fiscally authorized specie. Felix Retamero thus notes that beginning in 435/1043-4, “the ‘Āmirid financial structure depended in large part on a conscious policy of monetary emission.” Piracy provided for a large part of Mujāhid’s financial needs, but changing Mediterranean dynamics may have forced ‘Alī to revert to monetization and taxation to support his court. The reinforced presence of the Christian port cities in the Western Mediterranean seems however to have increasingly limited booty as a source of state revenue. Pisan action against Muslim beachheads interfering with maritime commerce began as early as 1006 in the straits of Calabria, and their ability to oust Mujāhid from Sardinia points to their growing strength. In 1035, the Pisans raided the North-African port of Annaba (Hippo), also famous as a pirate haven, and two decades later attacked Palermo, bringing home enough loot to begin construction on their new cathedral. The Mediterranean maritime lanes were no longer the domain of Muslim navies, and navigation became increasingly difficult. Biographies of

182 F. Retamero, “Aproximació,” 103. A high perforation rate indicates an equally high rate of demonetization. Denia’s production may thus have been much higher than the figures lead to believe. Alberto Canto notes perforation rates of 30% for ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s earliest emissions, while coins from those years are also the rarest from the Umayyad caliphate, indicating “a selective program of demonetizing and reminting of coins:” A. Canto García, “Perforations,” 357.
185 Annales pisani, 238; Breviarium Pisanae Historiae, 167.
186 Annales pisani, 238; Breviarium Pisanae Historiae, 167; al-Bakrī, 55.
Muslim scholars show numerous attacks on the high seas, and over the course of the century jurists began counseling against travelling by boat for the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the second half of the century, the poet Abū al-ʿArab Muḥāb al-Ṣiqillī refused an invitation to come to Seville from Sicily on the grounds that “the sea belongs to the Rūm, and the ships sailing on it run a great risk.” This does not mean that Islamic piracy ceased, but it would have been increasingly difficult for privateering to reliably provide for the needs of Denia’s court in this context. As a result, ʿAlī turned to taxation and monetary emissions to supplement declining revenues. Ibn Ḥayyān notes significantly that ʿAlī’s primary concern was state revenue.

A large-scale fortification and construction program seems to have accompanied this new fiscal policy. Rafael Azuar Ruiz insists on the concomitance of regularized coin production and the arrival of a “series of large fortifications under direct taifal power.” He advances that normalized minting allowed for the construction of “emblematic fortifications,” and in Denia’s case, the urban qaṣaba and the border ḥiṣn of Bairén. Azuar Ruiz and Josep Torró i Abad likewise see fiscal aspects behind local fortifications, presenting them as the seats for semi-independent governors on whom the taifa rulers depended for tax collecting. Renewed

189 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:183.
monetary production thus allowed Denia’s rulers to establish an ambitious fiscal program, one that financed the construction of fortifications and representative power structures, themselves tied to collecting taxes and tribute. This brings us back to Ibn Ḥazm’s claims that monetization only served to extort from the people the financial means to better exploit and tax them.

**MEN OF THE COURT: KUTTĀB AND ‘ULAMĀ’**

Denia’s rulers needed individuals who could carry out their policies and maintain their administration. They needed to communicate, define and defend their power using tools adapted to the literary culture of the taifas. The court had to rest in contact with provincial governors, the ‘umma and quwwād, for tax collection, territorial defense and enforcing court orders. Mujāhid and ‘Alī maintained relations with their peers, Andalusī and elsewhere, and these relations followed strict protocols and literary conventions requiring a long and onerous education. They also had to worry about the legitimacy of their power, politics and actions, and this legitimacy often depended on the opinion of religious and legal scholars, the fuqahā’.

This section will not analyze in detail the literary culture of the taifa of Denia. Numerous studies already exist concerning this culture, for Denia and al-Andalus,

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and their authors are much more qualified in the subject matter. Those studies, and especially the work of Bruna Soravia, serve here as a basis for examining how the rulers of Denia relied on scholars and men of letters. They needed the approval and participation of an ensemble of these men, kuttāb and fuqahā’, to operate their court and execute their policies.

Kuttāb

Kuttāb (s. kātib), or secretaries, were essential for the operation of the state. Mujāhid and ‘Alī, like any ruler, needed a chancellery service capable of communicating their orders to those who were to apply them. These communications needed to carry the dignity and authority of the court, while remaining comprehensible for the addressees

193 First among these works is M.J. Rubiera Mata’s study, La taifa de Denia (Alicante, 1985), which is dominated by a literary approach. Rubiera Mata spends numerous pages enumerating the different figures associated at one time or another with the taifa, and deftly links this literary culture with the court’s political legitimacy. Clelia Sarnelli Cerqua’s work on the taifa’s court is often cited. While her article is more readily accessible, the publication of her thesis from the University of Cairo treats the court’s different literary figures individually and in detail: “La vita intellettuale a Denia,” 1-26; Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī “wa ihnuhu” lqābāl al-dawla fī Dāniya wa Sardāniya wa jazr al-Balayr fī l-qarn al-khāmis al-hijrā – al-hadā ‘ashrā al-mīlādī (Cairo, 1961). Any study on the taifas should include Henri Pérès’s La Poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XIe siècle (Paris, 1953). Cynthia Robinson’s In Praise of Song. The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005-1134 A.D. (Leiden, 2002) examines majālīs literature and its relationship with political power. We were unable to consult Bruna Soravia’s unpublished dissertation, but her collaboration with Pierre Guichard presents part of her research; “Les fonctionnaires epistoliers (kuttāb al-inshā) en Espagne musulmane a l'epoque des roitelets (Ve/Xe siècle h./XIe s.),” (Doctoral diss., Université de Paris 3, 1998); “Entre bureaucratie et littérature : la kitāba et les kuttāb dans l’administration de l’Espagne musulmane,” al-Masāq, 7 (1994): 165-200; P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 235-279. Finally, A. Ben Abdesselem’s study presents a competent though pedestrian description of the century’s major literary figures; La Vie littéraire dans l’Espagne musulmane sous les mulūk al-ṭawā’if (Ve/Xe siècle) (Damascus, 2001).

194 The fifth/eleventh century is especially known for its poets, and Denia’s court was one of the most important patrons of Andalusī poetry. This subject does not, however, seem especially pertinent here, and was not necessarily practiced by the kuttāb. Poetry was of course one of the more important tools for establishing and expressing a regime’s legitimacy, but it did not directly contribute to developing and executing Denia’s Mediterranean strategies. The bibliography in the preceding note also provides the principal works on Andalusī poetry for this period, from both a literary and political point of view.
expected to apply them. 195 Soravia cites a letter sent by Muʻtamid b. ʻAbbād of Seville to his quwwād al-bilād, as well as another by ʻAlī b. Ḥammūd, to order a tax collection. 196 Even if these collections were exceptional, Denia’s tax policies must also have passed through official missives. When al-Muqtadir b. Hūd sought to appropriate some of Denia’s fortresses, ʻAlī b. Mujāhid sent letters to the concerned ‘ummāl, first to order their retreat, then, having changed his mind, to order them to prepare their defense. 197 Likewise, sixty years earlier, when Mujāhid declared al-Muʻayṭī caliph, he ordered his kuttāb to include the Umayyad’s name in directives to require loyalty oaths (bay’a) from the people. 198

The kuttāb’s participation in the state’s operation, and especially the definition of its power, was more significant than simply writing letters. Power is often legitimized through ostentatious display of tradition, especially when that power is precarious. The literary culture, or adab, of the secretaries thus had served to confirm the conservatism of the caliphate, and especially al-Manṣūr’s hijāba, under which the kuttāb, along with the Berbers and Ṣaqāliba, were part of the ʻĀmirid power structure. 199 They thus offered their intellectual and literary abilities, their “moral and literary orthodoxy,” to the ʻĀmirids, contributing to the usurping regime’s

197 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:184.
199 P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 240. The term adab refers to the idea of customs and traditions, to refined literary culture, and to the “knowledge necessary to carry out an office or social function.” This last sense explains the terms abāb al-kātīb and kuttāb udabā’: F. Gabrieli, “Adab,” EI², 1:175b.
The caliphate’s implosion dispersed these functionaries, who offered their services to its heirs, often the same ‘Āmirid clients with whom they had shared the administration of the fallen regime. These kuttāb played an essential role in stabilizing the taifas at the beginning of the fitna, and Denia was no exception. Mujāhid thus attracted to his court, even if only briefly, a number of major figures from the ‘Āmirid chancellery.

Secretaries occupied the majority of higher administrative offices, including governorships and vizierates. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr ‘Alī entrusted his government to the four secretaries sent to him by the caliph al-Qāsim b. Ḥammūd, raising them to the vizierate and bestowing on them countless gifts and riches, while they in turn ensured governmental stability throughout his reign and during the transition to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s son, ‘Abd al-Malik.

‘Alī b. Mujāhid likewise relied heavily on the kuttāb in his court, involving them in the taifa’s most delicate matters. Abū al-Āṣbagh b. Ārqam served Denia’s court for many years, and carried the title dhū al-wizāratayn, setting him apart among the taifa functionaries. Ibn Ārqam was an essential contributor to Denia’s

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201 Soravia and Sarnelli Cerqua cite a letter by the kātib Ibn Shuhayd to Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī that expresses the relationship between the two men under their former patron: “We were, before distance separated us […], before destiny shook us with violence […], two companions tied by friendship, two allies unconcerned with our lineages, because ādāb bound us together.” Translation adapted from: P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 240-1; C. Sarnelli Cerqua, Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī, 225; C. Sarnelli Cerqua, “La vita intelletuale a Denia,” 606.
202 Among the most important of these were Abū b. Burd al-Asghar, Abū ‘Amīr Ahmad b. Abī Marwān b. Shuhayd, and Abū al-‘Alā Sā‘īd al-Baghdādī. See the article by C. Sarnelli Cerqua cited supra for a more complete discussion of Denia’s kuttāb.
international relations, and Alī charged him with correspondence to the ruler of Ifrīqiya, al-Muʿiz b. Bādis, as well as the Fatimid caliph al-Mustanṣir. Ibn Ārqam served as one of the witnesses for the 1058 treaty with Barcelona, as did Muḥammad b. Muslim, another of ‘Alī’s important functionaries. Faced with al-Muqtadir b. Hūd’s imminent attack in 468/1076-7, ‘Alī sent Ibn Muslim on a whirlwind diplomatic tour of the remaining taifas pleading for support, a task the kātib describes in a letter to Ibn ʿAghlab, governor of Mayūrqa and also a former student of adab.

‘Ulamā’

Denia’s rulers also needed the religious and legal support of the fuqahā’ and ‘ulamā’. These men, and especially the qādī of Denia, were also political figures because of their religious and legal roles, as well as a literary erudition comparable to the kutṭāb. Mujāhid thus sent Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Uthmān al-Ghasānī b. Abī Riʿāl, qādī of Denia, to accompany his son ʿAli on a diplomatic mission to Qayrawān. During the visit, Ibn Abī Riʿāl discussed theological matters with local scholars and showed himself a competent and sensible diplomat in his relations with the Shiite court of al-Muʿizz b. Bādis. The ‘alīm Abū al-Fatūḥ Thābit b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī arrived in al-Andalus to accompany Mujāhid on his expedition to Sardinia,

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205 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:184, 271, 295.
206 J. Baucells i Reig, Diplomatari, v. 3, doc. 977, p. 1557; M.J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 103-4.
207 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:320ff.
208 The term ‘ulamā’ (s. ʿālim) refers in general to religious scholars, while fuqahā’ (s. faqīh), more specifically denotes scholars of Koranic law, or fiqh.
and was at this side when their ship sank. Mujāhid showed such respect for another scholar and jurist, Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Rashīq, that he placed him at the head of his state and named him governor of Mayūrqa. Ibn Rashīq used his Balearic court in turn to patronize religious and legal scholarship, and numerous Andalusī ‘ulamā’ spent at least some time there during his mandate. ‘Ulamā’ were thus an essential component in the taifa state, and contributed to Denia’s operations within al-Andalus and across the Mediterranean.

‘Ulamā’ likewise legitimized the state and the power that supported it. Fuqahā’ often filled the office of qāḍī in their area, named by rulers because of their knowledge of Islamic law. The support of a secular power offered scholars recognition and compensation for a life of studies, while rulers could not carry out policies without their approval. In fact, the more a ruler’s policies were illicit, the more he would need the legal support of the fuqahā’. This was especially true for tax collections, the illicit character of which is discussed above, and so necessitated in particular legal pronouncements solicited for specific collections. Ibn Ḥazm, in fact, specifically criticized scholars who gave their approval to taifa rulers and their tax

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213 P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 221; B. Hallaq, The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law, 182-5. A recent article presented this relationship in terms of cost analysis, summarizing that the ‘ulamā’ “could increase the ruler’s ability to extract a surplus from the citizenry by conferring legitimacy, thereby lowering the cost of collecting taxes. It could also limit power through legal constraints on taxation;” M. Coşgel, Th. Miceli and R. Ahmed, “Law, state power, and taxation in Islamic history,” Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, 71 (2009): 704-17.
collectors, treating them as evil men who hid their wicked hearts under lambskins. Ibn Buluqqihn notes rebellious ‘ulamā’ inciting his subjects to refuse to pay taxes, while in another conversation he is advised to name as qāḍī a potentially complicit scholar since: “For should you wish to take but one dirhām from anyone without regard for the law, the people would consider it an outrage. But if you were to take 1,000 dirhams by rightful means, in so doing you would have the full weight of the law on your side, and no one would take offence.”

The tacit support of the ‘ulamā’, through their simple presence, could also help to bulwark a precarious regime, and religious studies played an especially important role in medieval Islamic politics, notably so in Denia. Mujāhid’s biographers systematically describe him as ‘alīm, a literary savant, a master of the Arabic language, and an important expert on lexicography and Koranic recitation (qirā’ā). He made his capital into the most important center for the study of Koranic reading in al-Andalus. Mujāhid himself wrote treatises on the subject, but his school was especially known for the presence and teachings of Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī. Al-Dānī was such a renowned figure, that after his death in 444/1053, ‘Alī b. Mujāhid marched at the head of this funeral procession. However, though ‘Alī may indeed have been a pious man, this act, as well Mujāhid’s patronage of religious

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215 Ḥ. b. Buluqqihn, Tibyān, 133.
218 Ibn Bashkūwāl (1989), 592, no. 882.
scholarship, also presented political benefits. As noted, a regime’s conservatism and attachment to tradition could contribute to its legitimacy, especially during troubled times. Al-Manṣūr had thus stabilized his power through a campaign of orthodoxy and persecution of heresy.\(^{219}\) In this instance, and as Soravia has noted, Koranic reading was one of the “most important sciences to which religious men could devote themselves,” rigorously orthodox and based solely on the religious texts. Mujāhid himself cultivated his reputation as an authority on recitation, and worked so that his capital would evoke its study. He had, in fact, been formed from his earliest youth in Koranic studies, and his patronage does seem to have been as sincere as it was famous, but Mujāhid did benefit from the prestige and legitimacy that came with his school. Denia’s reputation in religious studies attracted ‘ulamā’ from across al-Andalus, and its reputation spread throughout the Muslim Mediterranean.\(^{220}\)

\(^{220}\) We examine ‘ulamā’ as travelers \textit{infra}, in the chapter dealing with the Muslim Mediterranean.
CHAPTER IV

PORTS, SHIPS, AND NAVAL PRODUCTION

PORTS

Maritime traffic was essential to Denia’s existence, serving as a conduit for both piracy and commerce. The taifa’s ports channeled economic redistribution between the Peninsula and the Mediterranean, while also provisioning and harboring the ships that practiced piracy throughout the region. The two principal axes of Denia’s Mediterranean policies were thus inextricably tied to its ports, to their development and operation. Christophe Picard has also noted that port zones were strong symbols of caliphal authority, and could thus confer legitimacy to those who held them.¹ This was especially true during the fitna, when de facto rulers sought to solidify their unstable power.

Mujāhid had played a central role in the ‘Āmirid military and civil administration in the Sharq al-Andalus. He sought to consolidate his position in the region at the beginning of the fitna, without necessarily seeking independence. During the power struggles and factional strife that plagued the ‘Āmirid clients and other heirs to caliphal authority, Mujāhid appropriated the maritime resources of the Sharq al-Andalus. His movements at the beginning of the period indicate a campaign

¹ Ch. Picard, La mer, 40-1.
to control regional ports and naval infrastructures, from the coast to the Balearic Islands. Three sources, in fact, trace his movements through Tortosa and Valencia before establishing his regime in Denia, a coastal itinerary that indicates an ambition to take advantage of the maritime resources of these cities. Mujāhid’s development of port structures over the course of the century was a direct continuation of this goal.

**Tortosa**

Mujāhid’s time in Tortosa was most likely an extension of his responsibilities under the late ‘Āmirid regime. If he did indeed exercise the functions discussed above, he may have been present in the region as early as al-Manṣūr’s ḥijāba, as indicated by Ibn ‘Idhārī. Alternatively, he may have been named to the area by ‘Abd al-Malik, under whom Mujāhid served as one of the prime officials of the state. The anonymous *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus* states that Mujāhid rebelled in Tortosa in 400/1010. Al-Qalqashandī writes that Mujāhid made himself master of Tortosa before leaving it for Denia, which at the latest would have been 405/1014, when he declared the caliphate of ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu‘ayṭī. Mujāhid most likely then spent a few years in Tortosa before he was replaced by Labīb, and with whom he seems to have shared sovereignty over the region for a considerable time.

Tortosa offered Mujāhid an exceptional base from which he could build his

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2 *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus*, 201; al-Qalqashandī, 256; Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawā‘if, 301-2.
5 *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus*, 201.
6 al-Qalqashandī, 5:256.
power. Denia does not appear in narrative sources before the fitna, but Tortosa had been one of the main caliphal ports during the fourth/tenth century. Independent maritime communities occupied the coast in the third/ninth century, when sailors from the region of Tortosa raided coastal installations and were forced to flee before resettling in Pechina.\(^7\) The extension of Cordovan influence over the outlying coastal regions in the fourth/tenth century reinforced Tortosa’s naval importance. Almería was the site of the caliphal dār al-ṣinā‘a and naval base for the fleet and qā‘id al-bahr, but Tortosa also played an important role in Umayyad maritime planning. It served to equip and supply fleets attacking the Frankish coasts in 321/932-3, 323/934-5 and 328/939-40.\(^8\) Tortosa’s role as a regional arsenal is confirmed by an inscription mounted into the cathedral walls and commemorating the establishment in 333/944-5 of facilities for the building and equipping of ships.\(^9\) The Umayyads also fortified the town, building a citadel and walls.\(^10\) Al-Rāzī wrote during the same period that Tortosa “possesses a good port that is frequented by merchants from all parts.”\(^11\) Al-Bakrī described Tortosa’s mines that produced a kuḥl “comparable to that from Iṣfahān,” and that was exported to every country, while Yaqūt wrote that its port was a hub for commercial relations with faraway lands.\(^12\) Urban construction followed

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\(^10\) Al-Himyarī, 391.

\(^11\) Al-Rāzī, 71.

\(^12\) Al-Bakrī, (2003), 2:386; Yaqūt, *Kitāb mu‘jam al-buldān*, 3:529. The kuḥl produced in Tortosa was most likely a kind of lead, and not antimony like the kuḥl from Iṣfahān. See “al-Kuḥl,” *EI²*, V, 356a.
this port activity, including a mosque with five naves built in 345/955-6.\textsuperscript{13}

Mujāhid also controlled Valencia at the beginning of the \textit{fitna}, and he would periodically exercise shared sovereignty there until the arrival of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr in 411/1021. His interest in Valencia came most likely more from the region’s economic resources and road connections, since Valencia’s port would not gain importance until the sixth/twelfth century. Al-Rāzī wrote that the \textit{kūra} of Valencia combined both land and maritime advantages, but mentions neither a port nor maritime activities for the town.\textsuperscript{14} Al-Bakrī’s \textit{Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik} is known for its detailed descriptions of maritime routes, but treats Valencia only within a limited continental context.\textsuperscript{15} Ships come and go in Idrīsī’s description of the town, while its port served for the import and export of goods.\textsuperscript{16} Nevertheless, Idrīsī also writes that the wood shipped to Valencia from Cullera served for housing construction, and not for ships as in Denia.\textsuperscript{17} In addition, al-‘Udhrī describes caravans leaving Valencia’s gates for Tortosa and Denia, indicating that the town’s port structures did not suffice for its commercial needs.\textsuperscript{18} Maritime connections with Valencia were most likely through coastal shipping, while Mujāhid’s interest would have been in the city’s urban structures and road communications.

\textsuperscript{13} Al-Ḥimyarī, 391.
\textsuperscript{14} Al-Rāzī, 71.
\textsuperscript{15} Al-Bakrī (2003), 2:380, 385.
\textsuperscript{16} Idrīsī, \textit{Opus geographicum}, 5:562; Al-Ḥimyarī, 97.
\textsuperscript{17} Idrīsī, \textit{Opus geographicum}, 5:560.
\textsuperscript{18} Al-‘Udhrī, 18.
Denia

Al-Rāzī described Denia’s port in the fourth/tenth century as “very good and very old.” The port, however, did not come into its own until the establishment and development of the taifa over the course of the following century. The ships visiting Denia during al-Rāzī’s time probably used the old Roman port that served as a maritime conduit for Ondara and its hinterland. In fact, Denia’s port only gained importance through Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s ambitions to build a sea-based power. Their efforts led to naval and urban infrastructures capable of supporting their military and commercial ambitions, transforming this village into a taifa capital and major Mediterranean port.

Strabo described Denia in the first century CE as a small city with a port and observation tower that had served as the general Sertorius’ fortified maritime base a century earlier. Denia grew as a regional center over the following centuries, acting as an intermediary between its rich hinterland and the Mediterranean Roman markets. However, as elsewhere along the Mediterranean littoral, a period of decline began in the second half of the fourth century. Despite continued rural settlement and the restoration of some professional sites in the third century, no sign of activity is visible thereafter. Denia thus atrophied without its role of export and

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19 Al-Rāzī, 71.
21 J.A. Gisbert Santonja, “El territorium de Dianium,” 129. Noticeable throughout the Mediterranean, this decline is even more palpable in the West, especially along the Iberian coast. As an indication of maritime traffic, shipwrecks north of Denia, along the Tarragonese coast, dropped
redistribution, and Avienus notes during the fourth century that the once-peopled city was devoid of inhabitants.\textsuperscript{22}

Roque Chabas Llorens somewhat hyperbolically observed that Denia was “reborn like a phoenix from its ashes” under the Visigoths, when the city appears as an episcopal see at the beginning of the seventh century.\textsuperscript{23} Denia did regularly send either its bishop or his agents to councils in Toledo, but after the Muslim conquest, al-Rāzī is the only author to mention Denia before the fifth/eleventh century. Denia experienced the same fate as other coastal cities, the victims of an economic crisis aggravated by the redirection of road networks thenceforth oriented inland by the needs of the Cordovan capital.\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{itemize}
  \item from eighty-six during the third century to thirty-two in the sixth, a 63\% reduction; A.J. Parker, \textit{Ancient Shipwrecks of the Mediterranean and the Roman Provinces}, BAR International Series, 580 (Oxford, 1992) 13-15; M. McCormick, \textit{Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900} (Cambridge, 2001), 67, n. 7. Paul Reynolds notes that Carthaginian ceramics were exported to Alicante until the sixth century, with the withdrawal of Byzantine commercial stimulus: P. Reynolds, \textit{Trade in the Western Mediterranean, AD 400-700: The ceramic evidence}, BAR International Series, 604 (Oxford, 1995), 139. This decline in maritime traffic is reflected by a similar decline on the coast, where the number of rural sites diminished by 63\%. As McCormick states, the coincidental correspondence between rural sites and shipwrecks should not be exaggerated, but they do indicate a drastic trend symptomatic of the crisis that struck the Western Mediterranean; M. McCormick, \textit{Origins}, 67, n. 7.\textsuperscript{22} Cited by R. Chabas Llorens, \textit{Historia}, 81. Avienus may indicate another cause of Denia’s decline, since he notes that the city was surrounded by shallow, swampy waters, possibly the same as those described by al-'Udhrī (p. 19) six centuries later. M. McCormick (pp. 38-9) notes a rise in malaria during Late Antiquity in conjunction with the abandonment and negligence of agricultural lands and thus the extension of marsh or swamplands where mosquitoes would have proliferated. An outbreak of malaria may have contributed to Denia’s depopulation.\textsuperscript{23} R. Chabas Llorens, “La ciudad de Denia, (bosquejo histórico),” \textit{El Archivo. Revista literaria semanal}, 1 (Denia, 1886-7): 372.
Archeological research on the Roman town of Dianium, on the north-west slope of the current castle’s hill, the south-west side of which housed the Islamic city, shows signs of regression beginning in the fifth century. Buildings that had once lined the fourth-century imperial road housed graves within their ruined walls a century later.\(^{25}\) In addition, there are no archeological traces of urban dwellings during the period between the Roman city’s abandonment and the late fourth/tenth century.\(^{26}\) Al-Rāzī’s description thus does not attest to Denia’s urban survival, only the continued use of one of the rare well-equipped harbors along the coast between Almería and Tortosa.

Denia’s coastal population most likely migrated inland, settling a few kilometers away around Ondara. In fact, al-Zayyāt’s Dhikr al-āqālim wa ikhtilāfuhā, which was written towards the turn of the fifth/eleventh century, gives a confused spelling for the town and port that faces the Balearics Islands. In the manuscript 2186 from the French National Library, the text reads مدينة يدارة, “the city of Y.dāra”, while another version notes مدينة أيراره, whose capital today is Denia.”\(^{27}\) A few pages later, the geographer places بذارة (B.dhāra) facing Majorca and Minorca.\(^{28}\) Although the text’s editor gives “Denia” as the translation for each of these variations, he also notes their discrepancies in the footnotes.
conjecturing on a possible confusion with Orihuela. However, given its location, Orihuela would have more naturally been linked to the ports of Alicante or Cartagena. In addition, the Arabic spelling of Orihuela، أوريلولا، is only vaguely similar to the three variations in al-Zayyāt’s Dhikr. It seems in fact more likely that the seventh/fourteenth-century transcriber would have made a mistake with Ondara، أندارة، and that at the turn of the fifth/eleventh century, Denia had become the simple maritime outlet for Ondara to the point of taking on the inland town’s name.29

Ondara likewise replaced Denia on the administrative level, at least under the ‘Āmirids. In 374/985, al-Manṣūr and his army were en route for Barcelona. Stopping in Tudmīr, they were sumptuously received by a local notable, Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Marwān b. Khaṭṭāb.30 Al-Manṣūr rewarded the dignitary for this generosity by awarding his son jurisdiction over the cities of Valencia, Ondara, Tortosa, and the islands of Ibiza, Majorca and Minorca.31 Al-‘Udhrī does not mention Denia among the cities handed over to the Banū Khaṭṭāb, even though it was in the designated area. Instead, he cites Ondara, a clear sign that the inland town had administratively replaced Denia. A Berber attack that ruined the city at the beginning of the fitna likewise confirms, and ended, Ondara’s importance as an inland settlement.32 Rafael Azuar Ruiz notes that this attack, along with the imminent arrival of Mujāhid in Denia and his use of its port as a “fundamental base for the

31 Al-‘Udhrī, 15-6.
32 Al-Ḥimyarī, 31/39.
conquest of the Islands,” led to Denia’s rebirth as an Islamic city.33

Mujāhid chose the port partly because of its natural advantages. Its location at the entrance to the Gulf of Valencia under the protection of the Montgó made it an indispensable stopover for ships travelling along the coast, despite navigational difficulties caused by underwater rocks.34 The surrounding marshes eased the city’s defense, especially from sieges.35 The taifa’s naval and urban infrastructures would capitalize on these assets.

Some form of fortification may have topped Denia’s hill before Mujāhid’s arrival. J.A. Gisbert estimates work on the alcazaba that dominates the town began in the second half of the fourth/tenth century, but this hypothesis is unconfirmed and R. Azuar Ruiz posited origins concomitant with the taifa itself.36 Nevertheless, the hill’s strategic location over this essential anchorage could have justified a basic fortification similar to the one built by the Umayyads at Almiserat, at the entrance to the Gallinera valley. Almiserat’s control over a major communications corridor seems linked to the gradual extension of Cordovan control over the Sharq al-Andalus during the fourth/tenth century. In fact, the series of caliphal constructions along the littoral, including the shipyards at Almeria and Tortosa, and perhaps the ribāṭ/s at Guardamar and San Carles, would have logically included Denia’s hill, though we

33 R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 63.
35 Al-‘Udhrī, 19.
cannot be certain without further information.

Mujāhid augmented the city’s defenses, as described by both al-‘Udhrī and Idrīsī.\(^{37}\) Denia’s *alcazaba* served until the nineteenth century, and numerous transformations over time completely altered any remains of the fifth/eleventh century Islamic fortification.\(^{38}\) Archeological research around the Torre de Mig has however unearthed traces from the taifal period.\(^{39}\) Mujāhid also protected the city with an “intelligently built” wall that projected out into the sea. Geographers thus agree that taifal Denia was well fortified.\(^{40}\)

Denia was best known for its port, begun as well under Mujāhid. The Roman port situated north-west of the castle had probably fallen into disrepair, which would explain why Mujāhid created the Islamic port to the south.\(^{41}\) Sub-aquatic archeology confirms the Islamic port’s location south-east of the castle, facing the *El Forá* maritime district, itself begun *ex nihilo* in the fifth/eleventh century.\(^{42}\)

Al-Bakrī notes Denia’s port and its place within the network of regional maritime itineraries, while the sixth/twelfth-century geographer Yāqūt writes that Denia’s port was pleasant, and a subsequent anonymous author working with fifth/eleventh-century sources communicates the port’s importance.\(^{43}\) Ships (*sufun*)

\(^{37}\) Al-‘Udhrī, 19; Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 5: 557; Al-Ḥimyarī, 76/95.


\(^{39}\) J.A. Gisbert, “Dāniya y la Vila de Denia,” 89.

\(^{40}\) Al-‘Udhrī, 19; *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus*, 1: 75.


\(^{43}\) Al-Bakrī, 82/165; Yāqūt, 2:540; *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus*, 1: 75. Yāqūt adds that Denia’s port was called “al-Summān”.
left Denia for the “farthest Orient,” according to Idrīsī, while al-Ḥimyarī and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kutubī evoke ships coming and going in the busy port.\textsuperscript{44} Geniza documents also confirm the port’s importance, describing ships travelling as far as Alexandria. Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s efforts over the course of the century transformed the scale of their port, building maritime traffic and establishing a center for ships practicing long-distance commerce.

Mercantile activities were not, however, the sole occupation for ships frequenting Denia’s port. Idrīsī and al-Ḥimyarī write that “the fleet left from [Denia] to carry out raids,” giving the impression that Denia was a major center for Islamic piracy.\textsuperscript{45} Piracy was an active policy under Mujāhid and ‘Alī, practiced on a grand scale. Other Andalusī ports also harbored pirate ships, notably Tortosa and Almería, but Arab geographers recognized Denia’s particular role in the guerre de course.

Pirate and corsair fleets overshadow more elective forms of maritime commerce indicated in the Geniza, notably in al-Ḥimyarī’s description, which does not mention ships leaving for the Orient. The geographer writes that boats came and went from its port, but he does not specify their activities, whether they were merchants vessels or pirates. Nevertheless, ships sailed to Alexandria for commerce, even if that included commercializing booty such as the human captives that most likely made up a large part of Denia’s exports to the East. Guerre de course and commerce were intermixed, and a clear distinction between the two is largely

\textsuperscript{44} Idrīsī, \textit{Opus geographicum}, 5:557; Al-Ḥimyarī, 76/95; E. Fagnan, \textit{Extraits inédits relatifs au Maghreb (géographie et histoire), traduits de l’Arabe et annotés} (Algiers, 1924), 63-4.

\textsuperscript{45} “الغزو إلى الأسطول كان منھا كان يخرج الأسطول إلى الغزو,” Al-Ḥimyarī, 76/95; Idrīsī, \textit{Opus geographicum}, 5:557.
impossible and pointless. More important is an understanding that Denia’s rulers practiced a balanced maritime policy, that ships leaving their port spread Denia’s influence throughout the Mediterranean, often adapting their activities according to the circumstances.

Secondary ports

Denia dominates geographers’ descriptions of the taifa, but the ensemble of secondary ports was almost as important in the network of economic redistribution. The Balearic Islands, and especially Madīnat Mayūrqa, projected the taifa out into the sea, while peninsular ports helped enlarge Denia’s sphere of influence and the economic power it could drain from its hinterlands.

Madīnat Mayūrqa’s role in Mujāhid’s plans was almost as essential as Denia’s. Its port was an essential stopover for ships travelling across the Mediterranean. It provided an outpost for the invasion of Sardinia and retained this importance in the subsequent maritime jihād. Majorca occupied a key position in many maritime itineraries, and offered Mujāhid dominant control over a large part of the Western Mediterranean.

In addition, Umayyad authorities had progressively improved naval and urban infrastructures on the Island since its conquest in 290/902. ‘Īṣām al-Khiwalānī enjoyed Cordovan support for his active urbanization and Islamicization, building
mosques and bath houses.\textsuperscript{46} He also sought to improve maritime commerce by establishing merchant houses (\textit{funduq}). The Umayyads made Madīnat Mayūrqa into their Mediterranean outpost, a stopover for the caliphal fleet en route for raids against the Frankish coasts.\textsuperscript{47}

Madīnat Mayūrqa served not only as a supply point for peninsular fleets, but it also became a base port for the Umayyad \textit{guerre de course}. Beginning around 350/961-2, the governor al-Muwaffaq began maintaining a fleet to conduct his own raids against Christian coasts.\textsuperscript{48} Successive governors continued this policy, assiduously pursuing maritime \textit{jihād}, supported by al-Manṣūr and his sons, until the death of Muqātil in 403/1012-3 allowed the Islands’ direct annexation to Denia. Mujāhid knew Majorca offered him a caliphal port capable of launching an expeditionary force, and which probably harbored at least part of the fleet built up by the Islands’ governors.

Majorca and the Balearics were also well known throughout the Mediterranean for the quality of their horses, mules and asses, vaunted by the geographer Ibn Ḥawqal in the fourth/tenth century and by al-Zuhrī two centuries later.\textsuperscript{49} Balearic equine production represented both a fiscal and strategic resource for Mujāhid, one that he put to use soon after taking control of the islands. According to Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Mujāhid imposed a fiscal reform on the islands, offering horse breeders

\textsuperscript{46} Ibn Khaldūn, \textit{Kitāb al-‘ibar}, 4:353.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibn Khaldūn, \textit{Kitāb al-‘ibar}, 4:353.
This reform represented political, economic and military benefits to the newly developing taifa. Firstly, by subjecting elite landowners to state financial pressures and oversight, Mujāhid cemented his control over the Balearics. Secondly, the derisory price paid would allow him to resell the animals for profit on the international market. Thirdly, the horses would serve in military campaigns, notably for the thousand-member cavalry (fāris) used in the Sardinia invasion. Madīnat Mayūrqa served thus as an essential staging point for the expansion of Mujāhid’s Mediterranean campaign, adding an important military and naval contribution to Denia’s resources.

The Sardinia invasion ultimately failed, but Mujāhid adapted his policies to the reality of a Mediterranean that he could not master, and piracy replaced military conquest in his overall strategy. The Balearic Islands remained an integral part of this modified approach, acting as the taifa’s maritime outpost and entry point for its sphere of influence. As a major hub for maritime traffic, only one day’s sail from Barcelona, Madīnat Mayūrqa became one of the principal centers for maritime jihād under Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s successive governors.51

Madīnat Mayūrqa was not the only Balearic port, and ships travelling from Denia first passed Ibiza after a day’s sail.52 According to S. Martinez Lillo,

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50 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 251.
51 Ibn Khaldūn (Kitāb al-Ibar, 4:355) uses the term jihād ǧīl-bahr, while al-Qalqashandi (256) writes that Ibn Mujāhid supported the numerous raids on the sea: و كان كثير الغزو في البحر فاستاؤن على بن مجاهد في الغزو.
52 Ibiza was visible from the Montgó on a clear day. Al-Ḥimyarī, 76/95, 198/240; Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 5:557, 582.
underwater archeological finds around Ibiza have produced ceramic pieces indicating commercial relations with Denia, Altea, Valencia, Murcia and perhaps the Maghreb.53 Al-Zuhrī indicated that olives were shipped to Ibiza from Seville, Almería and Játiva.54 Yāqūt wrote that Ibiza’s wood served in the construction of ships, the same wood that al-Ḥimyarī qualified as “excellent for the construction and rigging of ships.”55 Ibiza thus could have contributed to Mujāhid’s fleet, or at least to the number of boats visiting his ports. Farther east, the island of Minorca was only one day from Barcelona, and four from Sardinia, offering a useful staging point and last extension of Denia’s power three days’ sail into the sea.56

Mujāhid was also able to extend his power over the key ports of northern Tudmīr. These ports offered Denia the opportunity of integrating the economic networks south of the Jibāl Balansiya. This mountainous region had initially made political or economic dominance of Tudmīr unrealistic for Denia. Roads allowed only limited traffic, and most do not seem to have developed before the fifth/eleventh century. Thus, the anchorages and ports along the Tudmīr coast allowed Mujāhid practicable access to the kūra’s economic networks.

Alicante was the most important of these ports, especially since its maritime infrastructures made it one of the rare equipped harbors between Tortosa and Almería. The port was likewise accessible from the main road network, more accessible in fact than Denia, and supplied a relatively prosperous Roman settlement.

53 S. Martínez Lillo, “La arqueología y el mar,” Al-Andalus y el Mediterráneo (Malaga, 1995), 218.
55 Yāqūt, 4:1000-1; Al-Ḥimyarī, 198/240.
56 Al-Ḥimyarī, 185/224; Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 5:582.
A light industry tied to glass production juxtaposed the port in late Antiquity, and Carthaginian ceramics were imported there until the sixth century. Nevertheless, Alicante suffered the same rupture as the rest of the Iberian coast. Although it was one of the seven cities in the eighth-century Theodomir Pact, urban activity does not reappear in Alicante until the end of the third/ninth century.

Alicante was part of the Iberian littoral renewal that began in the fourth/tenth century. Alicante’s port was not its only source of activity, and sources from this time period show that the relationship between the port and Alicante’s hinterland was an essential part of its success. The geographer al-Rāzī, in fact, does not mention Alicante’s port, placing the settlement inland in the Sierra de Benicadell and centering its economy on the production of silk fabrics. Al-Muqaddasī, who died towards the end of the fourth/tenth century, likewise omits Alicante’s maritime character, writing that Alicante was “encircled by a wall” and situated in the countryside. R. Azuar Ruiz has justly noted that these descriptions concentrate on Alicante’s influence on the surrounding territory, rather than its relationship with the sea. The fourth/tenth-century Cordovan society for whom al-Rāzī wrote was more concerned with Alicante’s place in the region’s unruly network of fortifications and local elites. Ibn Ḥayyān however understood Alicante’s important role as a

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57 P. Rosser Liminana “La ciudad de Alicante y la arqueología del poblamiento en época medieval islámica,” Urbanismo medieval del país valenciano, 33; P. Reynolds, Trade, 139.
58 Al-ʿUdhrī, 5; S. Gutierrez Lloret, La Cora de Tudmīr, 243; P. Rosser Liminana, “La ciudad de Alicante,” 32.
59 Al-Rāzī, 70-1.
structuring point between the maritime and peninsular systems. In describing ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III’s campaign against the Banū Shaykh in 316/928, Ibn Ḥayyān writes that the vizier Aḥmad b. Ishāq al-Qurashī took “the city of Alicante which is on the Mediterranean, and all its subject ḥusūn and the surrounding fortifications.”62 The relationship between the region’s cities and ḥusūn evolved over the course of the fourth/tenth century, influenced in large part by the state’s efforts to impose a fiscal system, but commercial and economic factors also strengthened ties between rural communities and zones of urban influence.63 The economic pull of Alicante’s port on the Vinalopó valley comes through in Ibn Ḥayyān’s description of its political ties. In addition, geographers regularly describe the short distance between Alicante – which was not on the main route – and Elche, the principal urban and cultural center for the Vinalopó valley; regular traffic circulated between the two, despite Elche having its own port nearby in Santa Pola.64

The Vinalopó valley channeled northern Tudmīr’s products along the Via Augusta towards Alicante. A series of roads that grew over the fifth/eleventh century linked its port to the southern Jibāl Balansiya.65 Alicante benefited from its maritime and commercial position, exporting the quality silk produced in the surrounding

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62 Ḥayyān, Muqtabis V, 237/181.
65 R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 354-6.
mountains. At least some of the fabrics mentioned by al-Muqaddasī among al-Andalus’ exports must have transited through Alicante. The fourth/tenth-century eastern geographer al-Iṣṭakhri knew of Alicante in its maritime context and situated it on the coast along with Pechina, Valencia and Tortosa, facing the Maghreb. A century later, al-Bakrī wrote that Alicante was five days sail from the North-African coast, while Idrīsī indicated the coastal distance between the port and Denia.

Bringing northern Tudmīr into Denia’s territory offered Mujāhid better access to its road networks, as well as the regional economic activity that stimulated Alicante’s growth as it circulated through its port. Despite its small size, the city enjoyed the standard signs of urban life, including a market, a grand mosque and a kasbah. Its port was part of the Mediterranean commercial networks, exporting esparto “to all the countries on the sea.” Naval shipyards serviced this maritime traffic, producing a variety of boats for short and long-distance travel. Alicante had thus become a major port, most likely centered more on commerce than piracy, given its distance from the principal Christian shipping lanes. Exports towards “all the countries on the sea” seem also to indicate direct traffic, and not simply coastal shipping towards Denia or Almeria.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī could also depend on a series of secondary harbors, most of

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66 Note also the silks produced in Bocairent: Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 5:557.
67 Al-Muqaddasī, 48/49.
71 Goitein notes that textiles were the driving force behind Mediterranean commerce at this time: S.D. Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 101; O.R. Constable, *Trade and Traders*, 159.
72 Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 5:558; Al-Ḥimyarī, 170/205.
them probably unequipped, that were likewise tied into the Mediterranean networks. Al-Bakrī indicates relations between Santa Pola, Moraira and Jávea with the North-African ports Tanas, Sharshāl and al-Baṭāl. Calpe and the Peñón de Ifac also served as harbors, while shipwrecks off the coast of Altea point to exchange with the Balearic Islands. North-African ceramics discovered near Villajoyosa, along with Fatimid money in Benidorm, bear additional witness to the level of exchange between the two Mediterranean coasts.

These secondary sites simplified access to Mediterranean markets for the villages that began to repopulate the littoral valleys in the fifth/eleventh century. A direct relation most likely exists between this maritime activity and new coastal


74 Idrīsī, Caminos, 70/96; Ya‘qūbī, Les Pays, French trans. G. Wiet (Cairo, 1937), 217-8; C. Aranegui, A. Bazzana, “Vestiges de structures défenses d’époque romaine tardive et d’époque musulmane au Peñón d’Ifac (Calpe, Province d’Alicante),” M.C.V., 16 (1980): 421-436. For a dissenting view of the date for this site, see B. Pavón Maldonado, “Calpe y al-Askar (Alicante). Sobre el hábitat medieval del Peñón de Ifach y al-Askar o Madinat al-Askar,” Sharq al-Andalus, 14-15 (1997-8): 81-106. M. de Epalza associates al-‘Askar with Callosa d’En Sarriá, tying it to the harbor Mascarat, between Altea and Calpe: M.J. Rubiera Mata, M. de Epalza, Los nombres arabes de Benidorm y su comarca (Alicante, 1985), 43-50. André Bazzana’s hypothesis that Ifac was the site al-‘Askar mentioned by Ya‘qūbī does not seem correct, nor does M. de Epalza’s competing theory that al-‘Askar was Callosa d’En Sarriá / Mascarat. Recent unpublished archeological research seems to point more logically towards the site Castellar de Morera, near Elche. For shipwrecks off the coast of Altea, see S. Martínez Lillo, “La arqueología y el mar,” 18, 20.

settlements such as Almisserà near Villajoyosa. Coastal access also offered Denia’s rulers more effective fiscal control over populations poorly linked with the taifa capital. With its control over the coast, Denia thus multiplied possible outlets for piracy and maritime trade, while improving ties with its own fiscal territories.

SHIPS

Ships were essential tools for the taifa of Denia. They were vehicles for its rulers’ policies, through piracy and commerce. The natural resources necessary for producing and maintaining Denia’s fleet or the ships that came through its port were thus fundamental to its survival, and exerted considerable influence on its history. Stable access to the wood used in ship construction was a priority for Denia, and was a factor in the ultimate success of its rulers’ maritime ambitions. The wood transported to the taifa’s ports fed a number of dockyards, themselves an integral part of the taifa’s existence.

Wood

Many authors have underlined the importance of wood in the Mediterranean economy. The shortage of wood used in ship construction, and especially for masts and yards, heavily influenced economic exchange, exercising a kind of “tyranny over

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77 Even in the nineteenth century, travel between Denia and Alicante was easier by boat: V. Castañeda y Alcover, *Relaciones*, 1:33; J. Costa Mas, *El Marquésat de Dénia*, 549.
commercial routes.”

The imbalance in the supply of wood between the Christian and Muslim worlds has sometimes been associated with the decline of Muslim naval power. P. Horden and N. Purcell, however, have called for a more nuanced view, especially given regional Mediterranean diversity. The demand for wood in Muslim shipyards often did outstretch local supply, explaining in part interest in the islands of Crete, Sicily and Sardinia, but the same was true for Pisa and Genoa who accordingly oriented their naval campaigns. Claude Cahen expressed this universal need for naval powers, explaining that the ideal place for a port and arsenal was next to a forest, or at least at places along the coast with easy access to wood. A major part of Denia’s success was thus the favorable conjunction of its port and shipyard with stable access to wood.

The surrounding forested mountains certainly explain the establishment of a caliphal arsenal in Tortosa, as well as Mujāhid’s interest at the beginning of the fitna. Al-Rāzī cites the timber exported from its port, while Idrīsī and al-Ḥimyarī admired the incomparable height and density of its pine forests. In addition to the wood, it is

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78 O.R. Constable, Trade and Traders, 337; Th. Glick, Islamic and Christian Spain, 107.
80 P. Horden, N. Purcell, Corrupting Sea, 336-7.
82 C. Cahen, “Ports et chantiers navals,” 306.
83 Al-Rāzī, 72; Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 5:555; Al-Ḥimyarī, 124/151.
likely that a number of the large boats (al-marākib al-kibār) built in Tortosa were shipped to other ports as merchandise. Mujāhid’s initial time in Tortosa would have furnished him with ample resources for building a fleet, while Tortosa’s wood partly explains the close relations maintained by Denia’s rulers throughout the century.

Denia could count on two sources of timber for its ships, in addition to what its hinterland could supply. The mountains near Cuenca produced large quantities of pine that was cut and transported down the Júcar River to Alcira and then Cullera on the coast. Boats carried the wood from Cullera to either Denia or Valencia. Although Valencia did have a port, ships were not built there, since Idrīsī specifies that the wood served for residential and urban construction. In Denia, however, the shipyard transformed the wood into large and small ships (al-sufun al-kibār wa-l-marākib al-ṣīghār). Part of Denia’s timber thus came from Cullera, though troubled relations with Valencia may have occasionally disrupted supplies.

Baeza and Segura were essential points in the south-eastern Andalusī road network, worthy of Denia’s interest. Nevertheless, the Sierra de la Segura was also densely forested, with “enough wood to supply all of Spain.” Transporting the wood by land would have been difficult, but the Segura River descends from the Sierra and empties into the Mediterranean near the ribāṭ of Guardamar, slightly south

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84 Goitein notes, for example, a letter from Ifrīqiya that mentions the arrival and loading of new Andalusī boats: S.D. Goitein, Letters, 106.
85 Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 5:560
86 Christophe Picard notes that safīna and markab are interchangeable general terms, but Idrīsī does seem to indicate some difference here: Ch. Picard, La mer, 113.
87 Mujāhid’s conflict with the taifa of Alpuente may have been an attempt to shore up control of supply routes: Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:354; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 1:480.
88 Al-Rāzī, 69.
of Alicante. Control of northern Tudmīr and strategic points from Orihuela to Baeza meant a stable supply of timber for Alicante’s shipyards, and possibly a supplemental supply for Denia.

The taifa of Denia could likewise count on the Balearic forests for its naval needs. Al-Ḥimyarī and Yāqūt both note the excellent wood used for ship construction on Ibiza. The Majorcan shipyards would seem to indicate ample timber supplies, though some may have been imported. Finally, Mujāhid would have been neither the first, nor the last, to include the Sardinian forests in his plans for conquest of the island.

Denia was thus one of the few Mediterranean maritime polities with an ample wood supply. The taifa’s rulers may have reserved the commercial rights over export towards the central Mediterranean ports, given the resource’s lucrative and strategic importance. The creation and maintenance of numerous naval shipyards throughout the taifa reflected the taifa court’s desire to fully exploit this valuable resource, and in the process provided the means necessary to carry out its maritime ambitions.

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89 The mouth of the Segura explains in fact, at least partly, the ribāṭ’s location: R. Azuar Ruiz, “De ribāṭ a rābīta,” 225.
90 Al-Ḥimyarī, 198/240; Yāqūt, 4:1000-1.
Fourth/tenth-century Umayyad efforts to develop the Mediterranean coastline included the construction of arsenals at strategic points. Certain criteria determined which ports were chosen for these sites: a stable sufficient supply of wood, a maritime population for building and operating the fleets, and a geographic location in line with Cordova’s maritime policies. Tortosa was close to Christian targets, while Almería faced the North-African coast. The port structures became regional political and military capitals, as well as major poles for economic activity. The shipyards represented a significant investment for the state, and became prized possessions in the race for power that followed the Cordova’s fall.

The caliphate’s principal dār al-ṣinā’a, Almería, thus became one of the most powerful taifas.92 Pechina had been an ideal site for caliphal maritime plans at the beginning of the fourth/tenth century; its maritime population furnished qualified crews and workers, while the Bahrīyyūn elite supplemented caliphal investments through their own participation, eventually integrating leadership roles in the fleet and even caliphal administration.93 Almería’s dār al-ṣinā’a was not simply a shipyard,
while its port was not reserved for the Umayyad navy. M. Sánchez Martínez indeed noted that al-‘Udhrī uses the term dār al-ṣīnā‘a in its fullest sense here, as a “house of manufacture and industry,” especially since the geographer also describes a commercial and industrial zone that attracted merchants from far away. Thus, when Khayrān took control of the city in 405/1014, he inherited naval, port and urban infrastructures that he could quickly put to use in consolidating his position. In addition, as the seat of the qā‘id al-bahr, whose power had been compared even to the caliph’s, Almería offered Khayrān a powerful tool of political propaganda.

Arabic sources do not provide details on ship production in Almeria under the Slav emirs, but Khayrān does seem to have maintained a fleet, since he lost a naval battle against Mujāhid. Almería continued as a major port and naval center throughout the taifa period and beyond, and the Banū Ṣumādīḥ – al-Mu’taṣīm in particular – maintained a noteworthy fleet.

Tortosa was likewise a site with numerous political, military and economic benefits. The nearby pine forests and its port’s location on the “path of those from France” made it an ideal choice for a caliphal arsenal. Cordova could also count on a population as capable as Almería’s, since members of Tortosa’s coastal population

96 Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Baghdādī wrote a poem for Mujāhid to celebrate the victory: Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:12-3; al-Dabbī (1989), 633, no. 1384.
97 According to al-Fatḥ b. al-Khāqān, al-Mu’taṣim was interested only in watching his fleets and cared only for his boats and fast ships: H. Pérès, La poésie andalouse, 215.
98 Al-Rāzī, 72, for citation.
had established Pechina’s maritime community. The Ḫariyūn along the Tortosan coast similarly practiced piracy and participated in naval expeditions against Christian targets. As in Almería, Umayyad investment in Tortosa was gradual, increasing as Cordova adopted the *guerre de course* as a maritime policy and came to rely on coastal populations. In fact, the establishment of caliphal shipyards in Tortosa in 333/944-5 – probably an officialization of pre-existing structures – coincided with major naval campaigns against the Christian Catalan and Provençal coasts.

Mujāhid left Cordova on the death of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Mahdī in 400/1011, heading towards the *Sharq al-Andalus* and Tortosa, where he more than likely controlled the port’s naval resources. Mujāhid was probably moving back into a position that he had occupied under the ‘Āmirid regime, and thus into a position of personal power. Tortosa would have been an ideal base for Mujāhid during the early days of the *fitna*, far from the civil war in which he seems to have taken little interest, while he likely continued to pursue the *guerre de course* that he had heretofore helped lead. It is not possible to evaluate the resources at Mujāhid’s disposal in Tortosa, but his ability to initiate ambitious maritime plans, invading the Balearics and sending one hundred ships against Sardinia, indicate a strong naval

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99 Al-Himyarī (1975), 79-80.
100 Note, for example, the fleet of 300 hundred ships that left Tortosa to participate in the conquest of Sicily; Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān*, 1:103-4; M. Talbī, *L’Emirat Aghlabide*, 432-3.
102 Similarly, the vizier ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yasār headed for his ministerial seat, Valencia, when trouble began in Cordova; Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra*, 3:19.
103 Mujāhid may have been involved in the attack on Pisa by a “fleet from Spain” in 1011: *Annales pisani*, 238. An independent attack is unlikely, given the seemingly large-scale campaign, but another of the northern taifa ports could also have contributed. Ibn Khaldān writes that Muqāṭīl, the Umayyad governor in Majorca was particularly active and did not die until 403/1012-3: Ibn Khaldān, *Kitāb al-‘ībar*, 4:353.
foundation for the taifa ruler.

Mujāhid abandoned Tortosa, though it is not clear under what circumstances. Although he held Tortosa and Valencia at the beginning of the fitna, an anonymous chronicle states that Mujāhid left Valencia for Denia after the rebellion of Mubārak and Muṣaffar, while al-Qalqashandī writes simply that he left Tortosa for Denia.\textsuperscript{104} Mujāhid and the Slav rulers of Valencia do not seem to have maintained relations, but the sources indicate no real conflict between them.\textsuperscript{105} In addition, Mujāhid exercised joint sovereignty over Valencia with Labīb, the Slav who had succeeded him in Tortosa, and supported him in a conflict against Ibn Hūd. Mujāhid’s departure from Tortosa does not thus seem to have been forced, but more deliberate and dictated by his expansionist Mediterranean ambitions.

Mujāhid must have been familiar with Denia’s port and stable supply of wood. He also knew that within a day’s sail, Ibiza and then Majorca offered an ideal outpost for the fleet that he would send to conquer the Mediterranean, though he would need to establish his rule there first. Mujāhid’s plans necessitated considerable means – Ibn al-Khaṭīb mentions 120 ships for the conquest of Sardinia – and he no doubt invested heavily in Denia’s naval structures to produce and maintain an adequate fleet. Rubiera Mata logically advances that ‘Abd al-Rahmān III established

\textsuperscript{104} Dhikr bilād al-Andalus, 201, 217; Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawā’if, 301; al-Qalqashandī, 256.

\textsuperscript{105} Mujāhid harbored ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Āflah when Mubārak chased him from Jātīva. Otherwise, Mubārak and Muṣaffar seem to have associated more readily with Mujāhid’s rival, Khayrān, perhaps as a protection against Denia. Khayrān struck money in his own name in Valencia in 404/1013, while in 407 the Valencian Slavs issued coins in the name of ‘Alī b. ʿAbd allāh Hammūd, whose caliphal rise had been helped by Khayrān: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb aʿmāl al-ʿlām, 259; A. Canto García, T. b. Ḥ. ʿAbd allāh ibn al-Khaṭīb, “Suplemento,” 132; A. Prieto y Vives, Reyes, 182, ns. 138, 139; A. Vives y Escudero, Monedas, 115, ns. 805, 806.
a caliphal arsenal in Denia, but no source offers concrete support for this hypothesis. An inscription attests the dār al-ṣinā‘a in Tortosa, and the caliphal fleet used it on more than one occasion. Madīnat Mayūrqa’s arsenal is not specifically mentioned before the Pisan attack in 1115, but its port did service the caliphal fleet in 323/935, and Ibn Khalduhn writes that the island’s governor after 350/961-2 built a fleet there to attack the Frankish coasts. Denia’s shipyards, on the other hand, do not appear in the sources before the fifth/eleventh century, and were thus probably more the result of Mujāhid’s need for ships than an earlier Umayyad building program.

A nineteenth-century map of Denia labels a space between the El Fortí zone and a wall to the south as dársena, derived from the Arabic dār al-ṣinā‘a. Archeological research in the area has confirmed the cartographer’s drawing. J.A. Gisbert Santonja estimates that the “construction and definition of the walls” for the El Fortí zone date from the end of the fifth/eleventh century, while no indication is

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107 E. Lévi-Provençal, Inscriptions, 83; Ibn Ḥayyān, Muqtabis V, 323-4, 366-8; al-‘Udhrī, 81.
109 J.A. Gisbert Santonja, V. Burguera Sanmateu, J. Bolufer i Marques, La cerámica de Daniya, 53 and lam. III-1. The map image, also reproduced in J. Ivars Pérez, La ciutat de Dénia, 45, does not carry the legend corresponding to the letters designating specific points on the map. We have thus chosen to adopt the Catalan term used by the authors of these studies.
given for the walls to the south of the dockyards. It is thus difficult to associate the
site with the beginning of the taifa, and even less so with the Umayyad regime. As
presented, the structure seems more the result of Denia’s maritime success, part of the
urbanization that characterized the city over the course of the fifth/eleventh century.

Whatever structures may have existed before Mujāhid’s arrival, his initial
plans for Mediterranean dominance and even subsequent more modest ambitions
necessitated a reliable and substantial production. Mujāhid must have invested
considerable means to launch the fleet described by Ibn ‘Idhārī and Ibn al-Khaṭīb for
the invasion of Sardinia, even if the figure of 120 boats is certainly exaggerated. Ibn al-Khaṭīb also notes that only five ships (marākab) and four small boats (qawārīb) returned from the failed expedition, and Mujāhid would have needed to
replace those vessels: his conflict with and victory over Khayrān soon thereafter
indicates that he was able to mobilize the necessary means. The guerre de course
sponsored by Mujāhid and ‘Alī likewise required a large and easily renewable fleet.
Commercial vessels were also needed, though most corsair vessels doubtless
performed double service. Developing and exploiting the taifa ports’ commercial
resources relied on the production of ships – themselves commercial products – to
transport merchandise. Denia’s arsenal made full use of its timber supplies, as well as

112 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:116; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 251-2. Note that the fleets led by
the admiral Muḥammad b. Rumāḥīs against the Frankish coasts included only eighteen and thirty-six
ships: Al-‘Udhrī, 81-2.
113 In addition to the panegyric poem cited above, Ibn Ḥazm notes a conflict between the two taifas in
which all access to Almería was cut off, including sea routes; Ibn Ḥazm, Tawq al-ḥamāma, ed. ‘A.al-
R. al-Muṣṭāwī (Beirut, 2004), 162-3.
the workforce furnished by local maritime populations.

Denia’s arsenal was central to the town’s infrastructure and identity, producing the ships that extended the taifa into the sea. Idrīsī’s description of Denia insists on its maritime character, which the geographer ties to its naval production: “Ships travel to [Denia], where many of them are made, since the town possesses an arsenal for manufacturing ships. The fleet departs from Denia to raid [Christian coasts], while vessels sail for the farthest Orient.” Al-Ḥimyarī’s reprisal strays little from Idrīsī’s text, though he chooses to link the taifa’s warships directly with the arsenal. Al-Ḥimyarī does not mention ships sailing for the East, but Idrīsī’s description shows that boats built in Denia served not only for piracy, but also for long-distance commerce with Eastern markets.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī could also rely on regional shipyards that responded to the local needs of secondary ports. Alicante produced boats for various uses, though descriptions do not mention piracy. Alicante’s arsenal does not appear in sources prior to the taifa period, and so probably grew out of the port’s participation in the economic expansion of the Sharq al-Andalus, and perhaps a desire on the part of Mujāhid and ‘Alī for an additional supply of ships using the timber from Segura.

The Balearic Islands also produced ships. Ibiza’s forests furnished timber for building and repairing the vessels that transited through its port following the

\[114\] *Opus geographicum*, 5:557.

\[115\] *Opus geographicum*, 5:558; Al-Ḥimyarī, 76/95.

\[116\] *Opus geographicum*, 5:558; Al-Ḥimyarī, 170/205.
transversal Mediterranean shipping lanes, whether for piracy or commerce.\footnote{Al-Ḥimyarī, 198/240; Yāqūt, 4:1000-1.} Madīnat Mayūrqa’s naval production was perhaps more important, and furnished a sizeable fleet for the local governor. Mujāhid did not establish the Majorcan arsenal, since Ibn Khaldūn evokes numerous maritime raids launched by the Islands’ governors in the second half of the forth/tenth century.\footnote{Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.} These governors were all Ṣaqqāliba clients of the caliphate, carrying out state policies that were generously supported. The mawlā al-Muważfa took charge of Majorca in 350/961-2, and commissioned the construction of warships (al-asāṭīl) to attack the Frankish coasts.\footnote{Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.} His successors likewise pursued an aggressive campaign of raiding Christian lands, and must have also produced ships to continue his policies. The Majorcan darsana remained in service over the course of the fifth-eleventh century, and was the site of violent clashes during the Pisan and Catalan attack of 1115.\footnote{Liber maiolicinus, 125, 127.}

Mujāhid must have considered Majorca’s arsenal in his plans for conquering Sardinia. He could use the port and shipyards to prepare the invasion, just as the caliphal expedition of 323/935 had regrouped and supplied there before continuing on to the Catalan and French coasts.\footnote{Ibn Ḥayyān, Muqtabis V, 366-7.} Even if the 120 large and small vessels described by Ibn ʿIdhārī and Ibn al-Khaṭīb is an exaggeration, it indicates a fleet large enough to drain the naval resources of more than one arsenal.\footnote{Ibn ʿIdhārī, Bayān, 3:116; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb aʾmāl al-aʾlām, 251-2.} Mujāhid spent five months in Denia between declaring the caliphate of al-Muʿayṭī and departing for the Balearics,
during which time he must have added to any ships he had brought from Tortosa. Nevertheless, a stop in the Balearic dockyards would have augmented his fleet and allowed for last minute preparations.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī later named governors known for their pursuit of the *guerre de course*, and the Balearic Islands remained a major stopover for Mediterranean shipping. These two activities, which were not mutually exclusive, stimulated naval production on Majorca and Ibiza. In fact, the economic profit from piracy and commerce must have financed a large part of the urbanization and fortification of Majorca and its *darsana* over the course of the century.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s Mediterranean policy relied on the naval production of Denia, Alicante and the Balearic Islands. The ships helped commercialize the products attracted by the taifa’s ports, and were themselves commercial products. The arsenals likewise provided the basic tools for Denia’s *guerre de course*, which in turn financed the taifa court and, as remarked E. Lévi-Provençal, was “at the origin of Mujāhid’s immense fortune.”

**The Fleet**

Denia’s rulers needed arsenals that could adapt to both axes of their Mediterranean policy, commerce, and piracy. Naval production in the taifa’s arsenals was logically a state prerogative, and its rulers’ interests dictated the construction and commercialization of ships. Al-Ḥimyarī associated Denia’s arsenal with maritime

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124 Al-Ḥimyarī, trans. p. 95, n. 2.
violence, but this neglects what must have been equally important commercial activities. Denia’s rulers certainly maintained a fleet for offensive and defensive purposes, but most ships must have been destined for more ambiguous use. These ships could be sold or rented out for commercial ends, or entrusted to captains who adapted their economic activities – commerce or piracy – according to circumstances. Maritime magnates close to the state were probably issued the right to build their own ships, while in times of need the emir, like the caliph before him, could requisition the vessels and their crews.  

It is difficult to describe precisely Denia’s fleet under Mujāhid and ‘Alī. Idrīsī and Al-Ḥimyarī report that Denia was the port of call for the fleet that raided Christian coasts. However, this “fleet” was likely an aggregate of official and semi-official vessels, augmented by independent elements. Maritime violence over the course of the fourth/tenth century had become a state affair, often in conjunction with independent members whose resources completed official navies. The state, however, furnished the core of this fleet as well as its command. Such would seem to have been the case in Denia, as well as in Madīnat Mayūrqa, where Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s governors also practiced piracy on a grand scale.

The invasion of Sardinia mobilized a fleet of 120 large and small ships to

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125 See for example the ships and crews requisitioned by ‘Abd al-Rahmān III to patrol the waters between Algeciras and Tudmūr in 301/914: Ibn Ḥayyān, Muqtabis V, 87.

126 Both the Banū Rumāḥis in the fourth/tenth century, and the Banū Maymūn in the fifth/eleventh served this purpose, with the former serving the Umayyads, and the latter serving the Majorcan taifa then the Almoravids and Almohads: Ch. Picard, La mer, 133; P. Guichard, “Recherche onomastique à propos des Banū Maymūn de Denia,” Cahiers d’onomastique arabe, 1985-1987, ed. J. Sublet (Paris, 1989), 9-12; Liber maiolichinus, 115.
transport one thousand horsemen. In comparison, the caliphal fleet led by Muḥammad b. Rumāḥis against Barcelona in 328/939-40 counted twelve warships (markab ḥarbiya), four lighter warships (shawna) and two scout ships (fattāsh). The caliphal fleet that attacked the Frankish coasts three years later left Almeria with thirty warships and six light warships. The purpose for these different expeditions was not the same, since Ibn Rumāḥis was seeking booty and acts of submission instead of conquest. In addition, maritime expansion over the century must have led to larger fleets. At the end of the fifth/eleventh century, the poet Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ‘Isā b. al-Labbāna eulogized the emir of the Balearics, Mubashir Naṣir al-Dawla, writing that the emir’s fleet threatened to spill the port’s waters, the same port that had harbored the entire caliphal fleet a century and a half before. In addition, while the Liber Maiolichinus does not give precise figures for the Pisan attack on Majorca in 1115, the number of different vessels described, of which eight are precisely named, indicates that more than thirty boats were used, not counting those from Barcelona. Mujāhid must have brought together a similar fleet for his invasion of Sardinia.

‘Alī, and perhaps also his father, also maintained vessels for personal commercial use. Historians have noted the implication of political elites in maritime

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128 Al-ʿUdhrī, 81.
130 “Hoc varie fiunt diviso robore naves: galli, drumones, garabi, celeresque galee, barce, currabii, lintres, grandesque sagene et plures alie variantes nomina naves.” Liber maiolichinus, 10 It is interesting to note the Arabic origin for a number of these terms, such as garabi / ghurāb and currabii / qārib: B. Kreutz, “Ships, Shipping, and the Implications of Change in the Early Medieval Mediterranean,” Viator, 7 (1976): 102.
commerce, the product of the political and economic interests of Mediterranean rulers.\textsuperscript{131} The fragmentation of the centralized regimes of al-Andalus and North Africa led to the creation of economic and political centers along their coasts. The rulers of these new centers drew much of their power from their maritime military and economic resources. In addition, the prohibitive costs of building and equipping vessels must have restricted production to only the most affluent.

‘Alī’s well-known interest in money and commerce naturally extended into maritime affairs. His boat, \textit{markab Mujāhid}, or \textit{markab Ibn Mujāhid}, repeatedly appears in the documents of the Cairo Geniza.\textsuperscript{132} He likely used his own vessel to ship food to the Fatimid caliph, al-Mustanṣir bi-Llāh, in 447/1055-6. This famous episode openly combined economic and political interests, since diplomatic letters to the caliph and his vizier accompanied the shipment, while the vessel itself returned laden with jewels and other riches.\textsuperscript{133} The \textit{markab Mujāhid} could also be a vehicle for ordinary commerce, since one letter relates a purchase of flax, and another notes its arrival simply because no Jews were aboard.\textsuperscript{134} In fact, the participation of political elites in maritime shipping was so banal that a letter mentions the arrival of ‘Alī’s boat, along with boats owned by “the Amīr [of al-]An[alus]” and the Zirīd ruler Tamīm b. al-Mu’izz.\textsuperscript{135}

The sources do not usually specify which type of vessel was used: the general\textsuperscript{131} Ch. Picard, \textit{La mer}, 168; O.R. Constable, \textit{Trade and Traders}, 121-4.
\textsuperscript{134} S.D. Goitein, \textit{Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders}, 283; Geniza BODL MS Heb E 98 64-65; S.D. Goitein, \textit{Mediterranean Society}, 218; Geniza TS 8 J 20, f. 2.
\textsuperscript{135} O.R. Constable, \textit{Trade and Traders}, 123; Geniza ENA 2805, f. 26.
term *markab* – literally “mount” – is most often employed, in both military and commercial contexts.\(^{136}\) More precisely, *marākib* are often associated with *qawārib* (s. *qārib*), smaller open vessels with oars used to transport goods and passengers between larger ships and the docks.\(^{137}\) Two *bacini* from the church of San Piero a Grado in Pisa, produced in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century in Maḍīnat Mayūrqa, illustrate the combined use of these two types of ships.\(^{138}\) The two images are similar, with large sailboats with castellated sterns in front of which smaller boats with oars transport passengers. On one of the *bacini*, the *qārib* has a small triangular sail. The slight difference between the two suggests that this was a common theme, often repeated, and thus illustrates ships well known by the Mediterranean community.\(^{139}\) A fifth/eleventh-century plate from Qayrawān discovered in Denia’s *El Fortí* district portrays a similar ship.\(^{140}\) Given the commonality of this theme, ‘Alī likely used a comparable vessel.

Idrīsī writes that Denia’s arsenal produced *sufun* (s. *safīna*). This term is almost as general as *markab*, but seems to refer to vessels destined more for commercial use.\(^{141}\) Thus, while the fleet, *al-usṭūl*, left the port for raiding, the *sufun* built in Denia left “for the farthest Orient.”\(^{142}\) The *marākib al-safāriya*, or travelling

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141 At least, we have not seen it used in a military context.
ship, from Alicante most likely filled a similar purpose. On the other hand, another type of ship produced in Alicante raises some questions. Idrīsī uses the term *al-harārīq*, but P.A. Jaubert notes a variant *al-zawāriq*, “small boat.” *Al-ḥarrāqa* can refer to a ship carrying Greek fire, leading E. Lévi-Provençal to translate it as “fireship.” Christophe Picard, however, notes that sources tend to specify when ships actually carried material for Greek fire. It would seem then more logical to conserve the variant, and understand that Alicante’s shipyards produced large ships for inter-coastal commerce and smaller ships for shorter routes.

The *markab* on the *bacini* could serve for piracy, but most sources indicate that there were specific ships used for the *guerre de course*. The singular *al-usṭūl* does not refer to a particular boat, but to an ensemble of ships destined for naval warfare. Its plural, *asāṭīl*, on the other hand, refers to heavy warships, like those built in the Balearics by the governor al-Muwaffaq. Ibn al-Khaṭīb writes that Mujāhid left for Sardinia with 120 *marākib*, but Ibn ‘Īdhārī writes *qiṭ’a a kibr wa sīghār*, “large and small warships.” According to S.D. Goitein, *qaṭā’i* were lighter than *asāṭīl*, and Christophe Picard specifies that they were more rapid and maneuverable because of their combined sails and oars. Geniza documents describe the combined use of *asāṭīl* and *qaṭā’i* against convoys and land-based targets.

Most ships probably transported passengers and commercial products, but

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they were also ready to take advantage of fortuitous circumstances. On the other hand, Goitein notes that *marākib al-ḥarbiya* were not restricted to warfare, since some sources mention commercial goods being loaded on them.\(^{149}\) Mujāhid and ʿAlī could thus rely on a fleet with a variety of ships built in the arsenals of their taifa with a stable supply of timber ensured by their political and diplomatic efforts.

CHAPTER V

DENIA AND THE CHRISTIAN WEST

Denia’s transformation into a thalassocracy, based on its Mediterranean resources and the different communications networks necessitated a policy towards the Christian world that incorporated both war and diplomacy. This policy evolved out of the practices of the ‘Āmirids and Umayyads, and which Mujāhid had actively pursued before the fitna. The Byzantine embassy received by Al-Manṣūr’s son, ‘Abd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar, in 393/1003, illustrates how the ‘Āmirid administration balanced the different aspects of its relations with the Christians. The embassy offered Andalusī sailors captured by the Byzantine navy as part of negotiations for a treaty between the two powers. The ‘Āmirids then had chosen to continue Cordova’s Mediterranean policies, pursuing relations that would likely yield financial profit, while also promoting naval activities against Christian coasts. Al-Manṣūr and his sons supported the governor of the Balearics, Muqātil, in his “jihād on the sea,” without neglecting diplomacy. When Mujāhid inherited part of the ‘Āmirid power structure, he broke with this policy, seeking to build a Mediterranean state through outright conquest couched in jihād. Mujāhid’s failure in Sardinia forced him to reevaluate his ambitious plans, and he returned to the policies of this former patrons,

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1 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:63-4; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:289-90
2 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:353.
pursuing his *guerre de course* against Christian coasts and vessels while also exploring the possibilities of commerce and diplomatic entente.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī reinforced Denia’s place in the Mediterranean networks, even bringing some under their control. Balanced diplomacy allowed them to ensure and improve economic and sometimes political exchange with the Latin West. Denia’s rulers thus opened their ports to Christian ships, welcoming merchants from Pisa, Barcelona and elsewhere. Communications with their peers in these cities allowed them to reinforce ties. This policy reposed on a combination of conflict and dialogue that adapted to the taifa’s interests as well its individual interlocutors. Pisa and Barcelona thus occupied different places in Denia’s political strategy. Beyond the religious divide that informed the *guerre de course*, the Italian ports offered economic opportunities through booty and commerce. Actual political exchange with Pisa or Genoa was minimal. Barcelona, on the other hand, because of its proximity, and especially because of its role in Iberian geo-politics, was an important political partner for Denia.

The maritime routes that Mujāhid and ‘Alī sought to dominate through conquest and piracy also served ships and merchandise from a Christian West that was in full expansion. The taifa’s expansion fed in part on this expansion, its ports harboring Christian merchant vessels and pirates who preyed on them. Mujāhid’s Mediterranean ambitions and desire to control the maritime lanes however, were countered by this same growth. Latin ports transformed defensive measures taken against Muslim attacks into offensive operations, reinvesting booty and profits into
maritime infrastructures capable of limiting Muslim aggression, while developing in parallel mutually beneficial commerce.

ITALY AND THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Mujāhid’s Mediterranean ambitions informed his relations with the Italian Peninsula. His principal aim at the beginning of his reign was building a maritime caliphate that stretched from Denia to Sardinia and beyond. The conquest of the Balearics was simply a step in his plan of Mediterranean conquest, as was in fact the very establishment of the taifa in Denia. Mujāhid had used the first years of the fitna to affirm his hold on power structures entrusted to him under the ‘Āmirids, but had few options for long-term growth. The Andalusī fitna and rival powers left little place for Mujāhid on the Peninsula, but his experience as a ‘Āmirid officer indicated the only direction for expansion beyond a petty regional polity. The maritime route from Iberia to the Central Mediterranean led from Denia to the Balearics and then Sardinia before reaching the Italian coast, Sicily and Ifrīqiya. Conquering the Balearics was then an essential step in establishing Muslim government in Sardinia, which would offer Mujāhid prestige, substantial territory and especially control over the Western Mediterranean maritime networks.

Historians often present the fifth/eleventh century as a turning point in relations between the Christian West and the Muslim World. Control over the Mediterranean slipped from Muslim to Christian hands over the course of the century. Ibn Khaldūn, in
a famous passage, reports that at the beginning of this period, the Christians could not even float a plank on the sea. By the end of the century, however, Muslim jurists considered the journey East for the pilgrimage perilous enough to discourage its practice, partly because of Christian pirates. Biographic dictionaries list at least three ‘ulamā’ captured or killed on the high seas by the Rūm during this time, and the geographer al-Bakrī describes necessary measures taken to protect the North-African coast against their incursions. Attacks by Pisa and Genoa on Bone, al-Mahdiyya, Palermo, Tortosa and Valencia over the course of the century – carried as much to extend their commercial influence as to end Saracen piracy – illustrate the Italian cities’ ambitions and growing capabilities. Italian expansion was as economic as it was military, and Muslim maritime potential crumbled almost in inverse proportion to the Italians’ rise. Denia’s expansionist and economic ambitions belong in this context, in a transitional chronology and at the crossroads of commerce and conflict.

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4 Ibn Bashkūwāl, 548, no. 809, and 719, no. 1028; al-Ḥumaydī, 274, no. 332; al-Bakrī, 30, 39, 122.
Conquest and Piracy

Sardinia

Mujāhid’s declared al-Mu‘ayṭī’s caliphate in 405/1015 as an initial step in his campaign to conquer Sardinia.\(^5\) The newly-named caliph brought legitimacy to the project, and allowed Mujāhid to establish his authority over the Balearics, to reform fiscal policy, to issue money and to assemble an expeditionary force. These were, in fact, all measures calculated as part of the invasion, which would also help maintain Mujāhid’s hold on his Andalusī territorial base. The Sardinia campaign is a key to understanding Mujāhid’s plans and ambitions at the beginning of his reign. It was the motor behind his first independent military and political actions and marks the beginning of his reign as the ruler of this own polity.

Pisa and Genoa pushed back an initial attack on Sardinia in 405/1015.\(^6\) Mujāhid returned the following year at the head of 120 ships and 1000 horsemen (\(jāris\)).\(^7\) This was perhaps not the first time that Mujāhid had troubled the island or even the Tyrrhenian ports. The Pisan annals describe an attack on their city in 1011 by a “fleet from Spain,” while an anonymous compilation claims that Mujāhid attacked Sardinia several times before conquering it.\(^8\) Ibn Khaldūn writes that the governor Muqāṭīl held the Balearics until 403/1012-3, but Mujāhid could have launched expeditions from

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\(^6\) Annales pisani, 238; Breviarium Pisane Historiae, Chronica varia Pisana, ed. F. Ughello, R.I.S., t. 6 (Milan, 1725), 167.
\(^7\) Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 251-2; Ibn Idhārī, Bayān, 3:116.
\(^8\) Stolus de Ispania venit Pisas, et destruxit eam: Annales pisani, 238; Breviarium Pisane Historiae, 167; Dhikr bilād al-Andalus, 217/229.
another *Sharq al-Andalus* port, such as Tortosa. Mujāhid thus seems to have continued the ‘Āmirid maritime campaigns against the Rūm coasts that had resulted in the capture of the Andalusī sailors returned to ‘Abd al-Malik in 393/1003. The difference in 406/1016, however, was that Mujāhid was intent on conquest, on creating a Mediterranean polity out of Denia, the Balearic Islands, Sardinia and the routes that linked them.

The 406 expedition targeted the southeastern coast of the island, attacking the judicature of Cagliari, which Mujāhid adopted as his territory. A twelfth-century Pisan epic poem, the *Liber maiolichinus de gestis pisanorum illustribus*, states that Mujāhid controlled the plains from the mountains to the sea. According to the manuscript of Ibn al-Athīr’s *al-Kāmil fi-l-tārīkh* used by Michele Amari in his *Biblioteca islamosicula*, Mujāhid killed many men in his conquest, and notably a certain Mālūt. Alberto Boscolo hypothesized that this “Mālūt” could be a deformation of “Sālūt”, or Salusio, the ruler of the Cagliari judicature. Boscolo likewise claims that Mujāhid appropriated the judge’s properties, located about twenty kilometers east of Cagliari. This was thus

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10 Eleventh-century Sardinia was nominally under Byzantium, but *de facto* power lay with the four kings, or judges of Cagliari, Torres, Arborea and Gallure. J.-M. Poisson, “Châteaux, frontières et naissance des judicats en Sardaigne,” in *Castrum* 4, 309-320. Ibn al-Khaṭīb notes that before the conquest the island was divided between four kings who served the “ruler of the great land”: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb a’māl al-a‘lām*, 253.
11 *Liber maiolichinus de gestis pisanorum illustribus*, ed. C. Calisse (Rome, 1904), 41.
14 A. Boscolo, *La Sardegna bizantina e alto-giudicale*, 125.
a veritable conquest, by which Mujāhid eliminated and replaced the previous ruling power.

Mujāhid brought Sardinia into the dār al-Īslām, imposing the jizya on the island’s rulers and building fortifications to protect his new lands. Mujāhid intended his occupation of Sardinia in 406/1016 to be permanent. It is in fact possible that his forces had not been entirely chased from the island the year before, and that he was merely bringing reinforcements. Once he had eliminated the local Byzantine forces, Mujāhid set about solidifying his position and the Pisan annals state that he built cities using local slave labor.\textsuperscript{15} Perhaps as a message to the local population, some were buried alive in the walls of his new fortifications. Mujāhid most likely kept his forces in the more fertile southeast with easier access to the coast, an area that coincided with the judicature of Cagliari, freed up by Salusio’s death.\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, a charter from 1081 donating land in the area of Cagliari places some of the land in the area of a ‘castro de Mugete,’ and ‘Mugettus’ or ‘Mugietus’ were common Latin transcriptions of the taifa ruler’s name.\textsuperscript{17} Although the actual site has not been located, archeological work in the 1970’s may have unearthed remnants of Mujāhid’s fortifications within the same area near Quarticciu, along with what the archeologist believed to be Roman baths adapted to Arab tastes.\textsuperscript{18} Mujāhid’s plans to permanently settle in Sardinia seem evident.

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\textsuperscript{15} Annales pisani, 238; Libri maiolichinus, 42.
\textsuperscript{16} A. Boscolo, La Sardegna bizantina e alto-giudicale, 125.
especially since he sent for his mother, aunt, son and the rest of his household. He may even have intended to establish the capital of al-Mu’ayṭī’s caliphate on the island.

Conquering Sardinia meant extending the limits of Mujāhid’s rule, and the Italian coast itself became a frontier to exploit for booty and jihād. Thietmar, the bishop of Merseburg at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century, reports that Mujāhid established a base near Luni, on the coast between Pisa and Genoa. However, while the Sardinian conquest was clearly an expansion of the dār al-Islām and the caliphate of Denia, Luni was a colony like Fraxinetum or Garigliano, intended as a raiding base. Saracen pirates had easy access to the Tuscan and Ligurian coasts from Luni, and could also prey on maritime traffic transiting through its port. Mujāhid invested ruins outside the town from which he raided the surrounding countryside, “abusing” its women.

An already existing Muslim population may also have strengthened Mujāhid’s position in the southeast of the island. He could even present the conquest as an action to protect fellow Muslims. A Muslim community lived in Olbia, on the northeastern coast, as indicated by a funeral stele discovered there in 1847. Corrado Zedda has advanced the idea that a Pisan expedition against Olbia in 1003 could in fact have been a
police action against Saracen pirates. The eastern coast from Arbatax southward appears on medieval maps as Sarabus, a deformation of medieval Sard for “the Arabs,” while some historians claim that the name Arbatax comes from Maghribī Arabic arba‘atash, or fourteen, a reference to a series of Byzantine fortifications that lined the coast. Eleventh century donation charters from the area mention ‘liberus de panilitu’, semi-free Christian children of Muslim slaves. In addition, the region was one of the last penetrated by either Greek or Latin monasteries. Numismatic evidence suggests a stable Muslim community north of Cagliari in the eighth century, although it is not clear whether there was a subsequent uninterrupted presence.

Archeological evidence also points to Muslim communities in the southern parts of the island. Two fragments of mqāбриyya funerary steles dated possibly from the fifth/eleventh century were unearthed near the prefecture in Cagliari. More archeological traces were found a few kilometers to the northwest, in the village of Assemini. The church of S. Giovanni in Assemini may even have served as a mosque before being transformed into a Christian sanctuary during the fifth/eleventh century.

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23 F. Cherchi Paba, La Repubblica teocratica sarda nell’alto Medioevo (Cagliari, 1971), 130. M.G. Stasolla, “Arabi e Sardegna nella storiografia araba del Medioevo,” Studi magrebini, 14 (1982): 178, n. 31. Cherchi suggests that this same region could have been offered by Sard authorities to Arab prisoners in order to “militarize the borders and render the lands productive.”
has a quadrangular structure, in which the internal space is divided into nine parts by four pillars, with a small apse in the southeastern wall. Although elements of the current structure resemble area churches such as S. Saturno in Cagliari, the basic plan is unique for the island and the church was most likely rebuilt adapting to original elements during the first half of the fifth/eleventh century. This then leaves the possibility that S. Giovanni was in fact originally a mosque. The church’s basic structure resembles primitive North African mosques, while the semi-circular apse, which is found in only two other churches on the island, is consistent with the mihrāb in a mosque’s directional orientation.

In addition, two Muslim funerary steles similar to North African and Sicilian works, from Assemini and dated to the later fifth/eleventh century, indicate a community large enough to support a skilled sculptor. The best-preserved stele was carved for Mariam, daughter of ‘Atiyya al-Sarrāj. In a village with approximately thirty to fifty inhabitants, the Muslim community indicated must have composed a considerable percentage of the local population. This community then, as well as those in Cagliari and Olbia, seems to have lived alongside the Christian population. Mujāhid’s conquest, however, would have overturned roles, bringing the Muslims out

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from under Christian rule. Mujāhid could then present himself as a protector of believers threatened by infidels.

Bringing Sardinia into the taifa of Denia also expanded opportunities for Muslim piracy in the Western Mediterranean. Mujāhid could facilitate traffic for pirates recognizing his authority, offering harbors from one end of the basin to the other, with the key port of Cagliari serving as a junction for routes travelling to Sicily, al-Andalus or the Italian coast, where Mujāhid had also established the beachhead at Luni. Even if conquest was not his intention with this last colony, it did represent an aggressive form of piracy, justified not only by the search for booty, but also by jihād. Piracy and the guerre de course were, in fact, among the major corollaries of this conquest, and were among its principal motivations.32

In addition to these economic and nautical reasons, conducting jihād against Sardinia could also contribute to Mujāhid’s claims to power. Indeed, with the collapse of the Cordovan regime, Mujāhid could no longer justify his position through his ties with the Umayyad caliph, and without that legitimacy, his temporal authority could only be regarded as illicit and wanting stability.33 Although Mujāhid had created a puppet

32 The island had often served this purpose for Muslim raiders, as illustrated by textbook maps that portray early medieval Sardinia as a no man’s land, cross-hatched with Islamic and Christian stripes. The massive Muslim raiding force that pillaged Rome in 841 most likely had used Sardinia as its base, under the alarmed but helpless watch of the Carolingian prefect of Corsica and Tuscany. Beyond the vague reference to a Sard embassy at Cordoba, tenth-century Sardinia seems to have been devoid of effective political control. While the Byzantine navy seems to have been active at the beginning of the century, the decrepit Byzantine administration had long given way to local administrators, or judges, giving lip service to distant Constantinople, and incapable of effectively defending their coasts. Mujāhid’s expedition then was continuing the practices of numerous Muslim forces that had occupied the Sardinian coasts before, exploiting their coves to wreak havoc on the Italian mainland and the Sards themselves: Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire, vol. 1, ed. L. Duchesne (Paris, 1892), 99; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kāmil fi-l-tārīkh, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Leiden, 1851-76), 4:567-8.

33 See F. Clément, Pouvoir et légitimité, for problems of legitimacy in taifa Spain.
caliphate, leading the *jihād* against Sardinia could only help his image, given that holy war was one of the obligations of a Muslim ruler.\(^{34}\) The first Spanish Umayyad caliph, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, had understood the importance of *jihād* in establishing his credentials as a good Muslim ruler, an essential piece in the construction of his caliphate.\(^{35}\) His example was closely followed by al-Manṣūr, whose chief ideological tool was, in fact, his successful yearly raids against the Christian North. The sense of his *laqab*, the victorious, underlines significantly the importance of *jihād* in legitimizing his effective usurpation of temporal power as ḥājib to Hishām II.

Mujāhid’s invasion of Sardinia contributed in the same way to his legitimacy. His biographers are consistent in their respect for him in regards to this conquest, despite its eventual failure, with Ibn al-Khaṭīb praising him before Allāh for his pious action.\(^{36}\) Mujāhid validated his power with this expedition and his subsequent *guerre de course*, receiving jurisdiction over the lands he himself had brought under Islam.\(^{37}\)

The expansion of Denia’s borders came at the expense of the Italian port cities. A state’s territoriality can be defined in part by its ability to impose fiscal policy, and so extract revenue. For a “traditional” state, this means lands that are in some manner or another subject to its fiscal authority, whether directly or indirectly, as with feudalism in the Latin West. For maritime states however, such as Pisa, Genoa and also Denia, such revenue constituted only a fraction of their wealth, completed by tolls, customs duties and the commercial activities of their elites.

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Control of maritime lanes and networks, or at least access to them, thus touched at the integrity of the state. Mujāhid had in fact gained control over those maritime networks with his conquest of Sardinia. Whether they were travelling towards Sicilian warehouses, Barcelona or the Sharq al-Andalus, Italian ships would have to pass through the taifa of Denia. Mujāhid was thus capable of limiting their access to the maritime lanes, threatening therefore their livelihood and possibilities for growth.

The conquest also raised concerns on the continent, as it represented a threat to the Church, an expansion of dār al-Islām to the detriment of Christendom. Indeed, two later Pisan chronicles state that Pope Benedict VIII granted privileges to those who agreed to sail against Mujāhid, sending the ‘vermilion banner’ to accompany them.38 Ranieri Sardo even goes as far as to say that the pope sent his legate to preach the crusade against the Saracens. However, the subsequent dispute between Pisa and Genoa over Sardinia pushed both sides to invent historical justification for their possession of the island. Both chronicles in fact describe aggression by Mujāhid over the next decade and as late as 1050 – six years after his death –, with Pisan responses in each case and a renewal of Papal privileges for their efforts in 1050, but the attacks left no trace in Arabic sources and were probably invented to strengthen the Pisans’ case for possession.

However, despite Ranieri Sardo’s fourteenth-century anachronistic use of the crusade, the papacy was in fact aware of, and concerned about, the situation. A Sard cardinal, Ilario Cao, was influential in Benedict VIII’s curia, and would no doubt have tried to persuade the Pope to act against this Muslim aggression so close to

38 Ranieri Sardo, Cronaca di Pisa, 14; Breviarium Pisanae Historiae, 167.
Moreover, Thietmar, the eleventh-century chronicler, states that Benedict VIII called upon the defenders of the Church to chase away the Saracens who were attacking the coast near Luni. Thietmar, in fact, makes quite clear the idea of a clash between the defenders of the faith, and the inimicos Christi, and places Mujāhid in direct confrontation with the pope. To illustrate this personification of the struggle between Islam and Christianity, he relates a story wherein Mujāhid would have sent the pope a sack of chestnuts as a metaphor for the number of Muslim warriors he would unleash on the continent. Benedict VIII’s response was to send a sack of millet to show the number of Christian warriors that awaited him. Although the authenticity of the story is doubtful, it is evident that while Pisa and Genoa were also concerned about the economic ramifications of the conquest of Sardinia, Mujāhid’s jihād had sparked a religious response on the part of the papacy, who most likely did charge the Italian ports with protecting the peninsula from Muslim aggression.

The Pisan and Genoese response was decisive. Their fleets converged on Mujāhid’s Sardinia settlement while he was returning from Majorca with this family. Mujāhid’s ultimate defeat, however, was as much an act of nature as the result of the combined fleets of Pisa and Genoa. Outnumbered, Mujāhid sought to flee when his fleet was smashed by a storm against the rocks of an ill-chosen cove. The Pisans and Genoese were easily able to pick apart the remains, and captured Mujāhid’s

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39 A. Boscolo, La Sardegna bizantina e alto-giudicale, 127.
40 Thietmari chronicon, 851.
41 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 251; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:183; al-Ḥumaydī, 353-4; Al-Ḍabbī, 457-9, no. 1379.
mother and his future heir. His mother would choose to remain among “her people,” indicating the taifa ruler’s possible ethnic origins, while his son would remain a hostage for a number of years. Of the 120 ships that left for the expedition, only nine returned to Madīnat Mayūrq.

**Guerre de course**

Ibn Bassām wrote that the Christians had thus “chipped [Mujāhid’s] sword.” His defeat signaled the end of his grand aspirations, and Mujāhid made no new attempts at establishing a caliphate across the Mediterranean. It did not, however put an end to Mujāhid’s naval activities or Denia’s implication in the Mediterranean. Both he and ‘Alī continued their support of piracy, using it as a political and fiscal tool, and making Denia one of the principal ports for the `guerre de course`. A century later, Idrīsī would still describe Denia as an arsenal and base for raiding fleets.

Muslim raids continued to plague Sardinia over the course of the century, many of them from Denia. From 1044 to 1056, two Andalusī scholars, both of whom sailed out of Denia, were killed in armed conflicts around the island, one of whom was explicitly there on jihād. A Sard adaptation of the life of S. Saturno from the late eleventh century includes a prayer for protection from Muslim attacks, while a life of S. Gavino transforms a local Roman martyr’s story to one of Muslim

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42 *Liber maiolichīnus*, 42-3; *Thiemari chronicon*, 851.
44 Ibn Bashkuwāl, 369, no. 800; al-Ḥumaydī, 304, no. 697.
persecution. Nor were the Ligurian coasts free from attack, for a Genoese charter from 1056 requires foreigners to help survey the coasts and aid the city in case of Muslim aggression. For these attacks, Corsica may have served as a staging base, as Gregory VII charged the bishop of Pisa with ridding the island of invading “evil men.” In fact, without advancing the idea of a new invasion of Sardinia, there may be some truth in the Pisan descriptions of attacks by Mujāhid in 1019, 1021, and 1028. Finally, in an 1150 peace treaty with Pisa, Valencia, whose territory now included Denia, promised to freely admit, and exact no tribute from Pisan vessels traveling to Sardinia.

Muslim pirates, moreover, did not limit their attacks to the Italian coast and islands. Saracen incursions had plagued the monastery of Lérins off the Provençal coast since the eighth century, the most famous of which resulted in the martyrdom of Saint Porcharius in 732. In the 1046, pirates from the Sharq al-Andalus attacked the monastery, killing the abbot Aldebertus and taking numerous monks away as human booty to sale them in the markets of Denia and Tortosa. The abbot Aldebertus II

46 Codice diplomatico della Repubblica di Genova dal DCCCCLVIII al MCLXIII. v. 1, ed. C. Imperiale di Sant’Angelo (Rome, 1936), docs. 3, 8.
48 Breviarum Pisanae Historiae, 167; Ranieri Sardo, Cronaca di Pisa, 16.
50 De sanctis martyribus lerinensibus Porcario abbate, ac quingentis monachis, AASS, August, t. 2, (Antwerp, 1735), 737-9.
51 Vita s. Ysarno abbate s. Victoris, AASS, September, t. 6, (Paris, 1867), 747-9
began fortifying the island in 1073, but it was again devastated in 1107, when Pope Honorius II offered indulgences equivalent to pilgrimage to the Holy Land for anyone who served there as a man-at-arms for three months.\footnote{Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Lérins, ed. H. Moris, E. Blanc (Paris, 1883), 1:299, n. CCXCI; 2:XV.} The taifa’s ports were not the only harbors for pirates, but Majorca did launch ships against the Frankish coast, causing in one instance the town of Elne to move its church inland to avoid further damage.\footnote{See below.} Moreover, Pisa and Barcelona invaded the Balearics in 1114-5 in large part to end its piracy campaigns. The 1107 attack on Lérins then was probably at least sanctioned by Mubashar Nāṣir al-Dawla, ruler of Madīnat Mayūrqa and former client of ‘Alī b. Mujāhid, in a clear continuation of the former taifa’s practices.

Mujāhid, and later ‘Alī, invested considerable resources in preparing for the Sardinia invasion, and then in maintaining a fleet to raid Christian ports, coasts and ships. Despite their costs, these actions brought numerous benefits for Denia’s rulers. The raids and attacks helped legitimate their power as a form of \textit{jihād}. The material and human booty brought monetary wealth, perhaps directly if the ship belonged to them, as a tributary fifth of the prize for their share as Muslim rulers (\textit{khums}), or even as taxes. Denia’s economy, and its court, were in many ways supported by this maritime \textit{jihād}.

Nevertheless, and despite this violence, not all ships left Denia to attack Christian targets. Mujāhid and ‘Ali participated in the Mediterranean commercial economy, sending their ships to the various Muslim ports as far as Alexandria and perhaps Tripoli. Perhaps more surprising, Denia’s rulers concomitantly cultivated
and maintained economic, diplomatic and even personal relations with the same ports that they assaulted.

Diplomacy and friendship

Mujāhid and ‘Alī also built their state through economic relations with the Muslim and Christian worlds. Communications between Denia and the ports of Pisa and Barcelona contributed to the composition of the western Mediterranean networks. Denia’s ships participated in the different networks that arose with the renewed Latin Mediterranean presence that began in the later fourth/tenth century, and the taifa’s ports likewise attracted Italian and Catalan ships. The taifa thus emerged in part thanks to an emerging economy with different ports of the Western Mediterranean basin, be they Muslim or Christian. In fact, even if Mujāhid’s failure in Sardinia was due to the growing maritime power of Pisa and Genoa, commerce with these same ports helped fuel Denia’s rise as one of the most important taifas. In parallel with this commerce, Mujāhid and ‘Ali maintained personal relations with the elite in these towns. The political and economic elites in Mediterranean ports, and their political and economic relations, were often indistinguishable.⁵⁴

Mujāhid helped enlarge the dār al-Islam through his conquest of Sardinia. Piracy filled his coffers and replicated al-Manṣūr’s legitimizing yearly raids. Mujāhid policies brought him in direct conflict with the Christian ports of the Tyrrhenian Sea. Nevertheless, Mujāhid needed these ports and their commerce. Piracy would be

⁵⁴ O.R. Constable, for example, has noted in the Geniza documents merchant vessels belonging to Muslim rulers, including ‘Alī b. Mujāhid. See above and Trade and Traders, 122-3.
anemic at best if not for maritime traffic, even if human booty was the most lucrative prize. And piracy had been part of Mujāhid’s plan in conquering Sardinia, but Denia was no longer simply a pirate port living off the booty brought in from expeditions against the Christian coasts. It had become part of the process that was regenerating commerce in the Western Mediterranean and ports like Pisa.

**Diplomatic relations**

As the twelfth century began, Pisa embarked on one of its most important putative expeditions, against the last remaining taifa kingdom, the Balearic Islands. The Islands had splintered off from Denia in 468/1076 when the taifa kingdom had surrendered to the Banū Hūd of Zaragoza. The ruler, Mubashr Nāṣir al-Dawla, was a client of Mujāhid and then ‘Alī, and therefore a member of the ‘Āmirid faction and clan. He had assiduously continued the privateering policies of his former patrons, which the combined fleets of Pisa and Barcelona intended to stop.55 When news came to Madīnat Mayūrqa of the impending expedition, Nāṣir al-Dawla sent a letter to his acquaintance in Pisa, Peter, great-grandson of Ildeberto Albizone, with the kindest words of friendship.56 He asked Peter to remember the pact that had existed between his ancestor and Mujāhid and that he, himself, had maintained for so long.57 Indeed, the failed invasion of Sardinia had marked the end of Mujāhid’s plans for a

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56 *Liber maiolichinus*, 40.
Mediterranean polity, but it had also provided the beginnings of a personal relationship between the ‘Āmirids of Denia and a prominent Pisan family, one that would continue through generations.

During Mujāhid’s attempt to escape from Sardinia, his fleet was destroyed and members of his household, including his mother and son, were captured by the Pisans.58 His mother, Jūd, chose to remain among “the people of her religion,” but Mujāhid was able to ransom the other prisoners, except his son, ‘Alī.59 ‘Alī remained with the Christians for sixteen years, speaking their language, wearing their clothes and even practicing their religion. As tribute to the emperor, the Pisans sent him to Henry II in Germany. ‘Alī, however, did not remain long at the imperial court, for Henry, who “cared greatly for Peter’s ancestor,” placed ‘Alī under Ildeberto’s supervision in Pisa.60 According to the Liber maiolichinus, Ildeberto, in fact, had requested that ‘Alī be sent to him. Mujāhid was finally able to arrange ‘Alī’s release in 423/1031, thanks mediation by the Banū Ḥammād and a ten thousand dinar ransom. ‘Alī must have stayed for so long in Pisa as diplomatic hostage, and not because his father, known to have paid a thousand dinars for a book dedication, Would not raise the ransom. Mujāhid may even have limited further actions against Sardinia and Pisa because of this son’s captivity in Pisan hands.

‘Alī may have been a hostage in Pisa, but he seems to have been treated with honor, and perhaps even familiarity. The author of the Liber maiolichinus certainly

58 Al-Dabbī, 457-8, no. 1379; Ibn Bassām, Dakhīra, 4:183-5; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 251-2; Annales pisani, 238; Annali genovesi, 161. Thietmar of Merseburg also describes the scene, though he replaces Mujāhid’s mother with a soon to be decapitated queen; Thietmari chronicon, 851.
59 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 252.
60 Liber maiolichinus, 43.
seems to intend this when he juxtaposes Ildeberto’s request for ‘Alī from the emperor with his subsequent liberation: the “dearest of gifts” for his father. As a result of this gesture, Ildeberto’s family and the ‘Āmirids of Denia were linked as brothers: Albicio quare successoresque vocantur Mugeti fratres successorumque suorum.\textsuperscript{61}

The chronology is not explicit, and sixteen years went by between ‘Alī’s capture and liberation. When exactly Ildeberto would have made his request is thus not clear, nor is the amount of time that ‘Alī spend in the imperial court before returning to Pisa. Ibn Bassām writes that a member of the Banū Ḥammād helped negotiate ‘Alī’s release, but the Liber maiolichinus gives Ildeberto the entire credit.\textsuperscript{62} A more likely scenario probably involves Mujāhid effectively working through the Banū Ḥammād, but building ties with Ildeberto and his Pisan connections through the process.

Throughout the next two centuries, Ildeberto’s family’s interests would be linked either with the ‘Āmirids or their successors, following often the same paths. Nāṣir al-Dawla’s epistolary exchange with Peter indicates an uninterrupted relationship between the two families over the course of the eleventh century. Moreover, the Albizone family was often involved in relations with the Muslims or Spain during the twelfth. During the Balearic campaign, Peter, Ildeberto’s direct descendant, negotiated with the Nāṣir al-Dawla, though he was unable to save the Muslim ruler.\textsuperscript{63} In 1161, Ardecase, sixth in the family line since Ildeberto, was sent

\textsuperscript{61} Liber maiolichinus, 43.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:183.
\textsuperscript{63} Liber maiolichinus, 110-1.
by Pisa as an ambassador to the Balearic Islands, while in 1157, his cousin, Bulso, served as a witness in the marriage between the niece of the count of Barcelona and the local ruler of Arborea in Sardinia. The Albizone family then, like their fellow Pisans, expanded their interests in the Western Mediterranean, through diplomacy and friendship, capitalizing perhaps on personal ties they had built with Denia.

Given his magnanimous treatment of ‘Alī, Ildeberto may also have been responsible for Mujāhid’s mother. No Latin sources speak of her beyond her capture, unless we count Thietmar having her beheaded, but an epigraph on the Pisan cathedral commemorates the tomb of a Majorcan queen taken as prisoner. Although the inscription does not in fact mark the queen’s tomb, a thirteenth-century Luccan manuscript describes the queen’s tomb inside the cathedral. The capture of the mother of the “tyran Musetto” was among the city’s foundational myths. It is not surprising that a plaque commemorated this on the cathedral façade, along with another inscription celebrating Mujāhid’s defeat. What is interesting is her burial inside the cathedral, marking a certain importance or recognition. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that with Ildeberto’s help in Pisa, Mujāhid’s mother maintained a lifestyle consistent with that which she had enjoyed at the royal court in Denia.

Given so few indications, it would be easy to consider exaggerated Ildeberto’s personal ties with Mujāhid and Denia. Nevertheless, he was personally involved in

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64Chronicon pisanum, v. 6-3 (Florence, 1845), 9.
65O. Banti, Monumenta epigraphica pisana saeculi XV antiquiora (Pisa, 2000), 60.
66O. Banti, Le epigrafi e le scritti obituare del duomo di Pisa (Pisa, 1996), 24, no. 7.
'Alī’s transfer from the imperial court and his subsequent release, actions that would have led to relations with the Denian ruler. The relationship between Mujāhid and Ildeberto is in fact indicative of the ties between Pisa and Denia. Despite piracy, conquest and religious conflict, commerce also linked the two communities. Ildeberto, in fact, provides not only an illustration of the diplomatic ties between Pisa and Denia, but, through one single donation, he also created an important vestige of their commercial relations.

**Commerce**

On the nineteenth of January, 1028, Ildeberto Albizone, for his soul and in memory of the emperor Henry II, founded the female Benedictine monastery of San Matteo on his lands immediately outside the Pisan pre-communal walls. San Matteo was in fact one of many churches built in Pisa during the eleventh century as the city expanded beyond the restricted Roman *civitatis*. Their construction alone is proof of the expanding economic resources of the Tuscan city. Over the century, the churches and monasteries became nodes of peripheral urban settlement, causing the city walls to stretch around these outlying settlements until a new wall was necessary at the end of the century. Indeed, the eleventh century saw a complete reorganization.

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of the Pisan urban structure in response to the city’s re-integration into the Mediterranean commercial networks.68

Beyond the edifices themselves, many of the churches built during this period provide more direct evidence for trade with the Muslim world. San Matteo, along with San Zeno, San Pedro a Grado, San Sisto, and the cathedral incorporated Islamic ceramic lusterware plates or open bowls, known as bacini, into their façades as architectonic decorations, this in clear imitation of ceramic tiles used to ornament North African mosques.69 As the bacini were incorporated into the facades at the time of construction, they are datable and themselves proof of exchange with Muslim cultures of the Mediterranean. In addition, Pisa was not the only city to use bacini as architectonic decorations. Eleventh-century churches in Lucca and Pavia used the ceramics, as did churches on Corsica and Sardinia.70 Over the century and into the next, the practice spread, so that from Genoa to Rome bacini became common on church façades.

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The eleventh-century *bacini* are a concrete sign of contact between Italy and the Islamic world, but they were long thought to be the product of successive waves of importation, possibly as booty from military expeditions, and would have served solely as decorations. Historians have also suggested that the *bacini* were perhaps traded on a small scale, as elite luxury goods, or that they were examples of a gift culture within the Western Mediterranean. This perception changed, however, with the results of archeological digs at Piazza Dante and Piazza dei Cavalieri in Pisa in 1991 and 1993. Both sites were in lower middle-class neighborhoods, characterized by merchants and lesser artisans, representative of eleventh-century Pisa’s redefined urban structure. The digs unearthed 493 pieces of Islamic ceramic-ware, creating a total of 540 with the 47 *bacini*. Although 66% of the pieces were similar in form to the *bacini*, 33% were closed forms, meaning bottles or pitchers. Moreover, the Islamic ceramics accounted for 7% of the total ceramics found. The majority of the Islamic ceramics unearthed was lusterware, and so not intended for common, daily use, while the vast majority of the ceramics unearthed was comprised of non-vitrified local production. The percentage indicates that, while uncommon, sophisticated architecture embedded with archeology,” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2006), 56, 78. We should also note that Ḥammāḍid artisans may have helped decorate S. Maria del Popolo in Pavia: M Jenkins, “Medieval Maghribi Ceramics: A Reappraisal of the Pottery Production of the Western Regions of the Muslim World,” 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1978), 202.


73 *Piazza dei Cavalieri*, 207.
Islamic ceramics were readily available to a non-elite local population. Non-vitrified imported pieces were also found, various sizes of jars, an indication that perishable goods were also being imported from the Muslim world.\(^7^4\)

The quantity of pieces then proves that the *bacini* were not merely booty or elite luxury imports. In addition to the theory that the *bacini* were war trophies, David Abulafia also advanced the idea that they may have served as ballast in Pisan ships returning from Muslim ports.\(^7^5\) The smeared aspect of some *bacini* would seem to indicate that this was true in certain cases, as it is hard to believe that such pieces could have fetched a price worthy of their transport. The majority, however, are exemplary pieces of Islamic ceramics, comparable to those found in the areas of production.\(^7^6\) These pieces then were expressly transported to Pisa for their commercial value.

The *bacini* were incorporated in the church façades at the time of their construction, as indicated by how they were fixed into the walls.\(^7^7\) The construction dates for the edifices thus provide a *terminus ante quem* date for the ceramics.\(^7^8\) With advances in ceramic typologies and classification of clay and soil types used for


\(^7^7\) e.g. G. Berti, *Pisa – Museo Nazionale di San Matteo. Le Ceramiche medievali e post-medievali*, (Florence, 1997), 12.

\(^7^8\) Rafael Azuar Ruiz has raised justifiable doubts about this method of dating, and has pointed out that dates for similar pieces found in al-Andalus are systematically much later than those proposed for the Pisan pieces; R. Azuar Ruiz, “Una necesaria revisión de las cerámicas andalusies halladas en Italia,” *Arqueologia y territorio medieval*, 12.1 (2005): 175-199.
ceramics, archeologists and historians have been able to determine to some extent the specific origins of the imported wares. Percentages between the bacini and the archeological finds are similar, with consistently over 70% imported from Sicily or Tunisia, and 15 to 20% from al-Andalus; the remaining imports from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean disappeared after the second half of the fifth/eleventh century. The majority share represented by Sicily and Tunisia easily correlates with Pisa’s military expeditions against Reggio, Palermo and Būna, proof of that region’s importance for Pisan commerce. Forty-eight pieces of ceramic ware came from al-Andalus in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century. Of those, the majority most likely was produced in the region around Murcia, while six were produced in Madīnāt Mayūrqa.

Muslim vessels were not absent from Italian ports, although their presence seems to be somewhat rare. The bishop of Pisa complained in the later half of the century of ‘sordid pagan’ ships in his city’s harbor. An early twelfth-century Genoese list of tariffs that makes reference to eleventh-century currencies sets higher prices for Muslim ships entering the city’s port. It is more likely however, that

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79 Piazza dei Cavalieri, 251.
82 Vita Mathildis celeberrimae principis Italiae carmina scripta a donizone presbytero qui in arce canusina vixit, in: Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, 2nd ed. v. 5-2. ed. L. Simeoni (Bologna, 1930), 52.
Pisan ships were the chief purveyors of these wares. The military expeditions alone show the importance that the Pisans placed on keeping sea-lanes and markets open to their vessels. In addition, Pisan merchants were so common in North African ports, that theirs was an accepted form of currency. Graziella Berti, the foremost specialist on the Pisan bacini, has suggested that the ceramics were not bought directly from their areas of production, but from a central trading emporium offering the collective goods of the Western Mediterranean. This seems to be the case for the majority of the pieces, and would explain the high percentage of ceramics from Sicily and Tunisia. This would also correlate with patterns of Mediterranean trade indicated in the letters of the Cairo Geniza wherein Sicily emerges as a major transit point for the transport of goods.

Some, however, may represent a more direct trade relationship. As stated above, the Majorcan ceramics represent only six of the total Andalusī pieces imported to Pisa. Those pieces, however, all date from the first quarter of the fifth/eleventh century, and so represent six out of eleven total Andalusī bacini from that period. Likewise, examples of continental Andalusī ceramics have been found in North African archeological digs, whereas the only Majorcan pieces found outside of Al-Andalus are among the Pisan bacini. The possibility exists then that certain Pisan

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84 S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:44; Tangheroni pointed out however that Pisa, in fact, did not mint its own money at this time; M. Tangheroni, 82.
85 Piazza Dante, 125.
87 R. Azuar Ruiz, 98.
merchants, such as Ildeberto Albizone, may have conducted direct trade with the Balearic Islands during the years probably following Mujāhid’s invasion of Sardinia.

Economic relations between Pisa and Denia began sometime in the first half of the fifth/eleventh century. The two states had begun to expand their spheres of influence before that, but they did not enter into real contact before the Sardinia invasion. Pisa’s interests lay initially and primarily to the south, as indicated by the ceramics from Sicily and Ifrīqiya discovered there. Pisan merchants were present in central Mediterranean markets, where they would have made their first pacific contacts with vessels from Denia. The commercial activities of the two ports crossed along the North African coast, in Bijayya, Būna and al-Mahdiyya. Both cities had documented contacts with that region during the same period. It is not surprising then that ‘Alī’s release would be negotiated through the Banū Ḥammād, and that those negotiations would then lead to more direct contact. Piracy characterized relations between the two coasts, but it was in fact part of the larger economic networks that linked them. Most trade was probably conducted through Madīnat Mayūrqa during the fifth/eleventh century, but Pisan interests looked towards the Sharq al-Andalus coast. If the bacini are any indication, commerce with the Andalusī coast accounted for 15 to 20% of Pisan activity over the course of the century. Pisan participation in the attack on Tortosa in 1092, and their lead in the invasion of the Balearics in 1114, was meant to improve access to those same ports and to eliminate the pirates that disrupted maritime routes in the region.
Denia’s relations with the Catalan county of Barcelona, like those with Pisa, were complex. In Barcelona’s case, however, common interests played an even larger role. Religious antagonism similarly came into play, as did the competition between two states intent on expanding into new territories and taking full advantage of commercial possibilities. Individual exchange between the two courts was more prevalent, entering at times into personal relations between sovereigns conscious of their mutual political and economic interests. Relations between Denia and Barcelona were also part of the larger dynamic that would grow into the Reconquista, overturning the balance between the Peninsula’s Muslim and Christian powers.

The Christian North began reinforcing its economic and military power just as the fall of the caliphate and political fragmentation weakened al-Andalus. The Christian polities became the dominant force in the Peninsula, and their relations with the Muslim kingdoms to the south were increasingly characterized by raids, demands for tributary payments and conquest. Despite this, Denia and Barcelona cultivated non violent relations throughout the fifth/eleventh century. A close reading of the sources reveals that a simplified vision of Muslim-Christian relations, limited to conflict, is insufficient and incorrect. The rulers of the two cities exchanged

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88 The standard work on the Catalan counties during this time, and especially in this context of renewal, is P. Bonnassie’s *La Catalogne du milieu du Xe à la fin du XIe siècle : croissance et mutations d’une société*, 2 vols. (Toulouse, 1975). We should note that recent studies have shown that the Umayyad caliphate’s decline began before the *fitna*, which was more the result than the cause of growing weakness and internal divisions.
emissaries and treaties, maintaining even personal relations while economic and political interests linked their states.

Denia and Barcelona both sought to exploit their ports and serve as conduits between the Peninsula and the sea. Their policies were thus both marked by the need to develop and protect their maritime interests, balanced with political concerns inland. Both states sought to expand their control of littoral resources in the *Sharq al-Andalus*. Mujāhid’s Mediterranean ambitions, along with the need to counter the Banū Hūd of Zaragoza, led him to build a rapport with the county of Barcelona, though without renouncing piracy and occasional conflict. Barcelona’s counts likewise applied forceful policies, exacting tribute from bordering taifas, while also developing economic interests in the maritime lanes that passed through Denia’s waters. Barcelona thus had to play a balanced game, seeking an entente with the leading port along the *Sharq al-Andalus*, and intervening more directly in Andalusī ports closer to home. The Catalan counts thus sought from the beginning of the *fitna* to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Șaqāliba taifas along the Mediterranean coast.

The *fitna*, Barcelona and the Șaqāliba taifas

In a document dated to 1012 from San Cugat de Vallés, the abbot of the monastery praises Count Ramón Borrell for his audacious attack on Cordoba, through which
“God granted tranquility to the Christians.”\textsuperscript{89} The attack in question was the famous expedition of 1010, in which the Catalans helped to expulse the Berbers from the caliphal capital. Despite the abbot’s religious rhetoric, the conflict was not uniquely a conflict across religious lines. The abbot neglected to mention that the Slav Wāḍīḥ had recruited Ramón Borrell and his Catalan army as mercenaries to fight for the Umayyad contender al-Mahdī.\textsuperscript{90}

This was not the first time that Muslim rulers had incorporated Christian mercenaries into the \textit{fitna}. The Castilian count, Sancho García, had aided the opposing Berber faction the previous year in exchange for a string of fortresses along the Duero border.\textsuperscript{91} Both al-Mahdī and Wāḍīḥ had also tried to recruit the Castilian, but the Umayyad cause was outbid, and Sancho García was convinced to throw his lot in with the Berbers. The count’s support enabled the Berbers to defeat Wāḍīḥ’s forces outside Alcalá de Henares, and to oust al-Mahdī from Cordoba.

Al-Mahdī’s hastily acquired Catalan allies were largely responsible for his subsequent riposte and short-lived victory. From Tortosa, al-Mahdī’s hājib, Wāḍīḥ, negotiated an alliance with the Catalans. Wāḍīḥ’s proposal coincided with, and may even have sparked, a council of the Catalan bishops and magnates, who then deliberated over the proposed expedition against Cordoba.\textsuperscript{92} Much like Sancho García with the Berbers, the Catalans profited handsomely from the Umayyad’s

\textsuperscript{89} “\textit{Inde dedit Deus tranquillitatem super christianos.}” J. Ruis Serra (ed.), \textit{Cartulario de “Sant Cugat” del Vallès} (Barcelona, 1946), v. 2, doc. 449, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibn ‘Idhārī, \textit{Bayān}, 3:86; \textit{Primera crónica general}, 454.
desperate situation. Wāḍīḥ promised the counts Ramón Borrell and Armengol I of Urgel one hundred dinars per day, plus food and wine, while their nine thousand followers received two dinars per day, plus food and wine.93 The mercenaries were also to receive any spoils taken from the Berbers, as well as, perhaps, the town of Medinaceli, whose mosques they sprinkled with wine and converted into churches.

The Catalans’ losses were substantial in the ensuing two battles outside Cordoba, including the deaths Ramón Borrell’s brother Armengol I of Urgel, Adalbert, son of the viscount Guitard, and the bishops Odón, Arnulfo and Aecio of Gerona, Vic and Barcelona.94 Nevertheless, those who survived the first battle were richly rewarded. They were given more or less free reign in Cordoba, blaspheming Muhammad and womanizing to their hearts’ content.95 Furthermore, the local population was taxed to pay their fees. Their glory was short-lived, however, as a second battle in the Guadiro valley saw one third of their forces killed. In fact, many also drowned while crossing the river, perhaps because their belts were so heavy with dinars that the spoils collected by the Berbers were inestimable.96

Cutting their losses, the Catalans returned home, despite pleas from Wāḍīḥ and al-Mahdī, who undoubtedly saw their imminent defeat in this departure. As Peter Scales has remarked, the expedition was a “fiasco” for the Catalans.97 It was, however, highly profitable for those who did survive, and did indeed mark a turning

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96 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:98.
97 P. Scales, The Fall, 194.
point in Catalan-Muslim relations. Al-Manṣūr had practically completed the subjugation of the Christian kingdoms before his death in 1002, to the point of demanding their military contributions in his actions against their refractory co-religionists. However, the implosion of the Umayyad caliphate allowed the Christians to offer their services, not as tributary charges, but as mercenaries. From this point on, the flow of money reversed. In the form of mercenary fees, and then tribute, the Catalans exploited the internal divisions of the erstwhile caliphate, first through services rendered and then extortion.

Even more significant, at least for the purposes of this study, was the pattern of alliances established by the Cordoba expedition. The Catalans continued to involve themselves in the *fitna*, while supporting the Ṣaqāliba, or Slav faction. Expeditions are also documented for 1013, 1017 and 1024. The Catalans, in fact, were well aware of the factional divisions in the *fitna*, and consistently aided the Slavs. Even from the 1010 expedition, documents specify action against the Berbers, “contra babaras naciones”, or “ad expugnandas catervas barbarorum.”98 Although this distinction is not systematic (sometimes expeditions are simply “ad Španiam,” and the abbey of San Cugat praises Ramón Borrell for acting against both Saracens and Berbers, “sarracenos atque barbaros”), in each of the expeditions mentioned, Barcelona sided with the Ṣaqāliba.99

The “fiasco” of 1010 may have dissuaded the Catalans from immediately re-embarking on another expedition *ultra Corduba*, but they did not remain for long on the

98 *Cartulario de “Sant Cugat”*, docs. 431 and 439, pp. 75 and 85.
99 *Cartulario de “Sant Cugat”*, docs. 427 and 449, pp. 71 and 95.
edges of the conflict. A will from the cathedral of Vic, dictated in July 1013 and
published in February 1014, speaks of another expedition *contra Spaniam*, in the
company of Ramón Borrell, other counts, bishops and viscounts.\(^{100}\) This mission
coincided with the rise of ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd, whose rebellion is attested by a Ceuta
minting in that year, and whose early machinations against the Berbers were supported
by the Slav faction.\(^{101}\) The Catalan intervention possibly came in support of the
Ḥammūdids’ Ṣaqāliba supporters.

‘Alī, however, quickly alienated his Slav supporters by bringing the Berbers
back into power, and he lost the Catalans’ support along with that of the Slavs.
Khayrān, the “muddled and unscrupulous” Slav leader who had succeeded Wādiḥ, headed the movement to oust the Ḥammūdid leader from Cordoba\(^{102}\). From his own
conquered territories around Almeria, Khayrān organized a coalition of other Slav rulers
with Mundhir b. Yaḥyā of Zaragoza, through whom he garnered a pledge of troops from
the recently widowed Ermesinda, countess of Barcelona.\(^{103}\)

The Ṣaqāliba coalition propped up an obscure Umayyad pretender from
Valencia, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Murtaḍā, in whom they hoped to have found a docile and
malleable candidate. ‘Alī’s murder at the hand of three palace eunuchs brought his
brother, al-Qāsim b. Ḥammūd, to the throne, but also provoked the Slavs to proclaim
their candidate caliph. The Catalan contingent followed Khayrān to Granada, where
they were to face the Ḥammūdids’ Zīrid Berber allies. However, as often happened with

\(^{100}\) P. Bonnassie, *La Catalogne*, 349, n. 82 citing A.C. Vic, C9, Episcop. I, perg. 98.


\(^{103}\) Mundhir enjoyed a privileged position with Barcelona, having brokered the marriage of the
fitna-era puppet caliphs, al-Murtaḍā proved to be less than manageable, much to Khayrān’s and the other Slavs’ disappointment.104 Outside the walls of Granada, the Slavs, along with their Catalan mercenaries, abandoned al-Murtaḍā to defeat and eventual death. The Catalans returned home, without having given battle, and once again richly rewarded.

These early mercenary expeditions were not the arbitrary result of pecuniary ambition. The Berber factions were equally solvent, and, as demonstrated by Sancho García’s case, just as willing to engage Christian mercenaries. The Catalans had their choice of economic benefactors. In fact, the Sharq al-Andalus, under the power of the Ṣaqqāliba, had become an essential zone for the Catalans’ political and economic projects. As Pierre Bonnassie observed, the rulers of Barcelona aligned themselves with the Ṣaqqāliba in each of these conflicts in order to construct a closer relationship with the rulers of the maritime provinces.105 With the beginning of the fitna, the Slavs had established a strong base on the eastern seaboard of the Iberian Peninsula. Wāḍīḥ had been governor of the Upper Marches, adjacent to the Catalan lands, and had used Tortosa as a base for his negotiations with Ramón Borrell. Within two years of the fitna’s outbreak, the Slav clients who ruled the Sharq al-Andalus as officers of the Umayyad state, among whom Mujāhid was one of the most important, had solidified their hold over the cities of Tortosa, Valencia, Denia, Almeria and Murcia, essentially dominating the entire coast.106
The counts of Barcelona were well aware of the importance of trade and relations along the eastern seaboard. As early as the tenth century, the Catalan count Suñer collected rents from transhumances between Barcelona and Tortosa. The tenth-century Andalusí geographer al-Rāzī noted in his description of Muslim Tortosa that its port was “frequented by merchants from all parts,” and was “on the way of those from France.” In 1011, Ramón Borrell ceded rights to wood along his southern coastal borders to merchants or fishermen passing along the coast. The act referred to merchants aboard “any lawful vessel” practicing coastal shipping. This applied, no doubt, to those merchants traveling north from Tortosa, apparently in large enough numbers to attract the count’s attention. Conscious of this trade in Barcelona’s burgeoning commercial interests, Ramón Borrell, together with his wife and son’s regent Ermesinda, sought to encourage a relationship that was profitable to all involved. The Catalans then, mindful of their own interests, sought to establish and maintain a relationship with the new Ṣaqāliba kingdoms in part through military support.

This policy continued throughout the eleventh century, contradicting the view in traditional Catalan historiography of this period as a time of conquest and victory over the Muslims. Bonnassie, in fact, has demonstrated the inaccuracy of this nationalist myth, arguing that the counts Berenguer Ramón I and then Ramón Berenguer I practiced

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108 Al-Rāzī, 72.

109 “Et ligna cedent ubique in omnes saltos nostras, montes et boscos, sine ullo impedimento, prout necessitas eis emerserit, piscaciones facere in ipsa mare ubique vel mercaciones deducere per omnium navium genere licitum sit illis sine cuiusque obstaculo et contrarietate.” Cartulario de “Sant Cugat” del Vallès, doc. 436, 80-81.
a policy of entente and stability with the frontier taifas. Motivated by the double profits of *parias* (tribute paid by taifas to the Christian kingdoms) and commerce, the Catalan counts sometimes carried out this policy to the detriment of their own reputation and authority.\textsuperscript{110} The counts of Barcelona exercised a veritable protectorate over the taifas of Lerida and Tortosa in exchange for their regular tributary payments. When the taifa of Zaragoza was divided in 1046, Barcelona supported Yusuf b. Ḥūd al-Muẓaffar of Lerida against his brother al-Muqtadir of Zaragoza. Likewise, when Labīb, Slav ruler of Tortosa, faced rebellion due to his fiscal policies, he called on Barcelona for help against his own subjects.\textsuperscript{111} Thus, instead of practicing a policy of bellicose expansionism, the Catalans used their military power to extract *parias* from their Muslim neighbors, who in turn benefited from Catalan protection. Barcelona maintained relatively peaceful borders (although occasional skirmishes, raids and small conflicts continued), reaping the benefits in the form of *mancusos de auro* through tribute and economic exchange. The counts of Barcelona cultivated their border relations without necessarily seeking to geographically expand their power, probably because the resulting *parias* and commerce were more lucrative and less costly than any profits possible through conquest.

While this political entente characterized the Catalan borders, an even more particular relationship evolved between the rulers of Barcelona and Denia. Indeed, there seems to have been an exceptional level of dialogue between the two Mediterranean ports, built both on their common interests and personal ties, and structured in part by mutual threats. Denia was in fact beyond Barcelona’s borderlands, perhaps too far for

\textsuperscript{111} Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhira*, 3:19.
Catalan forces to easily demand regular payment of *parias*. Nevertheless, although they were separated by land, they were linked by maritime routes essential for the survival of each. This perhaps explains why Barcelona and Denia developed the relationship that we shall see below. Throughout the fifth/eleventh century, the rulers of both polities held a common accord by maintaining a mutually comprehensible dialogue through both violent and pacific means.

**Piracy and Catalonia**

While the counts of Barcelona organized expeditions to ensure the regular payment of *parias* by their tributary neighbors, Mujāhid built Denia into an infamous haven for piracy and maritime violence. The Tyrrhenian Sea, moreover, was not the only theater of involvement for Denia’s ships. “Cordovan Moors” raided Narbonne in 1018. Ademar of Chabannes notes that these *Cordubenses Mauri* did not speak Arabic, but “in the manner of little dogs.” Given this remark, and the use of the term *Mauri*, the raiders were probably Berbers, members of the *Bahriyyūn* settled along the *Sharq al-Andalus* coast. Denia was not the only harbor for *Bahriyyūn* pirates, but direct action was taken against Mujāhid only a few years later to cease raids along the Catalan coast from his port.

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112 *Ademari Cabannensis chronicon*, *Corpus Christianorum*, 129, ed. R. Landes and G. Pon (Turnhout, 1999), 171, c. 52.
113 “Loquela eorum nequequam erat Sarracenica, sed more catulorum loquentes:” *Ademari Cabannensium chronicon*, 171, c. 52.
Sometime between 1018 and 1023, Roger of Tosney led a group of Normans to the Spanish Mediterranean coast and expelled Muslim pirates menacing the Catalan waters, a situation analogous to the Norman descent on Salerno two decades earlier. Ademar of Chabannes, the sole complete chronicler of Roger’s exploits, places the Norman in the role of independent adventurer, arriving to save the Catalan lands from infidel attacks. The account describes Roger splitting a captive Muslim in half and roasting him on a spit, “like a pig.” He offers one half to the rest of his captives while pretending to eat the other half in an adjoining tent, before allowing a captive to escape and spread the word among the Muslims. The ensuing terror leads Mujāhid (or “Museto”), to make peace with the countess Ermesinda, widow of Ramón Borrell, and agree to pay an annual tribute. In return, the Catalan countess offers the Norman the hand of her daughter Estefania in marriage.

The details of Ademar of Chabannes’s account pose a few problems, but the underlying facts seem based in reality. The feigned cannibalism is too common a theme to be convincing (al-Ṭūṭūrshī writes of a similar episode, but with a Muslim officer in Tosney’s place), and a subsequent description of a victory over five hundred Saracens by Tosney’s group of forty is certainly exaggerated. Nineteenth and even twentieth-century historians tended to focus on the pre-crusading aspects of Ademar’s account, while expressing reservations about its reliability. Stephen

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117 Al-Ṭūṭūrshī, Sirāj al-mulūk, 494-5.
Runciman saw Cluniac maneuvering behind Tosney’s arrival, and Marcélin Defourneaux viewed him as prefiguring the French expedition against Barbastro.\textsuperscript{118}

Ademar’s account, however, does appear based on facts. Oderic Vitalis referred to Tosney as “\textit{Hispanicus},” and William of Jumièges briefly noted that he killed many pagans in Spain.\textsuperscript{119} The \textit{Chronicon Sancti Petri Vivi Senonensis} also describes Tosney’s adventure, although it credits him with the conquest of and fifteen-year reign over Gerona and Tarragona.\textsuperscript{120} This reign is implausible because, among other reasons, the \textit{Book of Saint Foy} places Tosney back in Normandy by 1027.\textsuperscript{121} The account of Tosney’s marriage with Estefania is also problematic, as it appears in no other source concerning the Norman or his Catalan bride. However, this diplomatic marriage between Ramón Borrell’s orphaned daughter and a scion of an upwardly mobile Norman family is certainly not impossible.\textsuperscript{122}

Pierre Bonnassie wondered about the tribute that Mujāhid paid for Tosney’s departure. He compared Tosney’s band to other Norman adventurers roaming the Mediterranean at the time. While claiming to fight the Saracens, these travelers spent


\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Chronique de Saint-Pierre-le-Vif de Sens, dite de Clarius} (\textit{Chronicon Sancti Petri Vivi Senonensis}) (Paris, 1979), 112.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Liber miraculorum sancte Fidis}, ed. L. Robertini (Spoleto, 1994), 183-4. Tosney’s disorderly behavior does not seem to have been uniquely directed at pagans. Both the \textit{Liber miraculorum sancta Fidis} and the chronicle of Sens describe ambushes or attempted ambushes by his Christian enemies, in one instance forcing him to leave Spain, and in the other preventing him from traveling to Conques.

just as much time perturbing local affairs. He thus proposed the possibility that Mujāhid could have paid tribute to Tosney through the countess Ermesinda, purchasing the Norman’s departure for everyone’s benefit. Ermesinda’s role as intermediary and a temporary or occasional tributary payment is certainly possible. At any rate, Tosney was attracted to the Iberian Peninsula because of Mujāhid’s privateering, who perhaps exacted tribute payments of his own, much like the Muslim besiegers of Salerno who drew the first Normans to Southern Italy.

Tosney’s activities not only illustrate the rambunctious behavior of early medieval Normans, but also clearly shed light on Denia’s campaigns along the Catalan coast and maritime routes that linked Barcelona with the rest of the Mediterranean. While Tosney affronted numerous Saracens, Ademar specifically mentions only Mujāhid, or “Museto.” During the period between 1018 and 1023, Mujāhid not only ruled over Denia and the Balearic Islands, but also cooperatively over Valencia and Tortosa, sharing those two cities with his fellow Ṣiqlābī, Labīb. In a position to dominate the eastern coast, Mujāhid promoted economic development through involvement in Mediterranean maritime markets, while using the major Sharq al-Andalus ports as bases for his corsair activities. He thus established for himself a reputation of infamy that penetrated as far as Ademar’s monastery of Saint-Cybard in Angoulême.

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123 P. Bonnassie, La Catalogne, 352, n. 96.
125 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:20.
Mujāhid personally supervised this guerre de course from Denia, while also naming as governors of the Balearic Islands men who would incessantly administer his campaigns of “maritime jihād.”126 Thus, despite the conscious rapprochement between the rulers of Barcelona and Denia, a parallel policy of economic and religious violence developed. Moreover, this policy did not stop when ‘Alī b. Mujāhid took over the kingdom after his father’s death in 436/1044. His nominee as governor of the Balearic Islands, Mubashar Nāṣir al-Dawla, continued to raid Christian ports and ships even after the fall of Denia in 468/1076, until the joint fleets of Pisa and Barcelona put an end to his activities in 1115.127

Muslim piracy was prominent in the Western Mediterranean during the eleventh century, and while Denia was not the sole practitioner, its ports certainly led the way in campaigns against the Christian coasts. In 1041, countess Ermesinda and her brother, Peter, bishop of Gerona, ceded fortifications near Benedormiens to the monks of Saint Felix de Guixols so that they could protect the coast and the Aro valley against Saracen attacks.128 In 1069, the city of Elna, south of Perpignan, was forced to move its church inland because of the frequent Muslim attacks launched from Majorca.129 Denia’s corsairs and pirates did not exclude Catalan possessions

126 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:355.
127 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:355.
128 “[…] ubi statuentes et disponentes utrique ordinaverunt quomodo illum castrum appellatum Benedormiens ab omnibus eisdem in commune aedicatum custodiretur a militibus, vel peditibus per diem et noctem omni tempore ; ut omnes homines a Colonico usque ad Monasterium sancti Felicis cohabitantes absque ulla paganorum infestatione manere passent.” España Sagrada, t. 43, De la Santa Iglesia de Gerona en su estado antiguo, ed. E. Flórezi, A. Merino and J. de la Canal (Madrid, 1819), 184-5 and appendix 30, 437.
129 “Haec est mutatio Ecclesiae cathedralis Elnensis […] Et cum dicto tempore pagani seu Sarraceni tenerent insulam Majoricarum, frequenter transfretantes seu navigantes dissiparunt & destruerunt dictam civitatem, quae tunc erat in villa inferiori, & bis diruerunt Ecclesiam supradictum. Propter
from their campaigns, but, paradoxically, this did not prevent parallel positive and complementary relations. Real dialogue, built on diplomatic and personal ties, existed between Denia and Barcelona. Economic ambitions underlay this dialogue, underwritten by gold.

_Auro de Spania_

The Catalan economy was transformed over the course of the eleventh century. While this growth cannot be attributed to one single phenomenon, the influx of gold from Muslim Spain fed much of the Catalan development in the first half of the century. Scholars studying the provenance of these _mancusos_ have demonstrated the Sudanese origins of gold minted under Umayyad authority, imported first by Catalan mercenaries during the first few decades of the eleventh century and then obtained by means of _parias_. As P. Bonnassie explains, diplomatic sources are often careful to specify which _mancusos_ are used, sometimes allowing historians to determine the origin and date of the coins exchanged. Thus, the ḥājibs Ja’far and then al-Manṣūr minted the _mancosus iafaris_ and _amuris_ that are first mentioned in the


130 P. Bonnassie, _La Catalogne_, 376-8.

documents. These were in fact the dinars that Ramón Borrell and his fellow Catalans brought back from Cordoba. After the fall of the caliphate, caliphal monetary production ceased, though it was sporadically replaced by a few taifal mints. During the fitna, only the Ḥammūdids, and to a lesser extent the Tujībids of Zaragoza, issued dinars. These coins appear in Catalan sources as mancusos ceptinos (Sebta or Ceuta), and mancusos almanzoris (Mundhir al-Manṣūr of Zaragoza). These account for the majority of the names in the texts beyond the general mancusos de oro cocto, or even auro de Spania. On a few occasions, however, the texts deviate from this standard, and indicate other paths taken by the gold from African mines to Catalan coffers.

While the mercenary interventions of 1010, 1013 and 1017 flooded Catalonia with mancusos iafaris and amuris, the expedition of 1024 introduced another source of gold. The only explicit trace of this expedition in the sources is found in the will of a certain Seniofredo, who died of wounds received while he was “in expeditionem in Ispanie partes contra sarracenos.” Seniofredo was not the only one to suffer during this expedition, as his testament also mentions a captive, Guilelmo, who was to inherit from the deceased if he ever came back. The deceased’s testament specifies that he had been in al-Andalus on an expedition against the Saracens, and was most likely paid for his services. In fact, a few months after the publication of Seniofredo’s will at San Cugat, a document from the same monastery specifies the

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133 Cartulario de “Sant Cugat”, v. 2, doc. 494, p. 144-5.
payment of an ounce of Valencian gold. The quantity of Valencian gold necessary for it to become a trading currency in the first quarter of the eleventh century could only have been imported through mercenary payments.

Bonnassie hesitated in naming this expedition alongside the others, probably because it left no trace in the narrative sources. In fact, there is no mention in the Latin and Arabic sources of a specific conflict in the *Sharq al-Andalus* that would have necessitated the services of Catalan mercenaries. Conflicts further afield could have attracted the mercenaries’ attention, and Seniofredo’s expedition could have been directed against often-targeted Zaragoza. However, the mention so soon after the expedition of this *uncia auri Valencie* seems to indicate a link between the two.\(^{134}\)

Although the link is tenuous, it is possible to tie this money to the tribute paid by Mujāhid in exchange for Roger of Tosney’s departure during the same period. Tosney’s marriage to Ramón Borrell’s daughter indicates that he probably stayed in the region for some time. If Tosney was indeed tied to the house of the counts of Barcelona, Catalan mercenaries and soldiers could very well have participated in his expeditions, and helped to assure the payment of tribute until Tosney’s departure for this native lands.

The document, however, specifically mentions Valencian gold, and not gold from Denia. Nevertheless, it is difficult to know what exactly is intended in the text, since the taifa of Valencia minted neither gold nor silver at this time. Indeed, with the exception of the Ḥammūdīs and Tujībīs, monetary production ceased with the *fitna*,

\(^{134}\) S. Sobrequés does cite this expedition as proof of conflict between Barcelona and Zaragoza: S. Sobrequés, *El Grans comtes*, 43.
and did not return to Valencia until 422/1030-1.  In 1024, there were no gold coins being minted in Valencia, and Valencian gold does not appear in Latin sources until the 1060s. The document in question does not specify the gold’s mint, but rather its provenance, just as other documents simply state auro de Spania. Because of fluctuating borders and the oftentimes communitarian sovereignty exercised by the Ṣaqāliba over their territories, distinctions between each of the Sharq al-Andalus taifas were not clear in the early days of the fitna. Muslim geographers were unclear as to whether Denia belonged in the districts of Tudmīr or Valencia, and Mujāhid did indeed work to link his city with the ports of Tortosa and Valencia. It is understandable, then, that Catalan scribes would have considered that the tribute paid came from Valencia instead of the taifa of Denia, a kingdom they barely knew and which often included Valencia in one way or another.

This is indeed a bit conjectural, but it would not be the only time that money from Denia made its way to Catalonia. Two dirhams minted under ‘Alī in 447/1056-7 were discovered in a coin hoard near Barcelona, alongside pieces from three other taifas. Denia dinars are also mentioned in a document dating from the 1040s. Descriptions of payment in dinars usually specify only “pieces of gold from Spain,”

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or perhaps *mancusos amurinos et iaifarinos et cetinos*. While the specification of other mints remains uncommon, Denia is the only taifa, besides Zaragoza, whose money appears in a document before the second half of the century.

Denian gold appears only once in the sources: towards the middle of the century a piece of land in the county of Urgel was sold for the price of five ounces of *auro denesco*. The act does not specify the date, but does mention the initial sale of the allodium by either the count Armengol III or his mother and regent, Constance. The sale probably took place then before the middle of the century, since the young count, who was born in 1032, must have assumed his full powers before then. The document describes the payment as concluded, so we can assume that Denian gold really was used for the transaction, and not just as an abstract value.

Denia produced a small very amount of gold coins, minute when compared to the taifas of Ceuta, Zaragoza, or even Valencia. In fact, there was a total hiatus in coin production between the beginning of Mujāhid’s reign, represented by the specimens from Alūṭa between 401/1011 and 406/1016, and the last two years before his death. Mujāhid returned to coin production in 435/1043-4, in order to associate the names of his two sons, ‘Alī and Hassan, with this legitimizing privilege. In fact, Mujāhid chose to mint not only dirhams, but also a comparatively large quantity of

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dinars, as a way to underscore the legitimacy of his successors.\textsuperscript{143} 'Alī succeeded his father in 436/1044, but did not mint dinars until 443/1051-2. If this \textit{auro denesco} was indeed dinars from Denia, they must have been from Mujāhid’s 435/1043-44 emissions.

This Denian gold could have found its way to Catalonia through trade. Despite the conflicts that existed between the Christian kingdoms and the Muslim taifas, the frontier between the two worlds was not hermetic and did not prevent commercial and constructive exchange.\textsuperscript{144} Both road and maritime networks linked Denia and Barcelona, and Denia’s port may well have served as a transit point for Sudanese gold on its way north. However, it is also possible that this \textit{auro denesco} served as a diplomatic tool at a time of weakness for Mujāhid’s court.

The last years of Mujāhid’s reign were marked by a relative calm in his relations with the surrounding taifas. Taifa relations, nevertheless, were never stable, and a dynastic succession was rarely without contention, contestation, and perhaps opportunistic intervention.\textsuperscript{145} The imminent succession could have been the occasion for a diplomatic tributary payment, symbolically made with coins carrying his sons’ names. This would have helped to ensure Catalan benevolence after the father’s death.


\textsuperscript{145} ‘Alī’s brother Hassan, in fact, attempted a coup shortly after his father’s death, aided by the ruler of the taifa of Seville: Ibn Bassām, \textit{Dhakhīrā}, 3:130-1.
Diplomacy and personal ties

Denia’s gold created ties with Barcelona’s court, but this same court also maintained relations with others taifas, and built alliances with Lerida and Tortosa in part through their *parias* payments. Denia’s gold alone does not seem to indicate a particular relationship between Barcelona and Denia. On three occasions, however, sources reveal a dialogue between the two states characterized by both violence and mutual benevolence.

Besides the maritime raids discussed above, Denia’s ships campaigned beyond the Catalan coasts. The French monastery of Lérins was the victim of a Saracen attack, in 1046, when pirates from the *Sharq al-Andalus* raided the monastery. The abbot Aldebert I was killed and many of the monks were carried off as human booty to be sold in the slave markets of Tortosa and Denia. The hagiography of Isarno, abbot of Saint-Victor in Marseilles describes the attack and the eventual rescue of the unfortunate monks. The survivors from Lérins sent the saintly monk to Spain to buy back their brothers, hoping that the Iberian properties of Saint-Victor and the abbot’s personal ties would help the mission. Isarno gained an audience at the Barcelona court where he pleaded his cause before the count Ramón Berenguer I, the count’s first wife Elizabeth, and his advisor Gombal of Besora. The count and his court were moved by Isarno’s words (and probably by the political and

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147 *Vita s. Ysarno abate s. Victoris*, AASS, September, t. 6 (Paris, 1867), c. 5, 747-9.
economic interests that he represented) and offered to help him in his efforts to liberate the captives.

Barcelona’s involvement sheds light on its relations with the taifas of the _Sharq al-Andalus_. The Catalan court sent two groups of envoys accompanied by Isarno, one to Tortosa and the other to Denia. The writer specifies that Ramón Berenguer and his wife sent legates to Denia, while Gombal de Besora sent agents to Tortosa. In each case, the negotiations were successful and the monks were liberated, but the author’s details concerning the two missions are at times problematic. Isarno is specifically mentioned as having accompanied both missions, although it is hard to understand why two different groups of legates would have been necessary. The author expressly mentions negotiations with ‘Alī b. Mujāhid, or “Alaïo,” but simply names the ruler of Tortosa as “Agalifo”, clearly a variation of caliph. Tortosa’s line of taifa rulers is not the easiest to establish, but there was certainly no caliph there at the time. It is unclear, then, whether there really were two missions, or whether we should assume some confusion on the part of the hagiographer. Nevertheless, the importance accorded Isarno’s mission by the Barcelonan court is certain, as is the personal involvement of its rulers in their relations with the taifas.

Gombal of Besora was one of the key figures in the courts of Ramón Borrell, Berenguer Ramón I and the regency of the countess Ermesinda. Gombal was one of the countess’s most trusted advisors, and his participation in the story implies her

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148 _Vita s. Ysarno_, c. 5, 748.
149 P. Bonnassie, _La Catalogne_, 634.
own.\(^{150}\) Ermesinda maintained amicable relations with the taifa kingdoms, and her first regency during Berenguer Ramón I’s minority coincided not only with the 1017 Catalan mercenary expedition to Granada, but perhaps also with the intervention in Tortosa on Labīb’s behalf. Ermesinda owned a signet ring with her name in Latin and Arabic characters, which was most likely used in diplomatic correspondence with her Muslim counterparts.\(^{151}\) Ermesinda participated in the monks’ liberation through Gombal, using the contacts that she had built over time, and demonstrating the influence she held beyond the borders of Christendom.

The hagiographical account, however, centers on Denia and gives the impression that the prisoners and the bulk of the negotiations were held there. The Barcelonan legates were accompanied by Isarno, who easily recognized the unfortunate monks from Lérins. Ramón Berenguer’s representatives informed ‘Alī that if the monks were not freed, the count would break the peace that existed between them and declare war on land and on sea.\(^{152}\) ‘Alī yielded before the count’s threats, and turned the monks over to their colleague.

If the hagiographer’s account is correct, including the treaty referred to by the count’s envoys, this accord fits with the pattern of alliances maintained by Barcelona, and perhaps ties in with the dinars discussed above. The counts of Barcelona were careful to maintain a policy of peace on their borders, using the _parias_ as a diplomatic tool and security in their relations. When considered with the Denian dinars spent in

\(^{150}\) S. Sobrequés Vidal, _El Grans comtes_, 46.


\(^{152}\) “Quod si reddere rex paganus contemneret, omnia prorsus fœdera pacis ruptum iri, atque irreconciliabile terra marique bellum agitandum esse denuntient.” _Vita s. Ysarno_, c. 5, 748.
Urgel during the same time period, this would seem to follow the same pattern. Even if Denia was not regularly solicited as a tributary state, as its absence from lists of taifas paying *parias* would seem to indicate, this incident involving the monks from Lérins along with the Denian dinars demonstrates that there was a negotiated peace between the two states expressed at least in part through a tributary payment.\(^{153}\) Furthermore, it should also be noted that the point of dissention in this case was not situated along the classic Muslim-Christian religious boundary, but rather involved diplomatic agreements that the count was willing to risk for reasons probably tied to the political and economic influence of the Saint-Victor monastery.

Ramón Berenguer was not the only ruler involved in this diplomatic dialogue. ‘Alī b. Mujāhid, ruler of Denia since his father’s death in 436/1044, also sought to maintain the profitable peace that existed between the two states. Ibn Bassām remarked that ‘Alī paid more attention to commerce than he did to fortifications, and that his love of dinars and dirhams brought about the fall of his state.\(^{154}\) It is not very surprising, then, to see that he preferred to liberate the captured monks rather than risk a war that would only have hurt his commercial activities and reduced the taxes he could collect on the commerce of others.

Mujāhid was quite conscious of the commercial networks that linked the various ports of the Western Mediterranean, and he directed much of his energy to exploiting their possibilities. Nevertheless, his son and successor, ‘Alī b. Mujāhid,

\(^{153}\) Note for example that an agreement signed with the count of Cerdagne in 1058 explicitly names Zaragoza, Lerida and Tortosa as tributary states, but does not mention Denia: *Els pergamins*, vol. 2, doc. 30, pp. 974-6.

must have sensed even more the interconnectivity of the Mediterranean and its common commercial culture. ‘Alī was most likely even less reticent than his father to deal with the Christians, having been raised among and as one of them during his Pisan captivity. ‘Alī could have become familiar with members of the Western Mediterranean mercantile population during his years in the Albizone household, and he would have at least witnessed Pisan commercial relations with the Ḥammādids of the Central Maghreb. In addition, he traveled shortly after his liberation to the Zirīd court in Ifrīqiya, one of the most important centers for Christian-Muslim trade in the Mediterranean.\(^{155}\) ‘Alī, then, must have taken this incident as seriously as did the Catalans. The profits from a few slaves was nothing compared to the risks he ran in his relations with the growing market to the north – not to mention the simple threat of military action. ‘Alī sought to protect a relationship that was even closer than one simply bonded through *parias*, one that went beyond the limits of a simple tributary pact. This personal relationship between the courts of Denia and Barcelona becomes even more evident in the light of two documents: the first is a letter from ‘Alī to the countess Almodis, and the second a treaty signed between the two states concerning Denia’s Christian subjects.

The first document is unfortunately only the fragmentary preamble of a letter from ‘Alī b. Mujāhid to the countess Almodis, third wife of Ramón Berenguer I.\(^{156}\)


\(^{156}\) ACA, Cancelleria, pergs. Ramón Berenguer I, n. 182 dors (Els pergamins, v. 2, doc. 776, pp. 1325-6). The text reads as follows: *Regina preclara vel gloriosa, domna Adalmus, honorificet eam Deus suus. Amicus fidelis, Gali, prolis Mugehid.*
The document is not dated, but must be from between 1052, the year of Ramón Berenguer’s and Almodis’ marriage, and 1056, the date of a convenença written on the back of the letter.\textsuperscript{157} The letter was written in a pseudo-Visigothic hand and translated from Arabic to Latin by a Mozarabic scribe working in the Denian court.\textsuperscript{158} Although it is only a scrap of the original, the fragment points to a personal and even familiar relationship between the two courts. ‘Alī warmly addresses the countess, and does not forget to send his regards to the count. It is obvious by the letter’s language and tone that their acquaintance was, at least to some degree, personal as well as diplomatic. ‘Alī, then, built personal ties with the Barcelonan court, probably initially under his father, and then on his own as ruler.

‘Alī was not, however, the instigator of this particular epistolary exchange, as the document mentions an earlier letter sent by the countess. Almodis confided the delicate mission of diplomatic courier to Bernard Amat, a faithful associate of the court. Amat unswervingly supported the count and countess and was active in executing certain aspects of their policies. This correspondence, then, must have concerned matters more important than the preamble seems to indicate. It is

\begin{align*}
\text{In Dei nomine et eius gratie. Prolonget Deus, o regina preclara vel gloria, tuam salvationem et protelet tuam iucumditatem adque retineat vel salbet te. Comex excellentissimus meus amicus vel gratus, honorificet eum Deus. Pervenit ad me, o regina gloria, tuam paginam preclaram cum Bernardo Amato, tuo fidele, salbet eum Deus et sten cum illis super tua amicitate vel dilectione in me, vel tua sinceritate ad me, et tua loquutione obtima de me, et Deus scit quod sum ad te in duplo de hoc quod mici diligis, vel in tua sinceritate quod ad me retines, vel est Deus super me testificator quod a secolo tuam karitatem in anime mee vel custodio ac rego tuam in corde meo sodalitate, et tibi gratias multimodas refero pro confirmatione mea amicitate contra comite magno conservet eum Deus de celo, et iarn audibi, o regina gloria, tuam laudantiam me adque obtima tua dictione in me, et ego retribuam tibi super illud cum plu...}
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{157} S. Sobrequés Vidal, \textit{Els Grans comtes}, 63; \textit{Els pergamins}, v. 2, doc. 468, p. 873.

impossible to know the exact contents of the damaged letter, but it is interesting to note the circumstances surrounding it.

Ramón Berenguer I was in the midst of suppressing two rebellions, and his control over the Catalan lands was extremely tenuous. The count’s grandmother, Ermesinda, was in open rebellion. She had taken advantage of his offhand dismissal of his second wife, Blanca, in favor of Almodis, to usurp the young count’s rights in her own fief of Gerona and to mount a coalition of the older Catalan nobility against her grandson. Mir Geribert, “prince of Olèrdola,” was leading an insurrection of Catalan nobles who were disgruntled by a court with too many pretensions and whose policies of appeasement with the Muslim south prevented them from practicing as feudal warriors.

Mir Geribert knew that the parias were a fundamental part of Ramón Berenguer I’s power base, and so sought to spread his insurrection by convincing Barcelona’s tributaries to break off their payments. It is no accident that the royal archives show a substantial growth in fidelity oaths in these years, as the count and countess attempted to shore up their positions vis-à-vis Mir Geribert and Ermesinda.

‘Alī’s letter to Almodis takes on greater significance in this context. Bernard Amat’s role as courier shows that the letters exchanged were politically significant, and not just personal correspondence. Perhaps the countess sought assurances from ‘Alī, like those she had received from her own nobility through their oaths of fidelity. Almodis, perhaps, was worried about a possible taifal movement taking advantage of

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159 P. Bonnassie, *La Catalogne*, 639-44.
the divisions within the Catalan ranks. If such was the case, ‘Alī’s response was certainly reassuring, and this fragment was probably part of a reiteration of the diplomatic and personal relations that bound the courts of Denia and Barcelona.

If this letter were the only tangible example of the relations between the two states it would be difficult to situate it within the larger scheme of the intercultural political dialogue they maintained. However, when considered alongside the second document mentioned above, it becomes evident that the taifa’s rulers actively worked to build a mutually beneficial relationship with the counts of Barcelona.

The 1058 treaty between Denia and Barcelona

In November of 1058, Ramon Berenguer I, count of Barcelona, along with Guislabert, bishop of Barcelona, consecrated the city’s newly constructed cathedral, Santa Eulalia. The dedicatory document confirms Barcelona’s episcopal limits, and includes the dioceses of Denia, the Balearic Islands and Orihuela. It furthermore explains that this exclusive authority was granted to the Bishop of Barcelona in a treaty signed with Mujāhid and then renewed by his son, ‘Alī. A month later, on

161 J. Baucells i Reig, A. Fabrega i Grau, M. Riu i Riu, J. Hernando i Delgado, C. Batlle i Gallart, Diplomatari de l’Arxiu Capitular de la Catedral de Barcelona. Segle XI (Barcelona, 2006), v. 3, doc. 973, pp. 1544-1550. The section concerning Denia reads as follows: Preterea nos supra dicti omnes, excommunicando sub anathematis interdictione, confirmamus Mayorcas et Minorcas insulas Baleares et episcopatum civitatis Denie et episcopatum civitatis Orioleaf et earum ecclesias omnes et quantum pertinet ad clericatus ordines, ut omnes episcopi, presbiteri et diachoni aliquique clerici, in prelibatis insulis et in prefatis locis commorantes, a minimo usque ad maximum et a puero usque ad senem, ab hodierno die et deinceps minime consentur deposcere ab alio aliquo pontificum ullius ordinationem clericatus neque crismatis sacre confessionem neque aliquem cultum ullius clericatus nisi ab epISCO barchinonensi, aut ab illo cui ipse preceperit sive permiserit, sicut illa scriptura testatur quam inde Muiehid et filius eius Aly, hismaeliteal quondam, fecerunt et Guislaberto episco po barchinonensi dederunt et tradiderunt.
December 26th, the bishop ratified the renewed treaty, which was signed by ‘Alī, and which granted these rights to the episcopal see.162 The treaty demonstrates how religion could be used as a political and diplomatic tool. It also testifies to the persistent existence of Christians within the Muslim kingdom of Denia. ‘Alī was offering a piece of legitimizing propaganda to the Catalan court, which had only recently managed to quell two rebellions. He was also consolidating connections that could only improve his economic interests.

162 Rome, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, n. 2222 (pieza 21); Barcelona, Archivo de la Catedral, perg. n. 3-3-8; J. Bauceells i Reig, Diplomatari, v. 3, doc. 977, pp. 1554-1558.

The Barcelona version of the treaty’s Latin and Arabic texts reads as follows: Hoc est translatum sumptum fideliter a quodam instrumento cuius series talis est: Noticie plurimorum, tam instantium quam posterorum, tradere satagimus qualiter, superno opitulante numine, Sedes Sancte Crucis Sancteque Eulalie barchinonensis anno Dominice Incarnationis LVIII post millesimum, insistentibus gloriosissimi presulis eiusdem sedis Gislaberti intercessibus, insularum Balearum clericatus atque ordinum necnon urbis Denie adepta est donum. Dux quoque predicte urbis Denie, dum viveret, nomine Mugehid, interventu iam dicti pontificis revocavit atque reddidit insulas prelibatas Baleares, quas nunc vulgo Mayoretas et Minoretas vocant, sub iure et diocesi sancte prefatae Sedis barchinonensis, statuens ac iubens ut omnis clerorum gradus, in predictis degens insulis, a nullo pontificum auderet expetere ordinem allicuius clericatus, neque sacriscrismatis uicionem vel electionem, neque ecclesie dedicationem, neque ulius clericatus cultum aliquem, excepto antistite barchinonensi. Huius itaque largitionis filius predicti dux Mugehid, auctor et imitator, nomine Ali, dedit ac reddidit omnes ecclesias et episcopatum regni mei, que sunt in insulis Balearibus et in urbe Denia, in perpetum abinceps maneant sub diocesi predicte urbis barchinonensis et predicte urbis Denie iuri et diocesi sancte sedis barchinonensis, eodem videlicet modo quo genitor suus Mugehid precatu prenominati pontificis impertivit universa fecit sedi prelocute. Impertitionis autem predictarum ecclesiarum et episcopatus earumdiestoria digna cognitu ita se habet:

In Dei omnipotentis nomine. Ego Ali dux urbis Denie et insularum Balearum, Mugehid iam dictae urbis olim ducis proles, assensu filiorum meorum et ceterorum ismaelitarum in meo palatio maiorum, contrado et largior Sedi Sancte Crucis Sancteque Eulalie barchinonensis et predicto presuli omnes ecclesias et episcopatum regni mei, que sunt in insulis Balearibus et in urbe Denia, in perpetum abinceps maneant et ut iussu Ali et assensu filiorum meorum et ceterorum ismaelitarum in meo palatio maiorum, et predicte urbis Denie et insularum insularum et predicte urbis Denie iuri et diocesi sancte sedis barchinonensis, eodem videlicet modo quo genitor suus Mugehid precatu prenominati pontificis impertivit universa fecit sedi prelocute. Impertitionis autem predictarum ecclesiarum et episcopatus earumdiestoria digna cognitu ita se habet:
This treaty is the only one of its kind of which we are aware for the Iberian Peninsula. It goes well beyond the limits of a uniquely political treaty. In the agreement, which was signed by ‘Alī and other dignitaries from his court and by the bishop of Barcelona, Guislabert, and other Christian authorities, ‘Alī grants the Barcelonan see exclusive spiritual jurisdiction over the Christians “of the Balearic Islands and the city of Denia.” In exchange, the Christians of Denia were to mention ‘Alī’s name in their churches during the *khutba*, or weekly sermon. Unfortunately, the original document is not extant, but it does exist in two copies, one in the archives of the Barcelona cathedral, the other in the Vatican archives. Both copies were made in the thirteenth century in response to a dispute between the bishops of Barcelona and Tortosa over diocesan authority in the Balearic Islands.\textsuperscript{163} The treaty consists of a Latin text, followed by another in Arabic, with a Latin gloss added for the Vatican judges. The Arabic text was written in *shawwāl* 449, November/December 1058, about a month before the ratification in Barcelona on December 26\textsuperscript{th}, and probably in preparation for the cathedral’s consecration.

Although each section claims to mirror the other, the Latin and Arabic texts are not identical, and in fact treat completely different aspects of the agreement. They are, however, complementary enough to establish the treaty’s basic content. The Latin text explains that ‘Alī had given exclusive rights in ecclesiastical matters in his territories to the Barcelonan see, but makes no mention of ‘Alī’s stipulations. Similarly, the Arabic explains only that the Bishop Guislabert had agreed to have

\textsuperscript{163} The document in the Barcelonan archives was copied by the same scribe, Peter of Bages, who copied on the same occasion the consecratory act for the cathedral.
'Alī’s name proclaimed from the pulpits of the Christian churches and cathedrals of the taifa of Denia. These discrepancies and the dubious circumstances surrounding the copies have caused researchers to call the treaty a forgery, a thirteenth-century invention meant to sway papal judges. The differences between the two texts, though, are not grounds for dismissing the entire document. The Latin and Arabic texts in bilingual treaties were habitually dissimilar. The thirteenth-century bilingual treaty between the Valencian Muslim lord al-Azrāq and Prince Alfonso of Aragon presents two different texts, each with a distinct vision of the agreements surrounding the treaty. The differences present in the 1058 treaty are similar, with each side providing the details essential to its interests. In fact, according to John Wansbrough, discrepancies in bilingual treaties most likely simply reflect “a degree of informality in the drafting of […] international treaties.”

Although the Latin text was probably modified – or perhaps even completely rewritten – in order to better plead Barcelona’s case, it is not completely devoid of authenticity. Discrepancies between the Barcelona and Vatican copies are minimal and inconsequential. A search of the recently published cathedral archives reveals that all but one of the treaty’s witnesses also signed other documents. Excluding those who only also signed the cathedral’s consecratory act, which is perhaps suspect

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166 Negotiating Cultures, 59.
for having been copied on the same occasion, seven of the witnesses can be found elsewhere.¹⁶⁷

María Jesús Rubiera Mata was able to add to Juan Ribera’s list of verifiable witnesses from the Arabic text: among the witnesses were Muḥammad Mu‘iz al-Dawla and Mujāhid Ṣīrāj al-Dawla, two of ‘Alī’s sons, and Muḥammad b. Muslim and Abū al-Āşbagh b. Ārqam, a minister and a secretary from Denia’s court.¹⁶⁸ Two of Mujāhid’s clients, ‘Alām and Salama, also signed the treaty. A dishonest scribe may have borrowed the Latin signatures from other documents at his disposal in the cathedral archives, but it is hard to imagine a similar falsification for the Arabic signatories.

While the copies of the Latin text are acceptably similar, the Arabic copies present some variations that indicate slight alterations, or at least interpretations, at the time of their transcription. Some of the witnesses’ names differ between the two, though this seems to be the result of misreading or carelessness on the part of the scribes who, especially for the Vatican copy, do not seem to have mastered Arabic. The Barcelona version states that “Guislabert, the bishop of Barcelona” has agreed to the terms of the treaty, while the Vatican version reads more generally, “majlis of the bishop of Barcelona,” a direct translation of sedes. Moreover, while the Barcelona text simply states that the Arabic repeats “the above writing”, i.e. the Latin text, the Vatican version specifies that the preceding writing was “‘ajami”, or not in Arabic.

¹⁶⁷ J. Baucells i Reig, Diplomatari, docs. 364, 498, 595, 735, 873, 988, 1007, 1008, 1034, 1183, 1559, 1584, 1648, 1682.
¹⁶⁸ M. J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 104.
These differences are not contradictory, and in fact seem to confirm the existence of an original document from which they were copied, one whose details were either glossed over or modified at different points in the two texts. There thus seems to be a core element of authenticity for these versions of the treaty, and by comparing the Arabic and Latin versions, it is possible to reconstruct the essential elements of the original agreement.

Critics have, however, questioned the treaty’s veracity based on the supposed absence of Christians from fifth/eleventh-century Denia. Richard Bulliet’s study of Islamic conversion rates argued that the majority of the population in fifth/eleventh-century al-Andalus was Muslim, albeit with a substantial Christian minority. Bulliet’s study, however, glosses over regional differences, lumping centers such as Cordoba, with its own Episcopal see, with outlying regions devoid of documented church structures. This breakdown in regional ecclesiastical representation is in fact the basis for Mikél de Epalza’s theory concerning the complete absence of Mozarabs in the Sharq al-Andalus. Perhaps the most extreme in this debate, Epalza bases this rupture in the local Christian community on the absence of bishops, since Christians must be baptized by priests who in turn must be anointed by bishops. The Christian community thus would have disappeared within a few generations, well before the 1058 treaty. Epalza, however, as well as his colleague at the University of Alicante, Rubiera Mata, supports the document’s authenticity, labeling Barcelona’s newly

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acquired parishioners as “neo-Mozarabs”: slaves, soldiers, merchants, and travelers who were not descendants of the Christians conquered earlier.170

Epalza’s theory, however, seems to oversimplify the transmission of Hispano-Christian culture. Given the treaty itself, as well as other evidence, it seems more likely that the taifa of Denia supported a real and permanent, though perhaps minor, Christian community. The geographer al-‘Udhrī refers to the southern regions of the taifa as the land of the muwalladīn, or neo-Muslims, underlining the recent adoption of Islam in those areas. Furthermore, the Balearic Islands had only been brought under effective Muslim authority at the beginning of the tenth century, hardly enough time to have converted the entire population, especially given the fact that the islands were treated as a peripheral zone by the central Cordovan government.171 Pierre Guichard cited María del Carmen Barceló Torres’s study of religious minorities in post-Reconquista Valencia in order to argue for the “reasonable and prudent position” that indigenous Christian communities still existed at the end of the fifth/eleventh century, though perhaps without an ecclesiastical framework.172

Moreover, members of Denia’s Christian community under ‘Alī’s reign were educated and even literate in Latin. When riots forced dhimmī administrators from Granada in 1066, the Christian kātib Abū al-Rabī’ fled to Denia, where he stayed

172 P. Guichard, Musulmans de Valence, 1:176.
until he was recalled a few years later. The letter fragment from ‘Alī to Almodis was written in a Visigothic script that was clearly not the work of a northern-Christian hand. The Denian court, then, must have employed Mozarabic scribes. Denia was thus home to a Christian community, composed both of indigenous elements and immigrants from other regions of al-Andalus, and augmented by “neo-Mozarabs.” Thus, while there are obviously discrepancies in the extant documents, the treaty’s overall integrity is clear, and testifies to the presence of a Christian community in Denia, as well as to the relations that existed between Denia and Barcelona.

The Latin gloss explains that the document in question was a renewal of an earlier treaty signed with ‘Alī’s father, Mujāhid, who had confided spiritual authority over the Christians of the Balearic Islands to the Barcelonan see after a personal intervention by Guislabert. ‘Alī then enlarged the area concerned to also include the city of Denia. Thus, if we accept Guislabert’s intervention, Mujāhid would have signed an agreement with Barcelona sometime after 1034, when Guislabert became that city’s bishop, perhaps in exchange for Barcelonan aide during one of his many conflicts with Valencia. The treaty may also have been arranged in conjunction with the tributary payment discussed above. This renewal is not mentioned in the Arabic text, but it would have been in Barcelona’s best interests to backdate its influence in the region as much as possible, and to explain the process by which it had gained these rights. The Muslims, however, may not have deemed this information pertinent enough to include.

Conversely, while the Arabic stipulates that ‘Alī’s name was to be pronounced and honored from all the Christian pulpits in his kingdom, the Latin text is devoid of any reference to this. This would have been essential for ‘Alī, as the weekly prayer in the name of the ruler was a key method of legitimacy propaganda. The text specifically uses the word “khutba,” making ‘Alī’s intentions even more evident. Dénia’s Christian subjects would have been quite familiar with basic Muslim political and religious protocol, and would have understood the significance of this stipulation. Proclaiming ‘Alī’s name from the church pulpits would have made it clear to the Christians that, while their souls belonged to Barcelona, the rest belonged to Dénia. ‘Alī could thus be sure that he would not be sacrificing any of his sovereignty through this treaty, and that his temporal authority would be acknowledged by his Muslim and Christian subjects alike. On the other hand, it is not surprising that the Latin text would omit this. Explicitly acknowledging Denian political power over the Christians would have been counterproductive for Barcelona’s case before the Vatican judges. It would be easy to understand, even had it been included in the original, that such a precision might have been misplaced somewhere between Barcelona and Rome.

Although at first glance the treaty may seem based on an unequal relationship, with ‘Alī making concessions to the Catalan court, both sides profited. The two dirhams minted by ‘Alī in 448/1056-7 and discovered near Barcelona may indicate a tributary payment in conjunction with the treaty. However, an accord signed in November 1058, in which Ramón Guifre, count of Cerdania, promises aide to Ramón...
Berenguer in obtaining *parias*, specifically mentions Zaragoza, Lerida and Tortosa, but not Denia. Closer examination of both the Arabic and Latin versions of the treaty, in fact, shows that there were clearly benefits for both sides. One such gain for both parties was in the area of legitimacy. At the beginning of 1058, when the treaty was signed, Ramón Berenguer I had only recently quelled open rebellions within his lands. Since the treaty was in fact a renewal of a previous agreement signed by ‘Alī’s father, it is possible that Ramón Berenguer I may have solicited the renewal to cement claims to legitimacy through his actions to protect Christians under Muslim rule. It may even be possible that ‘Alī’s letter to Almodis was part of the negotiations concerning this matter. Moreover, the dedication of Santa Eulalia, the cathedral of Barcelona, included the terms of the treaty. This clearly linked Berenguer’s patronage of the cathedral with his success over the Muslim kingdoms to the south, thus again bolstering his spiritual and political legitimacy. Beyond the gains in souls, then, it is clear that Ramon Berenguer I stood to benefit from what was the product of personal relations with the rulers of Denia.

‘Alī’s gains are perhaps less clear at first. Nevertheless, while the Denian ruler indeed conceded immediate spiritual authority over his Christian subjects to the see of Barcelona, he did not undermine his own political power. In fact, by specifying that his name be proclaimed as part of the weekly service, ‘Alī was actually directly involving the Christian church in the legitimation of his rule. Indeed, in the same way that the mention of the ruler’s name in the weekly *khutba* prayer lent him the spiritual authority necessary to rule as a regional successor to the
fallen caliphate of Cordoba, the terms of the treaty would ostensibly legitimize his rule in the eyes of his Christian subjects.\textsuperscript{174}

Furthermore, by establishing an official structure around the Christian \textit{dhimmī} community, ‘Alī was comparing his rule to the erstwhile caliphate, which had maintained an ecclesiastical hierarchy for its Christian subjects. In fact, ‘Alī’s desire to maintain the \textit{dhimmī} communities under his rule is underlined by an equally important Jewish community. The \textit{Sefer ha-Qabbalah} mentions a respected Jewish rabbi from Denia, whose replacement, sent from Barcelona, himself became an authority among Andalusī rabbis.\textsuperscript{175} Indeed, like the caliphs of Cordoba, ‘Alī gained the notoriety that came with a \textit{dhimmī} community under his own rule. In addition, providing that community with a functioning structure would have made the collection of the \textit{jizya} tax on non-Muslims more efficient and perhaps more lucrative, no small factor for a ruler often accused by his contemporaries of overly concerning himself with monetary matters.

Lastly, the two cities were also ensuring smoother commercial relations between their ports. Denia did have an indigenous Christian community, but its port must also have welcomed a good number of merchants, mercenaries and other non-Muslims. Ibn Sīda wrote that in Denia, he was surrounded by people who did not speak Arabic.\textsuperscript{176} This is often assumed to mean Ṣaqāliba and slaves, but is it not

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{175} Ibn Daud, \textit{Sefer ha-qabbalah}, 83.
\end{flushleft}
possible that he also meant foreign merchants who came to do business with Denia’s Muslims? It was in the interests of both sides of this treaty to be sure that there was an official structure to watch over these foreigners. Barcelona could thus be sure of the spiritual well-being of its subjects during their time in this Muslim taifa, and knew that the treaty offered them recognition in the eyes of the Muslim court. An ecclesiastical structure could also have provided a spiritual and social service, easing communications among resident and non-resident Christian merchants and with the state. Mediterranean maritime commerce profited from a certain level of tolerance during the fifth/eleventh century, especially among the ports of the Sharq al-Andalus. The recognition offered by this treaty, however, would help ensure that merchants perceived Denia as particularly welcoming, and this could only help to promote commercial activities and fiscal abundance.

The treaty takes on more meaning when placed in the contemporary Iberian context. Barcelona may have negotiated the agreement as part of its campaign against Aḥmad b. Sulaymān b. Hūd al-Muqtadir of Zaragoza. In September 1058, Ramón Berenguer I and the countess Almodis cemented an alliance with Ermengol III of Urgel to strike against Alhagid, ducem Cesaraugusta. In addition, the Sharq al-Andalus was becoming a zone of conflict for Zaragoza and Barcelona. Zaragoza had begun to express its direct interest in Tortosa, its principal maritime access point. Al-Muqtadir wrote to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr in Valencia to protest the assassination of Tortosa’s ruler, Muqāṭil, killed under his orders by ‘abīd from

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177 J. M. Salrach, G. Feliu, Els pergamins, no. 528.
Shortly thereafter, the death of Muqātil’s successor, Ya‘lā al-‘Āmirī, in 453/1061-2, gave Zaragoza the chance to take control of Tortosa. Philip Sénac has advanced that the famous attack on Barbastro in 456/1064 was in fact motivated by Zaragoza’s move towards the coast, a move that would have interfered in the flow of gold and parias from Tortosa’s port to Barcelona’s coffers. Ibn ‘Idhārī does in fact note that al-Muqtadir faced resistance from Rūm soldiers during his takeover of Tortosa, indicating a strong Catalan presence, negotiated perhaps in return for parias. The count of Barcelona seems then to have been consolidating his alliances before embarking on an open war with Zaragoza. Denia, on the other hand, was also maneuvering against Zaragoza, whose growing power and desire for a maritime outlet posed a direct threat to its sovereignty. Catalan cooperation with Denia’s dynasty continued even after the taifa’s fall, after Zaragoza had followed through with its push towards the sea, since ‘Alī’s son, Mujāhid Sirāj al-Dawla, enrolled Catalan help in his bid to retake his family’s territory.

It is clear that the 1058 treaty was part of a larger trend. Despite their religious differences, and despite the gains obtained from preying on their infidel neighbors – through piracy in the case of Denia, and through parias in the case of

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178 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:172.
182 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, al-mughrib, 3:228; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a‘māl al-a‘lām, 255; Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:355. Mujāhid Sirāj al-Dawla minted coins from Segura, which, in addition to communicating his dynastic claims, may also have served to pay Catalan mercenaries: A. Canto García, T. b. H. Ibrāhīm, “Suplemento,” no. 91.
Barcelona – the ruling houses of each city maintained a relationship that was mutually profitable. Denia, indeed, was at times a tributary state. The rulers of Denia paid \textit{parias} to Barcelona, sometimes voluntarily in exchange for military aid, and perhaps against their will at other times as a result of Catalan military pressure. Catalonia regularly suffered from maritime attacks, and Denia’s corsairs and pirates probably did not turn a blind eye to Barcelonan ships passing in their waters. This was not, however, a result of the religious differences that separated them. The Christian drive south was not uniquely motivated by religion, but was more often than not a case of weak borders ceding to expansionist states. The fifth/eleventh century saw as many conflicts involving Christian-Muslim coalitions as it did any kind of dichotomous religious confrontation. The extortion money paid by the taifas to their Christian neighbors in the form of \textit{parias}, while coerced, also involved the protection of those neighbors against both Christian and Muslim states. A prime motivation behind the alliance between Denia and Barcelona was their common apprehension of expansionist Zaragoza, a political situation that crossed religious lines.

It would be impossible to quantify Denia’s commercial traffic with Christian ports. Extrapolating from the few Pisan \textit{bacini} and a couple of coins found near Barcelona is at best tenuous. Nevertheless, this commerce, as well as piracy, did play a role in the taif’a’s development and the overall growth of the Andalusí coast. Although the process had begun by the end of the third/ninth century, it reached its peak under the taifas. We should also note, however, that the fifth/eleventh century saw a change in
the balance of power within the Western Mediterranean. Mujāhid’s famous exploits and determined naval policies could not match the growing power of the Christian fleets, who themselves practiced piracy on a grand scale against Muslim ships and coasts. Muslim shipping did not cease because of this, but there was a marked decrease in the West.\footnote{S.D. Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 1:56; O.R. Constable, *At the Edge of the West*, 90-1; N.A. Stillman, “The Eleventh Century Merchant House of Ibn ‘Awkal (a Geniza study),” *JESHO*, 16.1 (1973): 82. Al-Wansharīšī does note a Qayrawān jurist who declares the sea lanes towards the East as almost constantly clear: al-Wansharīšī, *Mi’yār*, 1:436.} Andalusī ships sailed farther to continue their commerce with Muslim merchants, but this was not enough to account for the economic expansion observable along the *Sharq al-Andalus* coast. In fact, Muslim markets would simply not have been enough to fuel the region’s growth. Coastal shipping and an upsurge in inland networks could have compensated in part for the declining state of markets in the Western Muslim Mediterranean, but they would not have sufficed for the large Andalusī ports. The economic resources that fed this growth, urbanization and construction of new ports, walls and cities also came from commerce with the Christian West. Historians more commonly write about the outflow of Muslim gold towards the North through *parias* during this period, but part of that gold came back through commercial exchange. The surplus that fed Robert Lopez’s “commercial revolution” also benefited Muslim ports. The expansion of Christian participation in the Mediterranean may have meant a decline in Muslim power, but it also helped prime the local markets and economies of Denia and the coastal taifas.
CHAPTER VI

DENIA AND THE MUSLIM MEDITERRANEAN

The principal maritime routes of the fifth/eleventh century ran between the Muslim ports linking al-Andalus, the Maghreb, Ifrīqiya, and Sicily and the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, despite Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s efforts to build relations with the expanding Christian West, commerce and maritime communication with the Muslim shores in particular shaped Denia’s Mediterranean diplomacy.

Relations with the Muslim World were necessarily different from those outside dār al-Islām. Notably missing were hegemonic ambitions or interreligious conflicts. Denia’s pirates may have brought their campaigns against the Shiite Fatimids’ ships and shores, but sectarian division did not determine the nature of relations to the same extent as the rift between Muslims and unbelievers. In addition, while Mujāhid did not hesitate to push his taifa’s borders at the expense of his Andalusī neighbors, Denia did not have the naval resources necessary to threaten the North African dynasties. Denia thus sought more to facilitate commercial exchange with the Muslim Mediterranean. Beyond commercial motivations, Denia’s rulers likewise favored the circulation of ‘ulamā’ and other scholars through their court and port.

Unfortunately, and perhaps paradoxically, historical sources provide little direct information concerning these relations in comparison with the Latin West.

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This is partly due to differences between Islamic and Latin legal traditions, and so the absence of archival documents such as those available for Pisa and Barcelona. Denia’s participation in the Mediterranean commercial networks consisted mainly of casual contacts and relationships that left almost no traces. Nevertheless, besides narrative sources, Arabic historiography provides interesting variegated sources for this period. Biographical dictionaries, *tabaqāt*, point to commercial and intellectual exchange, sketching out circulatory patterns. Letters and documents from the Cairo Geniza offer an essential complement to the *tabaqāt*, especially in understanding the human networks that framed Mediterranean exchange. As a whole, these sources indicate a coherent ensemble of commercial, intellectual and diplomatic relations, a series of networks through which Denia’s rulers and their subjects integrated the Mediterranean.

Geographers placed Denia at six days across from Algiers, while Majorca was three days from Bija. Barcelona, on the other hand, was only a day’s sail from the taifa of Denia. Nevertheless, Denia’s maritime lanes were more oriented towards the opposite Mediterranean shores. Ships left its port for the Balearics, following then routes towards the African coast, passing Maghribi and Ifrīqiyan ports and continuing on to Egypt. Denia was thus regularly linked with the major ports and cities of the Muslim Mediterranean. Scholarly, religious and political figures followed merchandise along the same routes, and Denia became a major transit point between al-Andalus and the Mediterranean.

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1 Al-Bakrī, 82/166; al-Ḥīmyārī, 188/228.
Denia’s port was an important nodal point in a dynamic series of networks that channeled goods and people in activities as diverse as commerce, piracy and scholarly and religious exchange, and often as not some combination of those three. The rulers of Denia contributed to this movement, commanding maritime jihād, building their court into a center for Koranic studies and probably policing waters to ensure safe passage for ships, including their own, transporting valuable goods to and from their port. More directly, different groups participated in this movement, from the sailors and other members of the local maritime populations to merchants and ‘ulamā’ drawn from perhaps further afield.

_Bahrīyūn_

When Mujāhid fled before the Pisans and Genoese in Sardinia, his fleet shipwrecked in an ill-chosen cove because he had disregarded the advice of Abū Kharrūb, his raʾīs al-Bahrīyūn. 

2 Behind this title, literally “head of the sea people,” lies the maritime community that supported Mujāhid for the Sardinia invasion and his subsequent guerre de course. Mujāhid’s role under the Umayyad regime may have involved naval duties, and al-Maqqarī writes that he was an experienced sailor. 

3 In addition, during the interim between the fall of the caliphate and his arrival in Denia, Mujāhid would have collected the naval resources necessary to establish his state and launch

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2 Al-Ḥumaydī, 565, n. 829.  
his plans. Nevertheless, Mujāhid augmented his fleet with semi-independent elements, as had the Umayyad caliphs and ‘Āmirid rulers, using the local population to command and provide crews for his ships.

Maritime communities, referred to as the Bahriyyūn, had occupied the Sharq al-Andalus coasts since the Muslim conquest, operating most often outside Cordova’s control. The term refers to a heterogeneous group that evolved over time, whose main characteristic was their relationship with the sea. Pierre Guichard has shown that during the eighth and ninth centuries, Berber sailors practiced piracy from this zone, while other sources indicate that native Christian or Muwallad populations also comprised the group. Maritime exiles from Tortosa had established the colony at Pechina, which would grow into the principal Andalusī port largely through the impulsion of the sailors themselves and their relations with the facing Maghribī shores. ‘Abd al-Rahmān III chose to establish the caliphal dār al-ṣinā’a in Almería partly because of this maritime community, and its elite would become the heads of the Umayyad fleet. Umayyad policy over the course of the third/tenth century canalized the independent piracy of the Bahriyyūn, without eliminating the communities that practiced it. The caliphal arsenal at Tortosa is another example of a state structure assimilating pre-existing elements and exploiting local human maritime resources. Mujāhid’s decision to establish his taifa in Denia followed similar logic.

Denia’s port most likely harbored an at least semi-permanent sailing

4 Supra, ch. 1: Al-Ḥimyarī (1975), 79-80.
population before the taifa that Mujâhid exploited to equip and direct his expeditionary fleet for the Balearics and Sardinia. The taifa’s reliance on the local community would have operated on two levels, recruiting crews in the same fashion as jundī for the caliphal army, while enrolling the participation of social and economic elites to augment and lead the fleet. These semi-independent elements must have accounted for a large part, if not the majority, of the taifa’s naval force, especially for the guerre de course launched out of its ports. Independent piracy on the part of the Bahriyyūn would have blended almost seamlessly with official state activities, occupying an ambiguous position between official jihād and maritime brigandage, the difference seemingly being payment of the khums to state coffers. In fact, this would have been analogous to the situation inland, where quwwād enjoyed localized power in exchange for regular fiscal contributions, while the court could depend on an administrative and fiscal network for its regional needs outside the

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6 While maritime raids may not initially seem an effort to expand or defend Islam, Muslim jurists considered them as such and thus bound by the rules regulating jihād. M. Talbi, L’émirat Aghlabide, 534-5. Talbi cites Muḥammad b. Saḥnūn stating that ships known to conduct business with Muslims can only be taken in their own territorial waters, while the capture of other Rūm ships is licit at any time. In an earlier article, Talbi presents a fatwa determining how to properly divide up booty among members of a pirate company; “Intérêt des œuvres juridiques traitant de la guerre pour l’historien des armées médiévales ifrikiennes (d’après le Kitāb al-Nawādir d’Ibn Abî Zayd),” Cahiers de Tunisie, 15-3 (1956): 289-93. Ibn Abî Zayd includes these discussions of maritime raids by independent companies, i.e. piracy, in his chapter on jihād, in which no differentiation is made between piracy and other forms of war against non-Muslims. In the second discussion by Ibn Saḥnūn cited by M. Talbi, the passage refers to أربع مراكب خرجت للغزو, or “four ships departing to carry out raids,” hardly a military expedition, but still considered jihād: Kitāb al-Nawādir wa-l-Ziyāda, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Hilw (Beirut, 1999), 3:172-3. Although he notes that engaging the enemy without legitimate authority or cause is illicit, Ibn Qudāma recognizes that booty from unauthorized pillaging can be kept once the khums is paid: H. Laoust, Le précis de droit d’Ibn Qudāma (Beirut, 1950), 279. We should note that H.S. Khalilieh cites legal decisions that disapproved of attacking Christian vessels during times of political tranquility, lest they lead to “frivolous military campaigns, the loss of life, and the interruption of overseas trade.” H.S. Khalilieh, Islamic Maritime Law, 135.
The Banū Maymūn, in fact, transitioned from one group to the other. Members appear as regional officials in the latter fifth/eleventh century, while the family later served the Majorcan taifa before assuming leadership roles in the Almoravid and Almohad navies. Moreover, Muḥammad b. Maymūn employed his resources during the Pisan attack against Majorca. See: P. Guichard, “Recherche onomastique à propos des Banū Maymūn de Denia,” Cahiers d’onomastique arabe, 1985-1987, ed. J. Sublet (Paris, 1989), 9-22; Liber maiolichinus, 115.

Supra, ch. 1; R. Azuar Ruiz, “De ribāṭ a rábita,” 226.

Al-Bakrī, 81-2.

Bahriyyūn participation in more far-reaching trade is likewise a legitimate speculation. While no direct evidence exists for the fifth/eleventh century, the continuity of ties between the Andalusī Bahriyyūn community on Crete, part of the group expelled from Alexandria and Cordova under al-Ḥakam I, and fourth/tenth-century Andalusī scholars points to a wider maritime context than the Alboran Sea; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 2:145 and 3:488; Ibn al-Faraḍī, Tarikh ‘ulamā’ al-Andalus (Cairo, 1966), ns. 1415, 1423, 1588.
an at least indirect participant in the Mediterranean economy. The boat of [Ibn] Mujāhid was loaded with flax in Alexandria towards the middle of the century, and appeared again in the Egyptian port on at least two occasions, though without mention of its cargo.\(^{11}\) ‘Alī’s role though is not clear, and he was certainly not personally trading beyond the taifa’s territory.

Christian merchants in Denia are not easily traced. It is nearly impossible to document the number of Christian merchants in Denia, but there are indications of commercial exchange with the Latin world, most likely through Christian hands. Muslim jurists validated the idea of safe passage (amān) granted to Christian merchants in Islamic lands, while condemning Muslims who traded in the dār al-ḥarb.\(^{12}\) The treaty signed between ‘Alī b. Mujāhid and Guislabert, bishop of Barcelona, in 1058, clearly evokes a Christian community in the taifa.\(^{13}\) Beyond the political implications, this treaty would have facilitated the circulation of merchants between the two states. Italian merchants likewise visited the taifa’s markets, since some of the ceramic ware plates used to decorate Pisan church façades came from Majorca and perhaps Denia.\(^{14}\) Italian and Catalan merchants would have contributed not only to market activity and the local economy, but also to state coffers, since non-

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\(^{12}\) H.S. Khalilieh, *Islamic Maritime Law*, 125-6. In addition to risking exposure to Christian laws and idolatry, jurists worried that Muslim merchants could enrich Christians who would then use the money to fight Islam.


\(^{14}\) See *infra*, ch. 4.
Muslim foreigners often paid toll and customs rates much higher than Muslims or *Dhimmi*.  

The Geniza documents that mention ‘Alī’s boat do however point to active merchants that tied Denia into the greater Mediterranean economic system. Jewish merchants left much clearer traces of their activities in Denia and their role as liaisons between the taifa and the rest of the Mediterranean world. When Ramon Berenguer wanted to kidnap his future wife Almodis from her husband in Narbonne, the emir of Tortosa sent Jewish merchants to help in the abduction. This is probably because while Muslims did not habitually frequent Christian ports, Jewish merchants would have been more likely to know the route and destination from experience, not to mention the fact that their status made it easier for them to circulate in Christian lands. While we cannot know if these merchants were from Tortosa, Denia did house a large Jewish community with active links across the Mediterranean. The *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, a sixth/twelfth-century Iberian Jewish source mentions two rabbis from fifth/eleventh-century Denia: the first, Isaac b. Moses, left Denia to become *gaon* for a community in the East, while his replacement, Isaac b. Reuben al-Bargeloni, originally from Barcelona, became one of the Peninsula’s most important rabbis. This second Isaac married into the family of an Ibn Laktush, who was

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16 Al-Bakrī (2003), 397; al-Ḥimyarī, 42-3/54.
18 Abraham b. Daud, *Sefer ha-qabbalah*, 82-3. Goitein (*Mediterranean Society*, 126) mentions another scholar from Denia, possibly the same, named Ibn Sukkārī, who became *gaon* for the Baghdadi community around 1070.
“among the leaders of Denia,” and who seems to have been active in trade with Alexandria since a Geniza letter mentions an Ibn Laktuji arriving in a boat from Denia. The author’s intended meaning for “leaders of Denia” is not clear, and while it may refer only to the Jewish community, these figures could have played an important role in the city or taifa itself. Heads of Jewish communities elsewhere across the Mediterranean often occupied influential positions, and for al-Andalus there is the example of Samuel b. Naghrila ha-Nagid, vizier of Granada under Bādīs b. Ḥabbūs. Mujāhid’s court included a Jewish doctor, Išḥaq b. Qustar, who was knowledgeable in medicine, logic, and philosophy.

The documents of the Cairo Geniza provide the most substantial evidence concerning Denia’s Jewish merchant community. The very nature of this corpus perhaps exaggerates the Jewish merchants’ presence, but it does provide an essential window into the taifa’s relations with other Mediterranean ports. Jewish merchants frequented Denia and communicated with the local community, members of which also participated in international commerce. Towards 1025, Joseph b. Samuel al-Dānī was an active merchant, with residences in Palermo and Egypt, and business contacts in Sicily, Ifrīqiya, Tripoli, and Damsīs (a village along the Nile specialized in the production of flax). In 475/1083, an Išḥaq b. Abraham swore an oath before the

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19 Geniza TS 10J 16, f. 17
22 S.D. Goitein, Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders, 316-9, doc. 71. Joseph may have emigrated to the central Mediterranean, or his family may have, but his name certainly points to Denia origins.
town’s rabbinical court concerning a shipment of cinnabar sent to al-Mahdiyya.\textsuperscript{23} In another document from the same period, a letter of attorney was signed before Denia’s rabbinical court before being sent on to al-Mahdiya and Alexandria.\textsuperscript{24} Two other documents indicate regular traffic for Jewish merchants between Denia and other Mediterranean ports. Around 1065, a merchant in Alexandria informed his partner in al-Mahdiya of the apparently unusual arrival of Ibn Mujāhid’s boat with no Jewish merchants aboard.\textsuperscript{25} In another letter, also from Alexandria, the author writes that a ship had arrived from Denia carrying “a number of our friends,” of whom four are specifically named, and one of whom was “the son of Ibn Laktuji,” perhaps the same as mentioned above.\textsuperscript{26} Among these men was Mukhtar al-Ḥalabi, the ghulām of Nahray b. Nissim, one of the most important Jewish merchants of Fustat.\textsuperscript{27} The ship had not stopped over in al-Mahdiyya, and we can assume that Nahray had direct relations with Denia. These letters demonstrate not only Denia’s importance as a commercial port, but also the important role played by Jewish merchants, certainly with the Christian world, and especially with other ports around the Muslim Mediterranean.

Muslim merchants, though, must have made up the majority of those practicing trade between al-Andalus and the Muslim Mediterranean. Sources, nevertheless, are almost non-existent on the activities of this section of the

\footnote{23} E. Ashtor, “Documentos españoles de la Genizah,” \textit{Sefarad}, 24 (1964): 76-80; Geniza TS 12.570 and TS 13J 21, f. 7.\footnote{24} S.D. Goitein, \textit{Mediterranean Society}, 1:69, 407, n. 45; Geniza TS 13J 7, f. 11. The shipment was carried aboard the \textit{markab al-ḥājib}.
\footnote{25} S.D. Goitein, \textit{Mediterranean Society}, 1:213; Geniza TS 8J 20, f. 2.
\footnote{26} S.D. Goitein, \textit{Mediterranean Society}, 1:318; Geniza TS 10J 16, f. 17.
population. Legal decisions sometimes refer to problems arising from international trade, akin to those mentioned in the Geniza documents above, but none of these make specific reference to Denia, and they are at any rate few and far between.\textsuperscript{28} Merchants, however, were rarely just that, and can be perceived through other activities. Bruna Soravia describes the circuit of taifa courts as a kind of scholarly market, where ‘ulamā’ sold their services to the highest bidder.\textsuperscript{29} The economic interests of the ‘ulamā’ were not limited to the taifa courts, and O.R. Constable has pointed out that many scholars also worked as merchants.\textsuperscript{30} In fact, many ‘ulamā’ seem to have arrived in al-Andalus following trade more than intellectual opportunities. Ibn Bashkūwāl alone cites twenty-six scholars who entered al-Andalus tājirān, or trading.\textsuperscript{31}

Denia’s place as one of the prime centers of ‘ulamā’ activity comes partly from Mujāhid’s active support of qirā’a and Koranic studies, but many scholars also transited through the taifa’s port on ḥajj and their way to the centers of religious scholarship in the East. Denia was second only to Almería in both the number of ‘ulamā’ specifically mentioned as having passed through the town and the number of ‘ulamā’ having embarked from its port.\textsuperscript{32} When combined with the figures for

\textsuperscript{28} O.R. Constable cites Ibn Sahl as an example; \textit{Trade and Traders}, 83.
\textsuperscript{29} B. Soravia, “Les ‘ulamā’ andalouš au V\textsuperscript{e} siècle de l'Hégire. Antagonistes ou courtisans des mulūk al-tawā’if,” in \textit{Saber religioso y poder político en el Islam} (Madrid, 1994), 296 and passim.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibn Bashkūwāl (1989), ns. 250, 659, 808, 1317, 1322, 1324, 1348, 1377, 1402, 1412, 1418, 1457; Ibn Bashkūwāl (1966), ns. 269, 569, 656, 674, 781, 924, 948, 958, 960, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1347, 1402. None of these entered Denia directly, and in fact, many if not most entered through Seville, but this seems more the result of Ibn Bashkūwāl’s sources than the sign of a highly commercial current among Seville’s ‘ulamā’.
\textsuperscript{32} See appendix.
Mayūrqa, the taifa’s place as a point of departure becomes even clearer. Scholars left from Denia or Mayūrqa for Bijāya and al-Mahdiya, and continued on to traditional centers of study in the Near and Middle East. Denia’s port likewise served as an entry point for scholars either returning or emigrating from the East. ‘Ulamā’ did not generate this traffic, and would have more likely followed established routes, taking advantage of relevant intellectual centers along the way. Their movements then indicate greater patterns of trade between Denia and the rest of the Muslim Mediterranean.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF MOVEMENT AND EXCHANGE

It may seem artificial to approach Denia’s relations from a geographic point of view, dividing exchange into regional sectors, as if borders influenced movement. Nevertheless, regional networks were the dominant mechanism for exchange, and individual actors worked within and through them. Likewise, the rulers of Denia tailored their diplomacy to the individual polities with whom they shared economic, religious and political ties. Dividing the Muslim Mediterranean between the Ḥammādid, Zirid and Fatimid spheres thus follows somewhat artificial political constructs, but does allow a better understanding of how actors from Denia interacted with other regional networks.

33 The two figures cannot be combined directly though, since individuals could and did pass through both ports on their way East.
35 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:65; Ibn Bashkūwāl, ns. 122; 809, 882;
Geographic proximity and established maritime circuits meant that modern-day Algeria attracted much of Denia’s economic and political attention. As noted above, al-Bakrī linked Santa Pola with Ténès, Alicante with Marsā Úqūr, Moraira with Cherchel, the Montgó mountain near Denia with al-Baṭāl, and Denia itself with the port of Janābiya, just west of Algiers. Idrīsī later wrote that Denia was six days’ sail from Janābiya and only three from Ténès. This portion of the Central Maghreb came under the control of the Banū Ḥammād in 408/1017, whose capital, the Qal’a Ḥammād, carried their name. The Ḥammādids do not seem to have had an active vocation for the sea and exploiting maritime activities, and it is noteworthy that many of the Maghribi ports were established by Andalusī elements. Diplomatic relations with Denia were thus more passive and occasional, in response to specific situations without necessarily building close ties.

Evidence for direct contact between the Ḥammādī rulers and Mujāhid and ‘Alī is rare, but does indicate at least intermittent exchange. First contacts between the two ruling houses date from the earliest years of both regimes. After the failed invasion of Sardinia, Mujāhid was able to ransom the female members of his household captured by the Christians, but ‘Alī was kept as a prize for the emperor Henry II, who entrusted Ildeperto Albizone with guarding the young ‘Āmirid. ‘Alī thus grew up among the Christians, to be liberated sixteen years later. According to

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36 Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, 4:582; al-Ḥimyarī, 188/228.
37 Al-Bakrī, 61, 65, 70.
Ibn Bassām, a member of the Banū Ḥammād helped negotiate ‘Alī’s liberation.38 The Maghribi ports under Ḥammādids control were a neutral intermediate zone between al-Andalus and the Italian ports, explaining the role played by the Banū Ḥammād in ‘Alī’s liberation. Denia and Pisa would create more direct ties over the course of the century, but North African markets would have been the initial starting point for non-violent relations between the two powers. Ports such as Bijāya and Būna did host pirates that attacked Christian coasts, but they also attracted Italian merchants seeking commercial contact with the Muslim world. Mujāhid could thus approach the Italian merchant house of Ildeperto Albizone through their mutual commercial relations.

Contact continued between Denia and the Central Maghreb over the course of the century, as shown through economic and intellectual exchange. Bijāya did not become a major port until the end of the fifth/eleventh century, when the Ḥammādids moved towards the coast after the economic and political catastrophes often associated with the Ḥilālī invasions.39 Nevertheless, evidence does point to economic exchange before that time. Archeological works on the Maghreb have not provided clear indications of trade with Denia, but fifth/eleventh-century Ḥammādids ceramics unearthed in both Denia and Maḍīnat Mayūrqa illustrate at least one end of the routes described by al-Bakrī and Idrīsī.40 In addition, ships transporting merchandise also

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38 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:183.
39 The actual effects of these invasions are debatable, but probably did contribute to the move away from the already fragile and even devastated interior: H.R. Idris, La Berbérie, 1:269.
carried passengers. When Mujāhid wanted to banish his unruly caliph, al-Mu’ayṭī, he placed him in a ship travelling to Bijāya and “the land of the Kutāma,” or the Central Maghreb.41 Biographical dictionaries mention at least two ‘ulamā’ having lived or studied in Denia and Madīnat Mayūrqa who then finished out their days “in the land of the Banū Ḥammād,” or more specifically, at the Qal’a Ḥammād.42 Neither the Qal’a nor Bijāya were known as religious or intellectual centers at this time, which may explain why more scholarly exchange does not appear between the two regions.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī probably maintained some form of contact with the Banū Ḥammād after ‘Alī’s liberation, but there is no extent trace of exchange beyond commercial activities. Nevertheless, Ibn Khaldūn’s description of the events following Denia’s fall may indicate continued relations. Ibn ‘Idhārī writes that after deposing ‘Alī, Ibn Hūd al-Muqtadir settled him on iqtā’ lands near Zaragoza where he lived until his death in 474/1081-2.43 Ibn Khaldūn, on the other hand, claims that ‘Alī fled from Zaragoza and sought refuge from Yaḥyā b. Ḥammūd in Bijāya.44 We should note, however, that Ibn Khaldūn is the only historian to make this claim, and that Yaḥyā b. Ḥammūd did not take power in Bijāya until 515/1121, long after ‘Alī’s death. Nevertheless, this kind of contact did exist between taifa rulers and the Ḥammādids. During the Almoravid invasion of the Peninsula, the son of Abū Yaḥyā b. Sumādīh, the ruler of Almería wrote to al-Manṣūr al-Nāṣir b. Ḥammād and

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42 Ibn Bashkuwāl (1989), ns. 122, 1350.
43 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:228.
44 Ibn Khaldūn, Kitāb al-‘ibār, 4:355.
received permission to settle in Ténès. Ibn Khaldūn seems then have confused these ruling sons, but his interpretation may have seemed plausible because of other relations between the ruling families. The Ḥammādīd court attracted other refugees fleeing the Almoravids, such as the poet Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā al-Dānī. We can probably then conclude that a mutual goodwill existed between the two coasts, motivated by commercial exchange.

**Ifrīqiya**

While relations with the central Maghreb were important for Denia, those with Ifrīqiya, and notably al-Mahdiya, were essential. Ifrīqiya was the hub of activity for the central Mediterranean, acting as a transitional emporium between Egyptian markets in the East, and al-Andalus and the Maghreb in the West. Goitein called ties between Egypt, Ifrīqiya and al-Andalus the “golden rule” of Mediterranean shipping, and sources speak to maritime connections between Ifrīqiya or Sicily and al-Andalus as early as the third/ninth century, when ships travelled “over the sea” in about six days. The growing importance of Denia’s port brought it into direct contact with Ifrīqiya beginning in the fifth/eleventh century. An *ataifor* produced in Qayrawān and discovered in Denia’s *Forti* district attests to relations that become

even more evident in light of similar ceramics unearthed near Jávea, Villajoyosa, Sax and elsewhere in Denia’s hinterland. In fact, Azuar Ruiz notes that Denia’s port and territory were the principal transit points for Ifrīqiyan wares and have produced the majority of archeological pieces from that region, a clear indication of direct ties.

The Cairo Geniza documents provide little additional information concerning these relations, but, as Constable notes, the nature of Mediterranean exchange limited documentary traces of this traffic. Ifrīqiya was the transition point between the eastern and western Mediterranean basins, and Andalusī merchants entrusted their commercial goods to Ifrīqiyan colleagues who continued to eastern markets. The western partners in this equation thus had no place in the Egyptian documents. This comes through in the fact that Denia’s ships are almost systematically mentioned in connection with the merchant house of Nahray b. Nissim, one of the most important Mediterranean commercial organizations with agents in Ifrīqiya, Alexandria and Fustat. Denia’s relations with Ifrīqiya do however come to light, and in fact Denia is the only Andalusī port specifically connected with Ifrīqiya in the Geniza documents: a load of cinnabar left Denia for al-Mahdiya in 1083, while a letter of attorney was signed first in Denia, then in al-Mahdiya before continuing on to Alexandria.

Maritime lanes allowed for regular traffic between Denia and the central

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50 R. Azuar Ruiz, “Al-Andalus y el comercio mediterráneo,” 62.

51 O.R. Constable, At the Edge of the West, 89-90; S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:211-214.

Mediterranean, generating considerable revenue for merchants and probably rulers.

We should note in particular the remarkable quantity of Sicilian and Ifrīqiyan Fatimid coins that circulated throughout the Peninsula, and especially in the *Sharq al-Andalus*, despite local monetary production and religious and political conflicts.\(^{53}\) Denia’s region in fact has produced eleven Fatimid coin hoards, more than any other taifa. The percentage of Fatimid coins in these hoards is, moreover, striking, ranging from 13, 14 or 15% to 48 and even 80% for a hoard in Elche. These figures are much higher than those for hoards elsewhere, which tend to stay under 10%.\(^{54}\) Monetary circulation flowed both ways, and though we have found no taifa coins in North African collections, Andalusī dirhams were common tender in Qayrawān, to the point that the price of silver there was based on them.\(^{55}\)

Denia was not the principal Andalusī port for ships coming from al-Mahdiya – Almería remained the “port of al-Andalus” throughout the fifth/eleventh century – but no other taifa presents as much evidence for economic exchange with central Mediterranean ports.

The ‘ulamā’ community likewise linked Denia and Qayrawān. Despite its Shiite leaders, Qayrawān remained a major center for religious studies for Andalusī scholars. Andalusī ‘ulamā’ on pilgrimage or simply looking to supplement their studies followed the same easterly route that inevitably took them past Ifrīqiya,


\(^{54}\) C. Doménech Belda, *Dinares, dirhames y feluses*, 191-2; C. Doménech Belda, “La moneda fatimí,” 341.

increasing their chances for stopping in Qayrawān. Denia was not the principal port for departures from al-Andalus, since about 50% of those went through Almería, as opposed to 17% for Denia. Nevertheless, about a quarter of the ‘ulamā’ having stayed in Denia travelled to the Orient. This traffic and transit through Denia functioned in both directions, and scholars from Ifrīqiya often (re)entered al-Andalus through Denia. For example, Abū al-Faḍl, the caliphal ambassador who brought letters of ‘Abbasid investiture to al-Mu’izz b. Bāḍīs in Qayrawān, continued on to al-Andalus, entering through Denia’s port, though he did not stay there. Denia’s scholars also communicated with their Ifrīqiyan colleagues, without necessarily travelling there, since Abū al-‘Abbās b. Rashīq, the jurist and governor of the Balearics, exchanged letters with ‘ulamā’ in Qayrawān.

Denia’s rulers maintained diplomatic relations in line with this traffic and the importance of the Ifrīqiyan Zīrid state in Mediterranean networks. Mujāhid and ‘Alī were not the only rulers to correspond with the Zīrids in Qayrawān, since ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn al-Zīrī also mentions epistolary exchange with his cousin. We should note however, that relations between Denia and Qayrawān existed despite the supposed rift between Ṣaqqāliba and Berbers, and especially despite the Sunni-Shia religious divide that could have separated them. Al-Mu’izz b. Bāḍīs did renounce Fatimid sovereignty, and so Fatimid Ismā’īlim, for a time in the middle of the

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56 See annex.
57 Over half of those mentioned in context with Mayūrqa travelled east, a clear sign of Mayūrqa’s place in the maritime networks.
58 Having learned of the ambassador’s arrival, ‘Alī b. Mujāhid hastened to have meat and four chickens sent to welcome the traveler; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:65.
century, but the Ḥilālī invasions and mid-century troubles forced him to return to his former allegiances. Even if exchange was possible despite this rift, as it was with the Christians, differences could pose problems for diplomatic and political relations. Ibn Bassām preserves two pieces of correspondence between ‘Alī b. Mujāhid and al-Mu‘izz b. Bādīs, but beyond their simple existence, the letters do not offer specific indications on the nature of relations between the two capitals. Nevertheless, ‘Alī and al-Mu‘izz knew each other personally, since the future ruler of Denia had spent time in the Ifrīqiyan court.

Although the Banū Ḥammād had aided in ‘Alī’s release from Pisan captivity, the future ruler was sent to Qayrawān to await transport on to Denia around 423/1031-2. Mujāhid sent the qāḍī of Denia, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Uthmān al-Ghasānī b. Abī Ri‘āl to the Zīrid court to bring his son home. Amicable relations must have existed between the two courts, but their sectarian differences did pose problems. In fact, Ibn al-Abbār’s description of ‘Alī and Ibn Abī Ri‘āl’s stay in Qayrawān brings to light how the divide could make relations difficult. First of all, though the religious scholar did not heed his orders, Mujāhid forbade his qāḍī from discussing with the ‘ulamā’ in Qayrawān. Given the frequent mention of Andalusī scholars that studied in Qayrawān, and the respect Ibn Abī Ri‘āl shows for the Zīrid capital as a religious center, it would seem that Mujāhid’s orders came more from the

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qāḍī’s presence there as an official representative of the Denia court. He represented the dawla of Denia, which derived part of its legitimacy from its defense of Mālikiyya Sunnism.

Al-Mu’izz offered his guests gifts of money and two colts, but Ibn Abī Ri’āl refused the presents. Ibn al-Abbār writes that he refused for scrupulous reasons, tawarr’u, but offering presents to guests of honor was a common practice, and we should wonder whether the Zīrid ruler’s sectarian loyalties were not a factor in the qāḍī’s refusal. If such was the case, diplomatic interaction between Zīrid Ifrīqiya and Denia must have involved complications that the sources do not clearly indicate. The possible tension in this situation comes through in al-Mu’izz’s diplomatic tact: ‘Alī and Ibn Abī Ri’āl were present in Qayrawān for Eid al-Adha, and al-Mu’izz invited his guests to participate in the festival at his side. However, he ordered that the khutba not be pronounced in the name of the Fatimids, out of respect for his guests.63 His decision shows there was a real political and sectarian divide between the taifa and Ifrīqiyan rulers, but one that could be bridged. Al-Mu’izz was probably moving towards distancing himself from Cairo at this time, but his deference to Denia’s future ruler speaks to important relations between their polities.

There is no reason to believe that the sectarian rift engendered problems for commercial exchange between al-Andalus and Ifrīqiya, nor even with Fatimid Egypt. Al-Muqaddasī may have remarked that a Shiite risked his life in fourth/tenth-century

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63 According to Ibn ‘Idhārī, the people of Qayrawān also objected to the pronunciation of the khutba in the name of the Fatimids, refusing even to frequent the mosque until al-Mu’izz ceased invoking the ‘Ubaydī name in 440/1048: Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 1:277.
al-Andalus, but the Fatimids could not afford a similar policy, given the fact that the majority of their subjects were in fact hostile to the Ismāʿīlī creed. Goitein writes that pirates occasionally made use of the schism to attack ships coming from the Muslim West, notably the emir of Barqa, Jabbāra b. Mukhtar, and ships from Denia may very well have practiced similar activities. This was probably not the norm though, and Goitein also remarks that the fifth/eleventh-century Mediterranean was a “free-trade community,” in which goods and men travelled without restrictions.

The volume of trade with Ifrīqiya probably diminished over the course of ‘Alī b. Mujāhid’s reign. The Zīrid kingdom had been in decline since the beginning of the century, a decline hastened by the Ḥilālī invasions and other mid-century troubles. Geniza letters, and notably those from the great merchant house of Ibn ‘Awkal, present an Ifrīqiya that was clearly on the decline following periods of political trouble and agricultural failures. Because of this, and further exacerbating the decline, a growing part of Mediterranean commerce turned towards the markets of the eastern Mediterranean, and more and more ships left for Alexandria, without stopping even in al-Mahdiya.

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65 S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:66. However, as Goitein also notes, we should not overly insist on this point. Examples exist, such as Abū al-Faḍl, of Sunnī officials who had to disguise themselves when travelling between Baghdad and the West, and regimes watched foreign travelers with an attentive eye.
Miṣr

Miṣr, modern Egypt and Libya, was also an essential stopover for Andalusī scholars traveling east, either on pilgrimage or for additional training. As with Qayrawān, despite the ruling regime’s sectarian stance, the ‘ulamā’ of Alexandria and Fustat remained respected sources of religious and juridical learning. Mujāhid even sought to attract to his court an ‘alīm, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Waḥhab b. Naṣr, who had sought refuge in Egypt.68 Other scholars did travel west to al-Andalus, but most visitors came as merchants.69 Scholarly exchange between East and West seems though to have declined over the century, despite Alexandria’s growing importance for Andalusī commerce.70 The menace of Christian fleets or pirates on the Mediterranean increased the risks of travelling across the Mediterranean, to the point that certain jurists counseled against it and pointed out that jihād against the Christian North was a meritorious replacement for the hajj.71 This does not seem to have had any effect on commercial voyages, and ‘Alī b. Mujāhid personally worked to favor exchange with Fatimid Egypt.

There are no clear indications of maritime commercial activity under Mujāhid. The first mention in the Cairo Geniza of a ship from Denia, the markab Mujāhid,
dates from 436, the year of Mujāhid’s death.\textsuperscript{72} This may have been in reference to the first of Denia’s rulers, since later documents sometimes specify markab Ibn Mujāhid.

The political shift from Mujāhid to ‘Alī is all the more difficult to gauge, since it coincides with the movement from west to east of the more important commercial Jewish families, our principal source for Mediterranean trade for this period. The very nature of this source, the Cairo Geniza, means that the majority of the documents are related in one way or another to Egypt, and activities in the Muslim West simply do not appear that often. We are left then with two possibilities: either Denia’s commercial activity under Mujāhid, then ‘Alī, followed the movement east, where it became better documented, or investment in Mediterranean commerce only began at that time.

Ibn Mujāhid’s boat is mentioned three times after 1050 in Geniza documents, and on at least two occasions the boat sailed directly to Alexandria without a stopover.\textsuperscript{73} A fourth letter mentions a boat from Denia in Alexandria, and also specifies that it had not stopped in al-Mahdiya.\textsuperscript{74} Like other Mediterranean rulers then, ‘Alī owned at least one commercial vessel that sailed the maritime routes, linking Denia’s markets with those farther east. Given the haphazard preservation of


\textsuperscript{73} S.D. Goitein, \textit{Mediterranean Society}, 1:213; O.R. Constable, \textit{Trade and Traders}, 123; Geniza TS 8 J 20, f. 2 and ENA 2805, f. 26. In this last document, ‘Alī’s ship must have been en route for Alexandria, since it is described as being at Cap Harzeit, Rā’s al-‘ Awsaj, the Roman port of Paraetonium on the Egyptian coast: al-Bakrī, 85-6/173; W.H. Smyth, \textit{The Mediterranean, a Memoir Physical, Historical and Nautical} (London, 1854), 86.

\textsuperscript{74} S.D. Goitein, \textit{Mediterranean Society}, 1:318; Geniza TS 10 J 16, f. 17. This letter is also interesting in mentioning the arrival of ships from Genoa and “other lands of the Rūm.”
documents through the Geniza, the relative frequent mention of his ship seems to indicate that such travels were not exceptional, that they were even regular, and documents from the sixth/twelfth century show that traffic continued along those routes.

‘Alī’s involvement in Mediterranean relations was not purely commercial, and while his father is especially known for invading Sardinia, ‘Alī’s moment of glory came from an exchange with the Fatimid caliph al-Mustanṣir bi-Llāh. Around 447/1055-6, while a famine was decimating Miṣr, ‘Alī sent a ship loaded with food (ṭaʿām) to the Fatimid ruler.\(^7^5\) The ship returned to Denia filled with precious stones, gold and other treasures. Ibn al-Zubayr writes that on two subsequent occasions, ‘Alī sent presents to al-Mustanṣir: in 452/1060-1, he sent pearls and silks woven with gold thread, while in 462/1070, he opted for furniture, silks, slaves, and thirty coral branches of a quality never seen in the Fatimid court.\(^7^6\) ‘Alī commissioned his secretary Ibn Arqām to write letters for the caliph and his vizier to accompany the 452/1060-1 shipment, instigating an epistolary exchange that was in his own interest

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\(^7^5\) Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:228; Ibn al-Khattāb, 254. Sources do not specify what exactly was sent, though Ibn ‘Idhārī’s text seems to indicate that the boat sailed loaded from Denia: وَجَهَبِرْكَمْ بَكَرَ مَمْلَؤْنَ طَعَامَاً إِلَى بَلَادِ مُصْرٍ. Agricultural exports from al-Andalus are not often identified, despite geographical descriptions of Andalusī bounty, most often fruits. Grains imports from North Africa to al-Andalus seem to become common over time, though specific information is lacking and reports date from after the taifa period. See O.R. Constable, Trade and Traders, 141-2. Idrīsī (Opus geographicum, 5:558-9) remarks on the fruits and vegetables produced in Alicante, while only a day’s rain sufficed to produce fruit in Cartagena.

\(^7^6\) Ibn al-Zubayr, Kitāb al-hādāya wa al-tulāf, English trans. Gh. H. Qaddumi, Book of Gifts and Rarities. Selections Compiled in the Fifteenth Century from an Eleventh-Century Manuscript on Gifts and Treasures (Cambridge [MA], 1996), 109, 113. It is possible that some of the mentions of the markab Ibn Mujāhid in the Geniza coincide with these gift-giving missions.
with the Ismāʿīlī caliph, despite their sectarian differences.77

Diplomatic relations with the Fatimid caliph, though delicate, would have offered legitimizing prestige for ʿAlī. The principal Andalusī historians of the time noted this correspondence, indicating that his contemporaries were equally well aware of it. The Egyptian famine gave ʿAlī the chance to act as the caliph’s benefactor, and the exchange of gifts that followed speak to mutual recognition between two political figures. ʿAlī could not place himself under al-Mustanṣir’s Ismāʿīlī rule – although he does address him as amīr al-mūʾīnī – and he could not expect an investiture from the Fatimid court. He did however gain honor among his peers, perhaps flaunting the recognition offered him by the most powerful Muslim ruler in the Mediterranean.

More importantly, and more in line with ʿAlī’s reputation, this relation certainly traced its origins to his economic interests. Archeological research in Alexandria has produced fifth/eleventh-century caliphal-style ceramics from al-Andalus, and Denia was one of the major producers of such wares.78 These Andalusī ceramics could have transited through an Ifrīqiyan emporium, but ships could have also carried them directly from al-Andalus. Slaves were probably one of the major commodities sold out of Denia and transported from its markets towards the East, but Mediterranean commerce was known for its diversity and merchants would have

filled their holds with other goods as well. The *markab Mujāhid* was loaded with a bale of flax for the price of $15^{5/24}$ dinars, and the ship must have carried merchandise on the other occasions it is mentioned.\footnote{S.D. Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, 283; S.D. Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 1:227; Geniza Bodl MS Heb E 98 64-5.} Return journeys did not bring only flax, and could include luxury or more sophisticated items. At the beginning of the twentieth century, municipal workers in Denia turned up a ceramic jar filled with bronze objects. The jar was probably buried around the time of the Christian conquest of the town, and so the objects themselves date from the fifth/eleventh to the seventh/thirteenth century.\footnote{R. Azuar Ruiz, *Denia islámica*, 51-5.} Azuar Ruiz has shown that some of these objects are stylistically analogous to Fatimid pieces from the fifth/eleventh century. A metallurgical study on a dozen of the pieces – in comparison with objects from Tiberias in Israel, and the Serçe Liman shipwreck off the Turkish coast – clearly designates Syro-Palestinian production, using metals imported from Iran.\footnote{Azuar Ruiz’s doctoral dissertation offers a much more in-depth analysis of the bronze pieces: “Estudio arqueologico del poblamiento islámico de la montaña alicantina. El a’māl de Denia,” 2 vols. (Doctoral diss., Universitat Alicante, 1986-7), 134-249; M.J. Ponting, “From Damascus to Denia: scientific analysis of three groups of Fatimide period metalwork,” *Historical Metallurgy*, 37-2 (2003): 92-3, 98, 99. Ponting specifies that certain of the pieces supposed by Azuar Ruiz to be of Andalusī origin were more likely produced in the Orient, in the same workshops as those from Tiberias.} The rarity of such objects in the Iberian Peninsula may indicate that these were luxury items included with the treasures sent by al-Mustanṣir, but it would seem that they were more likely tied to economic exchange.\footnote{J. Zozaya suggested a link between the importation of these goods and the exportation of wood from Denia towards Egyptian shipyards; “Importaciones casuales en Al-Andalus: las vías de comercio,” in *IV Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española: Sociedades en transición*, Alicante, 4-9 octubre 1993, 1, Ponencias (Alicante, 1993), 126.} Denia’s ships increasingly followed the routes to Alexandria, and amicable relations with the Fatimid court could only have
helped. It is even possible that ‘Alī was seeking assurances against naval attacks on his ships, possibly by pirates such as the emir Jabbāra. Such aggression is not mentioned in the letter from ‘Alī to the caliph, but during his communications with al-Mustanṣir the question may have been raised.

‘Alī b. Mujāhid well understood the dynamic patterns of trade and acted in consequence. The economic weight of the Muslim Mediterranean rested clearly in its eastern basin, and ‘Alī sought to maintain his polity’s place in the Mediterranean commercial networks. Most likely informed of the Egyptian famine by his own agents, ‘Alī knew how to turn the situation to his advantage.
CHAPTER VII

DENIA AND THE ANDALUSĪ NETWORKS

Denia’s policies fell within the larger program of affirming the taifa’s place as a conduit between al-Andalus and the Mediterranean. Mujāhid and ‘Alī adapted their actions within that framework according to specific networks and political needs. Relations with Pisa answered to Mediterranean dynamics, while those with Barcelona required a skillful navigation of Andalusī geopolitics. Relations with Muslim Mediterranean ports likewise followed lines traced by economic and diplomatic interests. The Berber ethnicity of the Banū Ḥammād or Zīrī does not seem to have affected maritime exchange any more than the Shī‘a adherence of the Fatimid and Ifrīqiyan elites. The Mediterranean waters reduced ties to essential interests; though complex, they left little room for confrontational posturing. Andalusī relations, on the other hand, were quite different. ‘Alī played freely with Mediterranean political divisions, even addressing the Shī‘a Fatimid caliph as amīr al-mū‘minīn, but in al-Andalus more stringent conditions framed his politics. Denia’s rulers had to balance regional and sometimes peninsular struggles between states and factions, while protecting the reticular base of their own power. Their need to ensure the supply of marketable goods to their ports as well as the redistribution of imports influenced relations with Andalusī peers as much as concerns about extending or defending their physical territory. This complex set of interests dictated Denia’s Andalusī politics.
Mujāhid and ‘Alī worked to establish, maintain and exploit their taifa’s place on the Mediterranean coast, constructing alliances and managing conflicts in consequence.

THE COASTAL TAIFAS

Events of the Andalusī fitna and the motivations of those involved are rarely straightforward. Mujāhid may have broken with his fellow ‘Āmirid clients, even betrayed his master, but he did not intend to establish an independent state when he left Cordova in 400/1010. He did not even seek exclusive autonomy from the other centers of Andalusī powers. Mujāhid split from the core ‘Āmirids, but Viguera Molins is correct in noting that he participated in the communal nature of power under the early ‘Āmirid taifas, though perhaps not as much as some historians would believe.¹ Meouak has written that Mujāhid shared power in Denia with Zuhayr, citing the eighteenth-century Tunisian compiler Maḥmūd Maqdīsh: *wa Zuhayr* wa *Mujāhid malakā madīnat Dāniya.*² Maqdīsh, however, is the only author to mention this, and his considerable chronological distance from the events puts doubts on his accuracy. Zuhayr, in fact, allied himself with Khayrān from the beginning of the fitna, making it illogical to follow Maqdīsh’s claims. Nevertheless, Denia did not emerge as an autonomous power until Mujāhid declared the caliphate of al-Mu‘ayṭī in 405/1014, placing himself in clear opposition to the Ḥammūdid Cordovan regime, and possibly as a countermeasure to Khayrān’s expansionist machinations in

Almería. Moreover, before and after this date, Mujāhid’s influence extended into a large part of the Sharq al-Andalus. His itinerant court went through Tortosa and Valencia before settling in Denia, and he must have exercised his weight as fatā kābir among the ‘Āmirid refugees throughout the region.

Mujāhid’s influence comes through in regional recognition of his caliph, al-Mu‘ayṭī, since Ibn Bashkūwāl writes that the khutba was pronounced in his name from minbars throughout the east. Khayrān’s disappointment in ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd led him to recognize al-Mu‘ayṭī for a time around 407/106-7. The Denia caliphate thus did not divide the Sharq al-Andalus ‘Āmirids, though we should not exaggerate its unifying potential. Mujāhid did little more than send out letters carrying his and his caliph’s new laqabs, and does not seem to have made any real effort to extend the Denia caliphate over al-Andalus, not even to those territories under Ṣiqlābī control. Khayrān’s numismatic recognition of al-Mu‘ayṭī may have even been tied to the caliph’s rebellion against Mujāhid during the Sardinia invasion. The Ṣaqālība elite were not necessarily submitting themselves to Mujāhid’s ḥijāba in recognizing his caliph, rather they were seeking to legitimize their power against Ḥammūdid claims.

Nevertheless, Mujāhid’s ability to promote his caliphate reflects directly on his place

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3 Mujāhid seems to have maintained semi-autonomous power before this, since Ibn ‘Idhārī writes that the khutba was pronounced for no one prior to this: “لا يدعي أحد ولا كان لا يدعو لحده”; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:116. Given the uncertain nature of his own legitimacy and the Andalusī political situation, Mujāhid must have been reticent to insert his own name into the weekly prayer. Later, he would not hesitate to use this tool to assert his position.

4 “المن على له خطب والأندلس، بشرق بالخلافة له بوعي له بالخلافة بشرق الأندلس، و خطب له على المنابر الشرقية”, Ibn Bashkūwāl (1989), 413, no. 598.


6 This same form of recognition appears later around Hishām II’s reappearance in Seville, as a number of taifas took advantage of the situation to legitimize their rule and implement fiscal policies through monetary issues in Hishām’s name.
in the hierarchy of ‘Āmirid clients.

Mujāhid’s eminence among the Ṣaqāliba led his peers to solicit his help outside of Denia on numerous occasions. As dynasties and taifas failed or converged over the course of the century, the communitarian nature of Ṣiqlābī power dissipated. In the early years of the fitna, however, ambiguous sovereignty and the residual influence of the ‘Āmirid hierarchy allowed the regime’s former officers to exercise considerable influence over territories controlled by their lesser peers. Khayrān extended his power into Murcia through shared power with Zuhayr, and for a time supported Muḥammad b. al-Muẓaffar ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Āmir al-Manṣūr in that same region. The ‘Āmirid ‘abīd in Valencia and Játiva played off conflicts between Mujāhid and Khayrān, alternating between the patronages of both. Muẓaffar and Mubārak, the fitān who took control of Valencia after Mujāhid’s departure sometime after 401/1010-1 and themselves an example of shared power, enjoyed the support of Khayrān. When the fatā Labīb, emir of Tortosa, was called in after Mubārak’s death in 408/1018-9, he invited Mujāhid to share sovereignty not only in Valencia, but also in Tortosa, and the khuṭba was pronounced in both their names in those two taifas. The two Ṣaqāliba argued and Labīb left for Tortosa in 410/1019-20, but the ‘Āmirid ‘abīd invested Mujāhid as their leader and continued to

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7 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a‘māl al-a‘lām, 223-4, 248.
8 Khayrān’s involvement in Valencia is indicated by a dirham issued there in his name in 404/1013-4; A. Canto, T. b. Ḥ Ibrāhīm, “Suplemento,” 132, no. 26; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:15.
9 Akhbār duwwal mulāk al-tawā‘if, 302; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:19-20; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:163-4. The sources do not specify if this authority was placed under a caliphal figure. Khayrān and his partisans invoked the Ḥammūḍid caliphate – Mubārak and Muẓaffar minted in ‘Alī b. Hammūḍ’s name in 407, and al-Qāsim al-Māʾmūm invested Zuhayr and Khayrān in their territories – but there is no mention of Mujāhid claiming similar recognition.
pronounce the *khuṭba* in his name in Valencia until the arrival of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo in 411/1021-2.

The advantages for Mujāhid in this shared sovereignty are not immediately clear. He does not seem to have actively sought or maintained rule over Valencia, and allowed ‘Āmirid *mawālī* to oust him from there on two occasions. Denia’s ruler may not have had the means to counter the ‘Āmirid ‘*abīd* in Valencia, but over the course of the century the taifa of Denia tended to expand towards the south and west and Mujāhid did not push his northern borders farther than Bairén and the Serpis river. Rather than territorial, Mujāhid’s interests to the north seem more fiscal. Having the *khuṭba* pronounced in his name inferred claims to legitimacy perhaps in conjunction with taxation. Muẓaffār and Mubārak are more famous for their fiscal abuse of local populations, but Mujāhid must not have been indifferent to the 120,000 dinars the two *fityān* raised monthly during their reign in Valencia and Játiva.\(^{10}\) Communitarian power was thus a way to share taxes legitimized by creating or recognizing various caliphs, monetary production, and ceremonies such as the weekly *khuṭba*.\(^{11}\)

Mujāhid centered his attention on consolidating his power in the *Sharq al-Andalus* after the failed Sardinia invasion. Despite his maritime defeat, Mujāhid remained, with Khayrān, one of the principal regional actors. Mujāhid used his influence among the ‘Āmirid *mawālī* to advance his and his polity’s interests beyond

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its borders. During the second phase of this reign, Mujāhid built alliances with weaker but strategically important taifas such as Tortosa, while facing off Valencia and Almería. This system of evolving alliances and confrontations developed according to the taifa’s maritime orientation and Iberian geopolitics, both of which were heavily influenced by the Mediterranean networks.

**Tortosa**

Tortosa’s dār al-ṣinā‘a, port and natural resources drew envious attention from neighboring states. Bordering the Catalan territories to the north, the taifa became a tributary client of Barcelona, while the route that linked Zaragoza to the sea following the Ebro valley passed through its territory. Tortosa was an important piece in regional geopolitical strategies, and became an essential element in Barcelona and Denia’s efforts to block Zaragoza’s expansion towards the sea. The successive rulers of Tortosa thus entered into protective alliances, and specifically favored relations with the taifa of Denia.

Mujāhid exercised power in Tortosa before settling in Denia, and probably before the events of 399/1009-10. Ibn Maqdīsh remarks that the slaves placed by al-Manṣūr to administrate the Sharq al-Andalus took power there, while Ibn ‘Idhārī writes that al-Manṣūr himself placed Mujāhid in the region.¹² Mujāhid left Cordova in 400/1010 – after the death of Muḥammad al-Mahdī, for whom he had betrayed his former patron ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo –, returning to lands under his control in

the *Sharq al-Andalus*. According to Ibn Khaldūn and al-Qalqashandī, Mujāhid took control of Tortosa at the beginning of the *fitna*, before continuing on to Denia, though no explanation is provided as to why Mujāhid chose to turn his back on the caliphal arsenal and fleet in Tortosa.¹³ Labīb, the first ruler of Tortosa, enjoyed Denia’s support, so it is not likely that he ousted Mujāhid. Ibn Khaṭīb does not include Labīb among ‘Abd al-Malik’s *fityān al-akbār*, but he was a ‘Āmirid *Ṣiqlābī* client. Sources do not document his arrival in Tortosa, and rarely mention him outside his relations with Denia and Valencia.

Tortosa’s initial weakness may have resulted from Labīb’s lesser status under the erstwhile regime, as well as immigration patterns at the beginning of the *fitna*. Mujāhid, on the other hand, as one of the principal ‘Āmirid officers, had a large support base that was essential in establishing his power in Denia. Mubārak and Muẓaffar were not as influential as Mujāhid, but they did benefit from the waves of ‘Āmirid clients who immigrated to Valencia.¹⁴ Those clients, many of whom had military experience, helped the *Ṣaqāliba* pair impose their rule on the local population, while also fending off aggression from neighboring taifas. Labīb thus had fewer assets than his peers, which may explain the dependency of his regime. Labīb may even have had client ties with Mujāhid, who left Tortosa without seemingly ruling out a regular presence there. Mujāhid could thus dedicate his attention to

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¹⁴ Ibn al-Khaṭīb includes Muẓaffar in his list of ‘Abd al-Malik’s *fityān*, but he did not rank with Mujāhid, Khayrān, or Wāḍīb. In addition, according to Ibn Ḥayyān, both Valencian rulers were former clients of Mufarrij al-‘Āmirī, the administrator responsible for *Madinat al-Zahrā‘*, who was in turn a client of the ‘Āmirid *hājiib*. Ibn Ḥayyān also writes that, although Muẓaffar had rudimentary writing and equestrian skills, indicating a privileged place among the *Ṣaqāliba* group, Mubārak was the real leader in Valencia; Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra*, 3:16, 18.
building his maritime power in Denia and the Balearics, while knowing he could rely on Tortosa and its resources.

Mujāhid’s conscious involvement in this taifa implies two series of factors. Firstly, his Mediterranean ambitions required Tortosa’s maritime resources. Its place in the maritime networks, as well as its exceptional timber supplies made Tortosa’s port and naval shipyards vital centers of interest for Mujāhid. Tortosa’s complicity was thus necessary for any commercial or pirate activities. This is directly implied by the fact that the raids on the Catalan coast that attracted Roger of Tosney’s Norman adventurers coincided with Mujāhid’s co-regency over Tortosa. The cooperative relations between the two ports appear again after the raid on the monastery of Lérins in 1046. Since the captive monks appeared in Tortosa and Denia’s markets, ships from both ports likely participated in the attack and split the booty, indicating moreover a shared economy between the two ports.

Tortosa also served as a piece in Denia’s efforts to restrict Zaragozan expansion towards the sea. This expansion was a constant dilemma for Denia, and Zaragoza exerted pressure in that direction throughout the century. Denia thus worked in conjunction with Barcelona to prop up Tortosa to maintain their own spheres of influence along the coast and contain the aggressive Banū Tujīb and Hūd. Mundhir b. Yaḥyā al-Tujībī first tried to take Tortosa shortly before 408 or 409/1017-8. Ibn al-Khaṭīb credits Mubārak of Valencia with coming to Labīb’s aid, bringing

16 Vita s. Isarno, c. 5, 747-9.
5000 horsemen (fāris) to help fend off the Tujībī.¹⁷ Mujāhid does not appear in this story, but his problems with Khayrān during the same period may have impeded his ability to intervene. Nevertheless, the 5000 fāris mentioned by al-Khaṭīb, even if exaggerated, does speak to the serious menace that Zaragoza posed for the taifa of Tortosa.

The Valencians chose Labīb to replace Mubārak after his death, giving the Ṣiqlābī control over the two cities. This most likely included Játiva, since that city had also been under Mubārak’s control, and its Āmirid elite often acted in concert with those of Valencia.¹⁸ Ruling the two taifas seems to have been beyond Labīb’s abilities, since he invited Mujāhid to share sovereignty over both.¹⁹ This invitation seems to indicate an effective submission on Labīb’s part, since the khoṭba was conjointly pronounced in their names in Tortosa and Valencia, while Mujāhid remained sole ruler in Denia. It was Labīb who needed to share his power. Labīb’s weak hold on power was threatened, in fact, on two fronts. He seems first of all to have imposed taxes that were even more onerous than those criticized under Mubārak and Muẓaffar, provoking a rebellion in Tortosa.²⁰ Unable to remain in power alone, Labīb sought aid from the “tyrant” Ramon, and was accused of becoming one of the

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¹⁷ Mundhīr’s nephew, Muḥārib b. ʿĪsā al-Tujībī died during the attack; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb aʿmāl al-aʿlām, 259.
¹⁸ Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:19-20; Ibn ʿIdhārī, Bayān, 3:163. For Mubārak’s control over Játiva, see Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb aʿmāl al-aʿlām, 259.
¹⁹ Akhbār duwwal mulāk al-ṭawāʼif, 302.
²⁰ Ibn Bassām writes that he introduced new things for which he was detested: فَأَخْبَثَ أَيْضًا فِيهِمْ أَحَدَاثًا مَّقْتُوهُ بِهَا, Dhakhīra, 3:19.
Barcelonan count’s agents. Catalan mercenary aid was common among the Ṣaqāliba taifas, but Labīb’s use of Christian forces against his own subjects provoked them into requesting aid from Ibn Hūd, governor of Lerida, in their efforts to expulse their ill-chosen ruler. Mujāhid’s role in the narrative is not clear at this point. Labīb ruled both Tortosa and Valencia, but Ibn Ḥayyān switches indeterminably between the two cities, and mentions only Tortosa as the specific place for this rebellion. He also writes that Mujāhid was angered by Ibn Hūd because of the affront to his power in Tortosa. The anonymous author of the Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-tawā’if does not specify when exactly Labīb invited Mujāhid to share his rule. He also indicates that conflict between Labīb and Mujāhid pushed the former to retire to Tortosa, leaving Mujāhid with exclusive rule over Valencia. Ibn Ḥayyān, on the other hand, writes that “the horizon darkened between [Ibn Hūd] and Mujāhid” because of what had transpired in Tortosa, and the war that followed devastated the region. We have to wonder then if Mujāhid was pushed from power in Tortosa by Labīb or Ibn Hūd. Even if he was not co-regent with Labīb at this time, Mujāhid consciously implicated himself in the affairs of Valencia and Tortosa.

These events indicate the principal characteristics of the interests surrounding Tortosa. Mujāhid became directly involved at Labīb’s request, but this also seems to

21 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:19-20. Ibn Ḥayyān gives only “Raimundo” for the count. Since the events happened sometime around the succession between Ramon Borrell and Beranger Ramon in 1018, it is not possible to determine which count was involved.
22 Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-tawā’if, 302.
23 Rubiera Mata and Guichard write that Mujāhid backed out of this war suddenly, without any apparent reason. However, neither Ibn Bassām nor Ibn ‘Idhārī describe this, and we have found no mention of it elsewhere. Ibn Ḥayyān’s description of the destruction caused by the conflict would seem to indicate a considerable level of dedication on Mujāhid’s part. M.J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 78; P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 46.
have been the formalization of an at least latent relationship between the two. As noted above, Mujāhid did not share power in his own base territories of Denia and the Balearics. Did Labīb call in Mujāhid to discourage Hūdid intervention? Was conjointly pronouncing the *khudba* in Mujāhid and Labīb’s names calculated to shore up Tortosa’s position vis-à-vis threats from Zaragoza and Lerida? The Catalans likewise understood the need to intervene in favor of their Ṣīqlābī ally against Ibn Hūd. Relations between Barcelona and Zaragoza were amicable at this point, and Mundhir b. Aḥmad al-Tujībī had brokered the marriage between the daughter of Sancho Garciá of Castile and the son of Ramon Borrell. It was moreover probably through his intervention that the Catalans sent support for al-Murtaḍā’s caliphal campaign. Nevertheless, expansion by Zaragoza or Lerida towards the sea would have worried the Barcelonan court, which held its own aspirations for these territories to the south.

Labīb’s rule seems to have continued in Tortosa, despite Ibn Hūd’s intervention, until 427/1035-6, when another Ṣīqlābī, Muqātil, succeeded him. Sources do not provide many details on relations between Denia and Tortosa at this time, but the two ports remained linked, as shown by the shared participation in the Lérins raid. ‘Alī b. Mujāhid welcomed Muqātil’s son at his court for a time, though he took for himself a horse the father had sent for his son.²⁴ Despite these ties, Ibn Hūd seems to have gained influence over Tortosa at this time, if not previously under Labīb. For the year 434/1043-4, Ibn ‘Idhārī writes that there were three taifa

coalitions, two of which recognized the caliph Hishām II – one around Sulaymān b. Hūd of Zaragoza, and the other around ‘Abbād al-Mu’tadaḍ of Seville – and the third under the Berber caliphate of ‘Idrīs b. Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd of Malaga.25 Mujāhid’s allegiances were with the ‘Abbādid faction, while Muqātil of Tortosa sided with the Banū Hūd of Zaragoza. In addition, when Játiva ‘Āmirids assassinated Muqātil for ‘Abd al-‘Azīz of Valencia in 445/1053-4, Mundhir b. Ahmad b. Sulaymān b. Hūd heatedly complained to the Valencian ruler.26 Muqātil was replaced by Ya‘lā, whose reign lasted only a few years before he was in turn replaced by the Ṣiqābī, Nābil.27 Prieto y Vives believed this last ruler of independent Tortosa to have been placed there by Zaragoza.28 In fact, the name Nābil appears on a dirham issued by Mundhir b. Yahyā al-Tujibī in 428/1036-7, while Nābil’s coins in Tortosa carried the title khalīfa, or officer, perhaps indicating subservience to a more powerful court. Even if such was the case, it did not suffice for Ahmad b. Sulaymān b. Hūd, who took the taifa in 453/1061-2 and confided it to his son, Mundhir, who would later add Denia to his territories in 468/1075-6.

Zaragoza’s success in gaining access to the seaboard, and especially its annexation of Tortosa, greatly worried Barcelona and Denia. The parias that Barcelona extorted from Tortosa and Lerida were also payments for protection from Zaragoza.29 While the Hūdīd taifa was working its way towards the sea and Tortosa,

26 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:172. We should note that Mundhir himself took over Tortosa for his father after the taifa’s annexation by Zaragoza in 452/1060-1.
27 A. Prieto y Vives, Los reyes, 190-191; A. Vives y Escudero, Monedas, 210-212.
29 P. Bonnassie, La Cataluña, 663-4.
Denia and Barcelona seem to have strengthened their ties: the 450/1058 treaty should definitely be read in this context. ‘Alī b. Mujāhid was militarily too weak to resist the Banū Hūd, and so turned to Barcelona for support. The chronology is imprecise, but Ibn ‘Idhārī informs us that al-Muqtadir b. Hūd had to face Christian soldiers after taking Tortosa.\textsuperscript{30}

The taifa of Tortosa thus does not seem to have been able to survive by its own devices, despite the advantages provided by its port, timber supply and place along the major road and maritime networks. These were in fact partly the reason the taifa’s rulers had to incessantly rely on allies for their survival. A particular relationship due to their former ‘Āmirid patron seems to have linked Mujāhid and Labīb, and possibly Muqātil, but Denia’s interests in the taifa came from its geopolitical importance. Denia and Tortosa were likewise tied by maritime networks, and their inland territories were in some way intermixed.\textsuperscript{31} Zaragoza’s expansion into this zone seriously compromised Denia’s chances for survival.

\textbf{Valencia}

Valencia occupied a central place in the coastal road networks, able to filter in part Denia’s access to the \textit{Via Augusta}, as well as the supply of wood that passed from Cuenca through Alcira and Cullera, but Mujāhid and ‘Alī do not seem to have expressed much interest in the \textit{kūra} of Valencia and its taifa. Mujāhid’s direct

\textsuperscript{31} Ibn Bassām writes that al-Muqtadir wanted to join some of Denia’s fortifications to Tortosa. While the two taifas did not share a contiguous border, their territorial networks must have come together at some point; \textit{Dhakhīra}, 4:184.
intervention in this region was limited to the earliest years of the *fitna*, and was more the result of ‘Āmirid administrative structures and *Ṣaqaṭiba* immigration that any real interest in the area. In addition, perhaps to dissuade Mujāhid from developing plans, the taifa of Valencia, under Mubārak and Muzaffār and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr, was placed under more powerful patronage, including Khayrān and the Berber Ḥammūdids.

Mujāhid’s reasons for leaving Valencia are not clear, but it is possible that his position there was destabilized by the massive influx of ‘Āmirid clients, many of whom may have opposed him given his betrayal of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo.\(^{32}\) As in Tortosa, sources do not indicate that Mujāhid actively resisted his expulsion from Valencia, and he only returned there at Labīb’s invitation, after the death of Mubārak, sometime around 408-9/1017-8. In the mean time, Mujāhid had begun work on his own taifa based on the Mediterranean, preparing even his invasion of Sardinia, and Valencia’s place in that scheme would only have been as a conduit for lumber. After his failed invasion of Sardinia, Mujāhid would have lacked the immediate resources to reestablish his hold over the *kūra* of Valencia, especially since the *Ṣaqaṭiba* in Valencia and Játiva seem to have supported Khayrān, Mujāhid’s chief rival.\(^{33}\) Denia’s ruler did not interfere in Mubārak’s affairs, though he did harbor ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Āflaḥ when he was chased from Játiva by the Valencian ruler.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{32}\) Khayrān, for example, resided in Játiva, before returning to Cordova in 400 to overturn the regime of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jubbār al-Mahdī; Ibn ‘Idhārī, *Bayān*, 3:96.


\(^{34}\) Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb aʾmāl al-aʾlām*, 259. This may in fact be the Ibn Āflaḥ to whom Ibn Dārāj dedicated a poem in Denia, and who subsequently died alongside his father, Āflaḥ, in Almeria in 405.
The people of Valencia called on Labīb to replace Mubārk after his death, though this was most certainly the ‘Āmirid ‘abīd, and not the Valencians in general, who confided their city into Labīb’s hands. The ‘abīd in fact, appear often in this role throughout the fitna. When the alliance between Labīb and Mujāhid in Valencia broke down, Mujāhid remained ruler there through the support of the ‘Āmirid ‘abīd, receiving the bay’a from them in 410/419-20. For nearly two years the khutba was pronounced there in Mujāhid’s name in Valencia, where he was the “leader of the ‘Āmirid ‘abīd,” before, that is, they rebelled and chose to replace Mujāhid with ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, grandson of al-Manṣūr, 411/1021-2.

During this time, Mujāhid maintained a policy of aggressive expansion to the south, a sign that his Sardinian failure had not diminished his ambitions. In control of Denia and the kūra of Valencia and Játiva, Mujāhid sought to expand his influence of the territories south of the Jibāl Balansiya, following the routes that linked the urban centers of the Sharq al-Andalus. He thus invaded territories in northern Tudmūr under Khayrān’s control, taking over Murcia and Orihuela and inflicting a major naval defeat on Khayrān’s fleet in Almería. Mujāhid’s temporary mastery of the Sharq al-Andalus ended quickly though, since he was chased from Valencia and pushed back from Tudmūr, forced back to his core territories around Denia, the Balearics and

If such is the case, Wasserstein’s argument that Mujāhid could not have entered Denia before 405 needs to be reconsidered: D. Wasserstein, The Caliphate in the West, 121-4.

35 Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawā’if, 302.

36 Khayrān was forced to seek help from Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik, another of al-Manṣūr’s grandsons, offering to cede to him any territories he could take back from Mujāhid: Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 223-4. Mujāhid sent the poet Sā’id al-Baghdādi a sack of dinars and a letters announcing his naval victory: Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 4:12-3. Ibn Ḥazm relates a story in which a friend who came to visit him in Játiva was unable to return to his love in Almería because Mujāhid had blocked all naval and terrestrial access to the city; Tawq al-hamāma, 149-50.
the Mediterranean sea lanes.

Mujāhid does not seem to have attempted to preserve his rule in Valencia, though the sources are certainly not clear on the circumstances surrounding his departure. The Akhbār duwwal mulūk al-ṭawā’if describes a rebellion by the ‘abīd, while Ibn Ḥayyān seems to indicate a more voluntary exit: “When Mujāhid left the ‘Āmirid clients, they entrusted the matter to their leaders who advised them to recognize one of their [...] and they agreed on the son of their patron, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.”37 This retreat may have coincided with the conflict with Khayrān and his temporary ally, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. al-Manṣūr, forcing Mujāhid to concentrate his resources on his acquisitions in the Vinalopó and Segura valleys. Whatever the reason, Mujāhid did not dispute ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s investiture, though, like his fellow ‘Āmirids, he did not submit to his former patron’s grandson.

‘Abd al-‘Azīz became ruler of Valencia in 411/1021, but the sources do not describe conflicts between the taifa and Denia during the initial years of his reign. In fact, Valencia does not seem to have interested Mujāhid. Plus, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s ability to block Denia’s access to the major road networks may have been a considerable deterrent to any plans to discomfort his rule (Valencia, on the other hand, required the access to Mediterranean markets that Denia’s port provided). ‘Abd al-‘Azīz may also have built a considerable network of alliances to protect himself. Since fleeing

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37 “فخلعوه العبید عليه قام ثم عينهم على أمرھم فاتفقوا له عتبة بن عبد العزيز,” Ibn al-Khattīb, 224-5; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:164; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:186. Given ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s age at the time, between fourteen and fifteen years old, it is most likely that the ‘abīd were simply looking for a legitimizing figure for their own power; P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 44.
Cordova, this son of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo had been harbored by the Tujībī court in Zaragoza, and Mundhir b. Yahyā al-Tujībī may have seen this investiture as means to expand his influence in the area – after resolving himself to losing this precious pawn in the games of legitimacy.38 ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wrote to the Ḥammūdid caliph al-Qāsim and had the khūṭba pronounced in his name, receiving in turn the laqab al-Mū’tabin. The caliph also sent four kuttāb to aid the new ruler in administrating his state. With this support, and that of the ‘Āmirid ‘abīd who had brought him to power, in addition to the weight of his prestigious heritage, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz must have inspired a minimum of respect among his neighbors. Denia and Valencia seem to have gone without open conflict until ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s acquisition of Tudmīr and Almeria in 429/1038, causing war to break out with Mujāhid.

This conflict, as we shall see below, allowed Mujāhid to enlarge his taifa, recover northern Tudmīr, and expand his power along the inland road networks as far as Jaén. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had inherited these territories after the death of Zuhayr, former client of his father.39 He likewise inherited Zuhayr’s conflict the Berber Banū Zīrī in Granada. The conflict seems the result of hubris or vanity on Zuhayr’s part, but ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s decision to continue has no clear explanation, especially since ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn claims the Valencian ruler had benefitted from exceptional

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38 Guichard notes, however, that Mundhir b. Yahyā’s intentions are not clear. According to Ibn Hayyān, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz left Zaragoza secretly, indicating that the Tujībīd had other intentions for this protégé. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, on the other hand, mentions no complications; Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:164; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:186; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a‘māl al-a’lām, 225; P. Guichard and B. Soravia, Les royaumes des taifas, 32.

39 Ibn ‘Idhārī, Bayān, 3:167; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 219. Ibn Bassām specifies that the territories fell to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz because Zuhayr had been among the slaves (tīlād) of the house of this grandfather; Dhakhīra, 1:557.
support from his grandfather, Bādīs b. Ḥabbūs, in Granada. Nevertheless, a contingent of Catalan mercenaries was enrolled, and Mujāhid allowed himself to be convinced to come out against the Berbers. ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz most likely proposed to share territories conquered, and Mujāhid’s interest in the region is indicated by his subsequent control over Segura and Baeza. Mujāhid did not follow through though, backing down at the last minute, provoking ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz to call him a coward, an insult that must have facilitated the war that Mujāhid brought against the territories under his control.

The ruler of Valencia lost Almería and most of his Tudmīr territories in the conflict that followed. No exact information appears in sources to indicate where Mujāhid and ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz’s forces met. However, Mujāhid’s attack did provoke a general dissention among the governors who formally served Valencia, forcing ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz to send for help from his mother’s Castilian connections. He was able to save Játiva, but lost almost all other territories inherited from Zuhayr; the ḥuṣūn of Tudmīr as far as Jaén transferred their loyalty to Mujāhid, while the governor of

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41 ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqān attributes this change of mind to Mujāhid’s reticence to face the Berbers, whose warrior prowess he had known while serving the ‘Āmirids; Tībān, 77.
42 Mujāhid’s conflict was not solely with Valencia. Ibn Khaldūn mentions a war between Mujāhid and Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Qāsim, the ruler of the taifa of Alpuente, though he does not provide any details. Moreover, al-Muṭḥādī b. ‘Abbād of Seville wrote a letter to Mujāhid, Ibn Mundhir of Zaragoza, ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz of Valenia and Ahmad ʿAḍūd al-Dawla of Alpuente, reproaching them for using Christian mercenaries in their fights among each other. Mujāhid’s fight with Alpuente may have grown from the war with Valencia, as a result of an alliance between the two. Mujāhid may also have been tempted by Alpuente’s location along routes connected Valencia, Zaragoza and Toledo; Kitāb al-‘ibar, 4:354; Ibn Bassām, Dakhīra, 1:480. Sarnelli Cerqua ties Ibn ‘Abbād’s letter to conflict with the Berber’s, but the text is not specific, and Mujāhid seems, in fact, to have avoided conflict with the Berbers; “La vita intelletuale,” 616-7.
43 Akhbār duwwal mulāk al-ṭawāʿif, 302; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, 224. Sources do not specify that Mujāhid enrolled mercenaries of his own, but Ibn Abbūd’s letter may indicate this. In addition, Denia’s renewed monetary production from 430/1038-9, may have been in part to pay for Catalan services.
Almería, Ma‘an b. Ṣumādīḥ declared his own independence. Hostilities continued, and reached a point where Sulaymān b. Hūd felt it necessary to intervene and broker a peace, lest the war weaken al-Andalus as a whole against Christian threats. To help ensure the peace, a triple alliance was built and consecrated through three marriages: ‘Alī b. Mujāhid married a daughter of Sulaymān b. Hūd, while his sister was given in marriage to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Valencia was thus severely weakened by this conflict with Denia, and became dependant on the emerging inland powers, drawn towards both the Dhū ‘l-Nūn of Toledo and the Banū Hūd of Zaragoza, while paying parias to Castile. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was able to maintain a relative balance within the major coalitions of the mid century: an alliance with Toledo was cemented through a marriage between his son, ‘Abd al-Malik, and the daughter of al-Mā’mūn Yaḥyā b. Dhū ‘l-Nūn; Ibn ‘Idhārī lists Valencia as part of Zaragoza’s faction in the list of taifas recognizing Hishām II’s caliphate. Despite these precautions, and as was the case with ‘Alī b. Mujāhid and the Banū Hūd, the marriage alliance with Toledo did not prevent the Banū Dhū l-Nūn from forcing their way into Valencia. In fact, the end of ‘Āmirid rule in Valencia is comparable to Denia’s fall to Zaragoza, with the taifa’s annexation by a more powerful inland state searching for access to the sea.

Relations between Denia and Valencia did calm, though, before their respective ends. Mujāhid had acquired the territories he was interested in and which gave him regular access to the inland road networks, and he thus accepted the peace

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44 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:314.
45 M.J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 87.
46 See Guichard’s summary of these events in his Les musulmans de Valence, 1:62-5.
proposed by Sulaymān b. Hūd. The diverging alliances maintained by Denia and Valencia probably indicates a mutual mistrust or apprehension, but sources do not describe further violence between them, and Mujāhid and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz exchanged reconciliatory letters. Later, when Ḥasan b. Mujāhid tried to upset the dynastic succession in Denia by assassinating his brother, ‘Alī wrote to his brother-in-law to the north to inform him of the treachery.\textsuperscript{47} ‘Abd al-‘Azīz allowed his wife to accommodate her banished brother, but he honored his pact and refused to help in Ḥasan’s plans.\textsuperscript{48} Diplomatic correspondence between the two courts, now without the insults that had colored Mujāhid and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s exchanges, indicates stability in their relations.\textsuperscript{49} ‘Alī b. Mujāhid did not share his father’s martial ambitions, and inherited a taifa with sufficient territories to pursue his mercantile and maritime interests.

Tudmīr and Almería

Denia expanded towards the south and west, occupying principal strategic points in an effort to control or at least ensure access to the maritime and road networks that linked the peninsular interior and the Mediterranean. Mujāhid and ‘Alī could extract

\textsuperscript{47} Ibn Bassām, \textit{Dhakhīra}, 3:130-1.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibn ‘Idhārī, \textit{Bayān}, 3:158.
considerable revenue from tolls, while also safeguarding supply routes towards their ports, where they would also receive duties from markets and customs houses. Stronger states to the north, namely Zaragoza and Barcelona, made expansion in that direction impracticable. Denia exerted constant pressure on northern Tudmīr and benefited from ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s inability to hold together such vast territories. Before Mujāhid’s success however, his efforts in Tudmīr were more often part of his larger conflicts with Khayrān.

Mujāhid and Khayrān were the two most important of the ‘Āmirid Ṣaqāliba, and Ibn al-Khaṭīb specifically underlines their exploits and renown. Like Mujāhid, Khayrān had been one of ‘Abd al-Malik’s principal officers and participated directly in the events at the beginning of the fitna, the difference being that Khayrān remained loyal to the ‘Āmirid regime. Lévi-Provençal wrote that Khayrān was addled and unscrupulous, and served only his own ambitions. Nevertheless, even if Khayrān did change camps often, his actions during the fitna seem tied to a real loyalty towards his former patrons and the Umayyad house, more so than simple self-promotion and vainglory. In fact, it was only his success and personal power among the members of the Ṣaqāliba community that distinguished him from his peers. Moreover, those same peers followed him in almost all his decisions. While Mujāhid was accused of betraying his patron and turning his back on his fellow ‘Āmirid clients, Khayrān became their leader, especially after the death of Wāḍīḥ.

50 Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Kitāb a’māl al-a’lām, 121.
51 E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 3:329
52 P. Scales, The Fall, 96.
According to al-Maqqarī, Khayrān governed Almería under al-Manṣūr.\(^{53}\) Though this is in contradiction with other authors, Khayrān most likely occupied some influential position in the region prior to the *fitna*.\(^{54}\) Khayrān was probably part of the palatine administration purged by al-Mahdí, and became one of the leaders of the *Ṣaqāliba* who fled Cordova for the *Sharq al-Andalus*. He worked from Játiva to restore a pro-ʻĀmirid regime in Cordova, while also working to secure Șiqlābī power in the East.

The arrival of Sulaymān al-Mustaʻīn bi-Llāh and his Berber supporters in Cordova in 403/1013 forced a change on Khayrān and his fellow *Ṣaqāliba*. Khayrān had left Játiva to support the regime of Wādīḥ under Hishām II. Though the caliph’s death did not cause the Slavs to abandon the regime, indeed it would seem that they were its principal supports, the fall of this last ʻĀmirid Cordovan regime pushed its clients to concentrate on reinforcing their power base in the *Sharq al-Andalus*, and a personal place in whatever order replace the old. Khayrān thus set to constructing a polity to the southeast. He first established a hold over Orihuela in 403/1013, expulsing the Berbers settled there.\(^{55}\) From Orihuela, he took Murcia and Tudmīr, using the region to next expand into Almería in 405/1014-5. This last city had been under another Slav, Āflaḥ, who had taken power there with the governor ʻAbd al-Rahmān b. Rawish in 402/1011-2, before eliminating his partner shortly before his

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\(^{53}\) Al-Maqqarī, *History*, 257.

\(^{54}\) Ibn al-Khaṭīb, al-ʻUdhrī and the author of the *Primera crónica* write that at the beginning of the *fitna*, Almería was governed by ʻAbd al-Rahmān b. Rawish and Āflaḥ, and that Khayrān came to power there later; Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb aʿmāl al-aʿlām*, 242-3; al-ʻUdhrī, 82; *Primera crónica*, 461.

\(^{55}\) Al-ʻUdhrī, 16.
Almería and Tudmīr offered Khayrān a solid base, not only to ensure his place at the head of the elite Ṣaqāliba, but also to develop his own role in the struggles surrounding the caliphate. He supported first ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd against Sulaymān, before launching his own brief efforts at caliph creation with the candidate al-Murtaḍā. While aimed at Cordova, much of Khayrān effort was calculated to strengthen his position vis-à-vis Mujāhid.

Historians have tended to see in this period the beginning of Mujāhid and Khayrān’s rivalry. Rubiera Mata considers not only that Khayrān’s success in Almeria pushed Mujāhid to declare the caliphate in Denia, but also that al-Mu‘ayṭī’s new caliphal claims pushed Khayrān to align with the Ḥammūdids to protect his own legitimacy. Indeed, while both had served under the same patron, the fragmentation of Āmirid clients into the Sharq al-Andalus that began with Sulaymān al-Musta’īn bi-Llāh’s second reign compromised Mujāhid’s plans in the region. The Dhikr bilād al-Andalus ascribes to Mujāhid control not only over Tortosa, Valencia and Denia, but also Tudmīr, Lorca, Baeza and Jódar as early as dhū al-ḥijja 400/July-August 1010. This date corresponds with the death of Muḥammad al-Mahdī, and corroborates Ibn Khalḍūn’s affirmation that Mujāhid arrived in the region at this time. The author of the Dhikr may be amalgamating the territories under Mujāhid’s control over the course of his reign, and especially those towards the end of his life, but the text is generally reliable, both in

56 Al-‘Udhrī, 82.
58 Dhikr bilād al-Andalus, 1:217/2:229.
its chronology and general facts presented. Mujāhid may then have exercised considerable power over most of the *Sharq al-Andalus* – but in whose name? – until the ‘Āmirid clients led by Khayrān displaced him. Khayrān may have participated in Mujāhid’s expulsion from Valencia by Mubārak and Muẓaffar, as a dirham struck in that city in his name in 404/1013-4 would seem to indicate.\(^60\) Al-‘Udhrī writes that he chased the Berbers from Orihuela and Tudmīr to make a place for himself there, though he does not mention conflict with Mujāhid this early. The anarchy of this period, along with the complete lack of clear legitimacy, makes it difficult to know who held which territories beyond simple claims, but Khayrān’s subsequent regional position points to authority from an early date.

Khayrān’s expansion likewise endangered Mujāhid’s maritime ambitions. Through Almería, with its ḍār al-sīnā’a and caliphal fleet, Khayrān could easily dominate the maritime resources of the *Sharq al-Andalus*. Though he did not exploit them with as much conviction as Mujāhid, Khayrān must certainly have been aware of the strong legitimizing power of these symbols of the erstwhile caliphal regime.\(^61\) In addition, the death of Muqātil in 403/1012-3 possibly brought the Balearics into play. Control over the islands, along with Tortosa or Almeria, could have decided the mastery of the Western Mediterranean.\(^62\) These events were likely among the factors that pushed Mujāhid towards his Mediterranean strategy. With little recourse to continental power, Mujāhid turned to the maritime lanes and the naval and corsair

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\(^61\) Ch. Picard, *La mer*, 40-1.

policies he had carried out under the ‘Āmirid regime.

The enmity between Mujāhid and Khayrān should, however, be nuanced somewhat. Though Khayrān’s expansionism does seem to have pushed Mujāhid towards declaring the caliphate of al-Mu‘ayṭī in 405/1015, Khayrān’s subsequent alliance with the Banū Ḥammūd quickly fell apart, leaving him without legitimizing recognition of his authority. This is probably the reason behind a 406/1015-6 dirham struck in Almeria in the name of ‘Abd Allāh [al-Mu‘ayṭī]. Khayrān’s name does not appear on the piece, but the place name definitely implies his participation. Ibn Bashkūwāl does in fact write that al-Mu‘ayṭī received the bay‘a as caliph in the Sharq al-Andalus and the khutba was pronounced in his name throughout the East. Khayrān was not submitting to Mujāhid, but using ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu‘ayṭī’s name did imply recognition of the source of his legitimacy.

This was, nevertheless, only a brief respite in the conflict between Denia and Almería, and Khayrān may even have contributed directly to al-Mu‘ayṭī’s rebellion against Mujāhid. Mujāhid returned from the failed Sardinia expedition only shortly before the caliphal campaign of al-Murtaḍā, the ‘Āmirid-sponsored candidate, and he

63 A. Prieto y Vives, Los Reyes de taifas, 182, no. 140; G. Miles, Coins of the Spanish Mulūk al-Ṭawā’if, 44, no. 160; A. Ariza Armada, “Las cecas de taifas bajo dominio eslavo.” 149-50. There are some identification problems for this dirham, and the date is not clear: A. Prieto y Vives does not hazard a guess at the date, A. Vives y Escudero gives 4_3, and G. Miles and A. Ariza Armada indicate 406. However, though this date does correspond with the caliphate of ‘Abd Allāh al-Mu‘ayṭī, it precedes the ascension of ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd in muharram 407, to which Khayrān directly contributed; Ibn Khaṭīb, Kitāb a‘māl al-a‘lām, 142, 152; Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 1:86.
64 Ibn Bashkūwāl (1989), 413, no. 598.
65 The simultaneity of the Allūṭa emission without Mujāhid’s name, and Khayrān’s piece mentioning al-Mu‘ayṭī may point in this direction.
does not seem to have participated in the venture. This abstention agrees with Ibn Bassām’s claims that Mujāhid split from the ‘Āmirids, which is not surprising given Khayrān’s role at the head of this movement. Mujāhid and Khayrān came together a few years later, in 417/1026, to expulse the Cordovan representative of Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd at the request of the city’s inhabitants. Their mutual disdain and mistrust caused a falling out within a few months, and Khayrān returned home. Mujāhid left the capital himself a short time later. The ambition of both men, and their rivalry, would have made it impossible for them to work together on a long-term basis, and their stay in the former caliphal capital probably convinced them of the futility, and even absurdity, of any effort to restore the caliphate there. Cordova was, moreover, too far removed from the maritime and Mediterranean networks that were the base of Mujāhid’s power, and the former capital could only have had peripheral status in his territories.

Mujāhid’s failure in Sardinia forced him to rethink his Mediterranean and general strategy, bringing his attention back to the Sharq al-Andalus. The invitation to share power with Labīb in Valencia and Tortosa offered him the opportunity to rebuild his presence on the continent through the port of Denia, but Mujāhid’s priorities lay to the south. His efforts over the next few years, and until the end of his reign, focused on expanding into Tudmīr, Khayrān’s sphere of influence. Sources do not provide precise dates for the conflicts between Mujāhid and Khayrān, but at least

66 Ibn al-Khaṭīb does not include him in the list of those ‘Āmirids who took the field against Granada, and only Ibn Khaldūn mentions him among the partisans of al-Murtadā. Mujāhid may have sworn the bay’a to stabilize his legitimacy in the aftermath of this own failed caliphate, without contributing concretely to the actual campaign.
part of the hostilities occurred before 414/1023. Mujāhid succeeded in occupying Orihuela and Murcia, thus taking control of major portions of the network of communications for the region. Though he had lost much of his fleet in Sardinia, Mujāhid was able to rebuild to the point of dominating the former center for caliphal naval production. Ibn Ḥazm writes that he blockaded the port, while Sā‘id al-Baghdādī wrote a poem to commemorate a major naval victory over Khayrān. The ruler of Almeria had to call on Muḥammad b. al-Muẓaffar ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad al-Manṣūr, who had used his mother’s inheritance to finance an army and set himself up in Jaén. Though he had been passed over by the ‘Āmirid ‘abīd of Játiva and Valencia in favor of his cousin, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Muḥammad’s resources were enough to oust Mujāhid from Orihuela and Murcia. Differences, however, arose between Khayrān and his ally, and Muḥammad turned to his former adversary, Mujāhid, for refuge. Khayrān entrusted his fellow fatā Zuhayr with governing Tudmīr, keeping Almería for himself. With perhaps the support of the Banū Ṣinhāja of Granada, with whom Zuhayr was allied, the two fityān were able to block Mujāhid’s peninsular ambitions, reinforcing the taifa’s Mediterranean orientation.

Khayrān died in 419/1028, and Zuhayr came into control of the territories stretching from Almeria to Cordova, from Játiva to Baeza to the borders of Toledo.

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Zuhayr’s possessions, even without Játiva, which he ceded to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr, would have allowed him considerable power over Denia’s access to peninsular markets. Mujāhid thus did not enter into direct conflict with his powerful neighbor, though he did not renounce his overall strategy of building Denia’s influence in the region’s communications networks. Instead of open confrontation, Mujāhid insinuated himself into a conflict between two factions of the Murcia elite – the Banū Ṭāhir and Banū Ḥaṭṭāb – over control of that city.72 Mujāhid supported Abū ‘Amir b. Ḥaṭṭāb against Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ṭāhir, hoping to gain his loyalty and shift the city back to his domain.73 Denia was not, however, in a position to force the situation, and Mujāhid accepted to liberate Ibn Ṭāhir in exchange for a large ransom. This effectively conceded control over Murcia to Zuhayr, who proceeded to imprison Ibn Ḥaṭṭāb in Almería and name the Banū Ṭāhir to run the city. This family would continue to control Murcia until the end of the taifa period, and Mujāhid would have to await Zuhayr’s death in 429/1038 to bring Tudmīr into his sphere of influence on a stable basis.

This incident illustrates one of the basic aspects of taifa power. The mulāk al-ṭawā’if depended on the adherence of local elites to impose their regimes in the towns and fortifications of their principalities; Zuhayr needed the participation of the local Banū Ṭāhir to implement his rule in Murcia. The governors and representatives of the local elites swore the bay’a to their respective rulers, thus communicating their

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consent to a specific *dawla*, and especially their recognition of its fiscal structures and representatives. Control over a territory could thus switch without military confrontation, signified by the simple changing of names during the weekly *khutba*. Mujāhid was finally able to extend his power beyond the *Jibāl Balansiya* thanks to defections by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s governors. The importance of the local elites explains in part efforts taken to maintain and argue legitimacy. Even though most of these elites did not wish to rule themselves, they could choose, to a certain point, to whom they would swear the *bay’a*.74

Zuhayr died during an ill-advised attack on Granada in 429/1038, and the people of Almería invited ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr of Valencia to govern their city.75 Zuhayr had originally forged an alliance with the Banū Ṣinhāja of Granada, a possible sign of Mujāhid’s threat to the north, and a definite sign of the little importance placed on factional ethnic divisions in the years following the *fitna*. For reasons that are not clear, but that certainly involved a fair amount of self-grandeur, Zuhayr aligned himself with Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Birzāl, ruler of Carmona and enemy of Bādīs b. Ḥabbūs, provoking open dispute with his former ally.76

Even less clear is ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr’s decision to continue this conflict with the Berbers of Granada, especially since he does not seem to have had the means. Mujāhid consented to participate in the expedition against the Ṣinhāja, probably in exchange for the promised division of territories conquered. The possible

gains did not suffice though, and Mujāhid’s apprehensions about fighting the Berber warriors he knew too well from his service under the ‘Āmirid regime caused him to renege at the last minute on his commitments. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz insulted the ruler of Denia, but was obliged to turn back home without his support.

Mujāhid’s brief time in the field with ‘Abd al-‘Azīz gave him privileged information on the Valencian ruler’s military capacities. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s hold over Tudmīr and Almería was not solid, and in 433/1042, Mujāhid took advantage of this weakness to expand his territories. The ruler of Valencia entrusted rule of Almería to his brother-in-law Ma’an b. Șumādhīh, who promptly declared his independence. The subsequent clash between Mujāhid and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz escalated quickly, and al-Manṣūr was forced to call for help from his mother’s Castilian relatives – because the Catalans sided with Mujāhid? – but his losses resulted as much from defections as from military battles. Mujāhid thus brought under his control strategic points from Lorca, Murcia, Orihuela and Elche to as far as Baeza and Jódar, taking in fact the entire kūra of Tudmīr, its road networks and coastal infrastructures – namely Alicante.77 ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was able to save Játiva, but the political map of the Sharq al-Andalus had radically changed by the end of the conflict, and Denia’s territory encompassed the majority of the crossroads and passage points that tied al-Andalus to the Mediterranean.

The geographer al-‘Udhri (d. 478/1085-6) writes that these territories passed to ‘Alī b. Mujāhid on his father’s death, and stayed in his power until they were

annexed by al-Muqtadir of Zaragoza in 468/1076-7. Other authors, however, and notably Ibn al-Abbār, indicate that the Banū Ṭāhir submitted to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and his son, ‘Abd al-Malik, to whom they sent their surplus taxes. Ibn ‘Idhārī, on the other hand claims that the Banū Ṭāhir took advantage of ‘Abd al-Malik’s weakness to become independent. In a well-known story, Mujāhid sent the lexicographer Tamām b. Ghālab b. ‘Umr al-Lughawī one thousand dinars to dedicate his book to him, “at the time of his conquest of Murcia,” indicating perhaps that his hold over that city was only temporary. The situation is thus unclear, and Murcia’s place between Denia and Valencia remains ambiguous. What is clear, however, is that outside the capital cities, political authority was expressed through tax collections. The governor of Murcia, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ṭāhir in this case, collected taxes, from which he paid the administration and army, then sending any surplus to the ruler who had confirmed his governorship. Authority over cities and ḥuṣūn defined taifa territory, and during times of peace that authority was translated through tax payments. Through Mujāhid’s campaigns, Denia had won over those who controlled the more important ḥuṣūn on the roads between Toledo and Seville and the Mediterranean coast. This not only helped ensure the flow of goods between the taifas ports and the interior markets, but also offered increased revenues from taxes

78 Al-‘Udhrī, 16.
and tolls collected along those roads.

Murcia vacillated in its allegiance, but the rest of northern Tudmīr at least continued under ‘Alī b. Mujāhid’s authority. Baeza passed to Granada, but Segura, in the same region, remained in the hands of the Denia ‘Āmirids until the end of the dynasty, and the taifa now stretched from the coast to the borders of Cordova and Toledo. Nevertheless, despite this seemingly strong position, Iqbāl al-Dawla did not translate it into military power, and did not exploit his advantages over his neighbors. Denia’s foreign policy under its second ruler worked through diplomacy, correspondence and alliances. These relations concentrated more on mutual benefit, and eventually did little to protect the taifa, and its neighbors, from the emerging powerful states of the interior. The entire region, in fact, would soon fall to the expanding authority of Zaragoza, Toledo and Seville.

THE TAIFAS OF THE INTERIOR

Toledo

Toledo and its region supplied much of Denia’s commercial activity, but paradoxically, little diplomatic exchange occurred between the two taifas. Ceramics from Toledo found in the region of Denia, as well as distribution of those same ceramic types in North Africa indicate Denia as the principal transfer point between

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the peninsular interior and the Mediterranean. The jurist Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī pronounced a fatwā concerning a cobbler from Denia who had died leaving valuable skins in the region of Toledo. There is, however, no trace of communications between the two courts, and this despite the fact that Mujāhid, ‘Alī and Yahyā b. Dhū ‘l-Nūn al-Mā’mūn shared the same apprehensions concerning the expansionist Banū Hūd. The closest indication of any kind of cooperation is their belonging both to the coalition built around the Banū ‘Abbād of Seville. Ibn ‘Idhārī describes a division between the Andalusī and Berber rulers, split in their loyalty between the caliphates of the false Hishām II and Idrīs b. Yahyā b. ‘Alī b. Ḥammūd. He also specifies that the Andalusīs themselves were divided between the allies of Zaragoza and Seville, with both Denia and Toledo siding with Seville. The alliance did not last though, notably because of competition between Toledo and Seville over annexing Cordova.

Relations between Denia and Toledo were probably limited in part because of close ties between Toledo and Valencia. Like the Banū ‘Abbād or Banū Hūd, the Dhū ‘l-Nūnids sought to improve their access to the Mediterranean, and worked to extend their influence through the ‘Āmirids of Valencia. ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz married the daughter of al-Mā’mūn of Toledo, who subsequently took the opportunity to interfere in his son-in-law’s affairs, even replacing him with his own

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84 For archeological remains, see: R. Azuar Ruiz, *Denia islámica*, 56, 246, 326, 415-6; R. Azuar Ruiz, “Al-Andalus y el comercio mediterráneo del siglo XI, según la dispersion y distribución de las producciones cerámicas,” *La Península ibérica y el Mediterráneo entre los siglos XI y XII, Codex Aquilarensis*, 13.1 (1998), 57-8. Despite the lack of direct access to the sea, members of Toledo’s Jewish community participated in Mediterranean commerce. When a man in Jerusalem wanted to contact his family in Badajoz, he sent a message through Fūstat and “the people of Toledo”: S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 1:69; Geniza TS 13 J 23, f. 22.


Toledo’s involvement in Valencia, and al-Mā’mūn’s direct efforts to control the ‘Āmirid court there, may have discouraged active dialogue with Denia. Tensions between the Dhū ‘l-Nūnids and the ‘Abbādids of Seville, Denia’s principal inland ally, likely also hampered relations between them.

Seville

Denia’s rulers maintained close relations with Seville, based in large part on economic factors and the commercial artery that linked the Betic region and the Sharq al-Andalus. Shared apprehension concerning the Banū Ḥūd of Zaragoza also brought them together. Anti-Ḥammūdīd sentiments may also have contributed, but Denia does not seem to have actively worked against the Berbers. Overlapping possessions between Denia and Granada in the Sierra de la Segura, as well as concerns about interference with traffic towards the coast, may have influenced ‘Alī to keep his father’s policies and avoid conflict with the Śinḥāja of Granada. Denia was, nevertheless, part of the coalition around Seville and the false Hishām II that Ibn ‘Idhārī considered anti-Berber.

Rubiera Mata insists on the importance of maintaining access to the eastern coast, avoiding the hostile Berbers of Granada, as a major factor in Seville’s relations with Denia. Nevertheless, Seville did have its own port and dār al-ṣinā’a, which al-Rāzī described as “one of the finest ports in Spain where large ships can dock.” Boats carried olive oil towards the Orient from its port – though Idrīsī does specify

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88 Al-Rāzī, 93; E. Lévi-Provençal, HEM, 3:110; Ch. Picard, La mer, 19-21.
transport by sea and land – and many fragments of ceramic *cuerda seca* from Seville have been found along the North-African coast, from Ceuta to Fez and Marrakesh, and eastwards as far as the Qal’a Ḥammād. A sixth/twelfth-century Geniza letter states that the trip by sea from Tripoli in modern Libya to Seville could be made in eight days, while a boat whose owner was from Seville appears on more than one occasion in letters from the fifth/eleventh century. Seville’s commercial contacts with the Mediterranean did not necessarily pass through the *Sharq al-Andalus* ports, but Constable does note that rough conditions caused some merchants to disembark before the Straits of Gibraltar and finish their journey by land. There is no question about ‘Abbādīd desires to gain direct access to the Mediterranean, as their efforts to annex Murcia would later confirm, but relations with Denia should also be placed in the larger geopolitical context that included the need to contain Toledo and Zaragoza.

Mujāhid was one of the first taifa rulers – along with ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr, Muqātil of Tortosa and Ibn Jahwar of Cordova – to recognize the caliphate of Hishām II in Seville in 426/1035, and Ibn ‘Idhārī places him alongside al-Mu‘taḍīd in 435/1043-4, in his lists of the three divisions among the *mulūk al-ṭawā‘if*. Though he had married his son with the daughter of Sulaymān b. Hūd, Mujāhid sought to balance his position among the inland taifas, likely knowing that his newly

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acquired territories would attract jealous attention. Diplomatic exchange between Denia and Seville was quite active, with regular personal correspondence between the two courts. Al-Mu'taḍid had a harem of seventy “well-born” wives, but his favorite was the daughter of Mujāhid and sister of ‘Alī.93 This marriage consolidated relations between the two taifas sometime around 433/1041-2.94 Regular letters between Mujāhid and al-Mu'taḍid speak to their shared interest in language and poetry, and Mujāhid delighted his son-in-law with an exceptionally intelligent and educated slave, who took her new master’s name as her own, al-'Abbādiyya.95 These close relations may explain in part al-Mu'taḍid’s personal involvement in the dynastic matters after Mujāhid’s death.

The transfer of power from Mujāhid to his sons seems to have been a hesitant and unwieldy process. Mujāhid had two sons in line for the succession: the oldest, ‘Alī, and his brother, Ḥasan. ‘Alī had remained prisoner in Christian lands for sixteen years after the failed Sardinia invasion, but after his return in 423/1031-2, his father reinstated him as heir alongside his younger brother.96 A series of dirhams and dinars struck in Denia mentioning only Ḥasan, in 430/1038-9 and 432/1040-1, both Mujāhid and Ḥasan in 432/1040/1, then Mujāhid and his two sons in 435/1043-4 and

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436/1044-5, indicates to some extent Mujāhid’s intentions.97 Some have hypothesized that the earliest emissions by Ḥasan point to a rebellion, or contested rule, but the dirham struck the same year carrying also Mujāhid’s laqab, al-Muwaffaq, goes against this, while written sources carry no mention of such tensions.98 Ḥasan seems to have been the heir during ‘Alī’s absence, but was then associated with his brother, losing primacy in the succession. ‘Alī then took Mujāhid’s place upon his death in 436/1044, proposing that Ḥasan succeed him in turn. Ḥasan’s deception presented an opportunity for al-Mu’tādid to intervene in Denia’s affairs, and thus gain influence over the corridor that Mujāhid had recently achieved between his port and the Betic region. In response to Ḥasan’s request for aide, the ruler of Seville sent a slave (ghulām) from his army to carry out ‘Alī’s assassination.99 Ḥasan’s plan failed, and he had to flee Denia and seek protection from his brothers-in-law in Seville and Valencia. ‘Alī had sent envoys to inform his fellow mulūk al-ṭawā‘if, not only of his brother’s treason, but also of al-Mu’tādid’s role in it.100 The ‘Abbādīd ruler must have understood that continuing to support Ḥasan was not in his best interests, that it could trouble his access to the east, and so

97 See annex.
98 Prieto y Vives took Ḥasan’s emissions as a sign that he had ruled during his father’s lifetime, while Chabas Llorens thought they indicated rebellion. Barceló underlines the conciliation shown by the coins carrying the names of all three figures, while Rubiera Mata advanced that the coins were false. This last hypothesis was rejected by Ariza and Retamero: A. Prieto y Vives, Reyes, 122; R. Chabas Llorens, “Mochēhid, hijo de Yūsuf, y Ali, hijo de Mochēhid,” in Homenajes à D. Francisco Codera, (Zaragoza, 1904), 411-34; M. Barceló, “Assaig d’un corpus numismatic de la taifa ‘āmirida de Dāniya-Mayûrqa (436-468),” in Actas del IV coloquio hispano-tunecino (Palma de Mallorca, 1979) (Madrid, 1983), 43-58; M.J. Rubiera Mata, La taifa de Denia, 94-5; A. Ariza Armada, “Las cecas de taifas bajo dominio eslavo,” 152-3; F. Retamero, “La formalización del poder,” 437-8.
100 Ibn Bassām provides the letter written to ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz al-Manṣūr in which ‘Alī describes, in detail, the attempt and its aftermath: Dhakhīra, 3:130-1.
refused his former accomplice asylum. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz allowed him to enter Valencia, but offered nothing for his cause, and Ḥasan ended his days in silence.

Sources do not provide details on subsequent relations between Denia and Seville, but it was in their mutual interest to maintain at least constructive diplomacy. When he executed his son with his own hands, al-Mu‘taḍid included ‘Alī in the list of rulers he wrote to explain his actions. Their relations may even have gone beyond superficial reconciliation, since Ibn Bassām describes a present offered by al-Mu‘tamid, son and successor of al-Mu‘taḍid, to “his primary wife, Bint Ibn Mujāhid”\(^\text{101}\). There is no specific mention of such a marriage, and Ibn Bassām may be confusing the wife with Mujāhid’s daughter, and so al-Mu‘taḍid’s wife. If such was the case, the gift shows at least the privileged place held by Ibn Mujāhid’s sister in the ‘Abbādid court. ‘Alī must in any case have considered ‘Abbādid Seville an ally, since he sent his minister, Muḥammad b. Muslim, there to ask for help against Ibn Hūd. Seville’s help, if sent, did not arrive in time, but this was not because of a lack of interest in the region. Indeed, after Zaragoza’s annexation of Denia, al-Mu‘tamid extended his own power eastwards, sending his minister, Ibn ‘Ammār, then his own son, to take possession of Lorca, then Murcia\(^\text{102}\). These actions followed quickly on the ‘Abbādid conquest of Cordova, and Seville’s strategy seems in part to come from the desire to build a corridor that stretched to the sea between the hostile Banū Ṣinhāja to the south, and Banū Hūd to the north.

\(^{101}\) “al-sīda al-‘arūs”: Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 2:392. The present was a pair of solid gold gazelles weighing 700 mithqāls, of which one was offered to his son, and the other to Bint Ibn Mujāhid.

Badajoz

Badajoz was one of the farther removed taifas from Denia’s territory, but Mujähid and ‘Alī maintained close ties with the ruling Aftasid family. There are no archeological traces of trade between the two regions, and maritime access was plentiful in this taifa that included Lisbon and especially Alcacer do Sal, the former caliphal dār al-sinā‘a for the Atlantic. Nevertheless, these ports did not necessarily have regular contact with the Mediterranean, and part of the taifa’s products and commerce may have transited through Denia. A Jewish merchant from Badajoz, residing in Jerusalem, sought to contact his family back home by sending a message to Toledo, where his father often did business. In such cases, Denia likely served as the point of entry for communications continuing inland.103

Antagonism between Badajoz and Seville did not hamper personal and diplomatic relations between Denia’s court and al-Muẓaffar b. al-Aftas, second ruler of Badajoz.104 Mujähid sent him a letter in which he expressed his friendship, despite the distance that separated them.105 ‘Alī wrote him on at least three occasions,

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103 S.D. Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1:69; Geniza TS 13 J 23, f. 22.
104 According to Ibn ‘Idhārī, al-Muẓaffar had to face not only Ferdinand I of Castile, but also Ibn ‘Abbād of Seville and Ibn Dhū ‘l-Nūn of Toledo; Bayān, 3:236; P. Guichard, B. Soravia, Les royaumes de taifas, 66.
105 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 2:78. The letter was written by the famous kātib Abū Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Barr, and was sent in part to temper any ill feelings concerning Mujähid’s having taken in the important faqīḥ Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī, for whose attention al-Muẓaffar was also actively vying. Bruna Soravia interprets the letter as a sign of ties that Mujähid and al-Muẓaffar had held while officers under the former ‘Āmirid regime, but this seems erroneous. There is no mention of Ibn al-Aftas having served as an ‘Āmirid officer, and the age difference between him and Mujähid – Ibn al-Aftas succeeded his father in 437/1045 and ruled until 460/1068 – does not seem to support the idea of a friendship built before the fitna. If Mujähid did know a ruler of Badajoz before, it was probably Sābūr, the Ṣiqālābī who ruled at the beginning of the fitna. In addition, according to al-Maqqārī, Sābūr was the
notably when he succeeded his father, and a few years later to send his condolences on the death of his father, ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Afṭas, in 435/1043-4. Relations between these relatively distant taifas stems first from the particular interest Mujāhid and Muẓaffar both held for language and literature, providing material and occasions for epistolary exchange. Their correspondence began even before al-Muẓaffar had come to power, a sign of its personal nature.

Badajoz could also offer a piece in Denia’s efforts to maintain geopolitical balance. Ibn ‘Idhārī includes Ibn al-Afṭas in the coalition centered around al-Mu’taḍid of Seville in 435/1043-4, together with Yahyā b. Dhū ‘l-Nūn and the other rulers of the south-west, separate from Sulaymān b. Hūd and the Berbers. Significantly, most of the extent correspondence between Denia and Badajoz dates from this period, one of intense diplomatic activity for Mujāhid, set off by his imminent death, his recent conquests, and a general reshuffling of taifa regimes.

Mujāhid seems to have worked consciously in the last few years of his reign to assure a stable succession after his death. He took precautions concerning the Catalans, as discussed above, and he seems to have done the same with his peers. The tacit support of the other mulūk al-ṭawā’if at a fragile time for this dynasty would have been valuable, and their recognition of the succession essential. This is clear in ‘Alī’s first efforts to ensure his hold over power after his brother’s failed plot: he repeated the bay’a ceremony with his governors, and he wrote to his fellow taifa

brother of Labīb, ruler of Tortosa, whose relationship with Mujāhid is treated supra; History of the Mohammedan Dynasties, 2:258.


rulers.\textsuperscript{108} His ascension and rule would not have been possible without the approbation of these two groups.

Mujāhid’s success in his conflict with ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūr drew the taifa towards the interior of the peninsula. Sulaymān b. Hūd’s intervention ended the war, but Mujāhid still had to consolidate his hold over these new territories that juxtaposed new neighbors. The marriage alliance with the Banū Hūd did not prevent Mujāhid from understanding Sulaymān b. Hūd’s expansionism; frontal attacks on Toledo left little question of Zaragoza’s intentions for surrounding taifas.\textsuperscript{109} In addition, even if Mujāhid does not seem to have pursued an anti-Berber policy, the acquisition of Zuhayr’s territories in the Sierra de la Segura placed the taifa in a delicate and possibly vulnerable position vis-à-vis Granada, as the subsequent loss of Baeza shows. The marriage between Mu’taḍīd b. al-‘Abbād and Mujāhid’s daughter was certainly orchestrated with these problems in mind, consolidating a relationship that existed at least as early as 435/1043-4, when Mujāhid was among the first to recognize Seville’s puppet caliph, the false Hishām II. The same dynamic explains Denia’s place in the 435/1043-4 coalition described by ‘Ibn ‘Idhārī. Though the sources do not provide information on specific actions by this group, Mujāhid needed to situate his power within a structure that was larger than his own taifa. Badajoz was not among Denia’s principal allies, especially since it was often involved in armed conflict with Seville and Toledo, but a diplomatic relationship with the Aḥṣasids in this context could enlist the support of a powerful court, without that support


necessarily entailing military action. Even at its greatest extent, Denia’s territories did not reach as far as Badajoz, but its territorial expansion towards the Betic region involved the taifa in regional geopolitics. If Mujāhid and ‘Alī wanted to profit from the economic ties offered by the roads now under their influence, they had also had to maintain a diplomatic presence in the area.

Finally, the intensification of diplomatic activity during the 430s/1040s was also the result of a number of dynastic transitions. Seville, Toledo, Badajoz, Zaragoza and Denia, as well as other dynasties, went through major changes at this time, indicative of a generational transition. Relations thus had to be established and defined between the new members of the peninsular ruling elite.

**ZARAGOZA AND THE DRAW OF THE SEA**

Zaragoza, like Seville and Toledo, used its power base at the center of the Peninsula to extend towards the coast, imposing its rule and annexing neighboring states. The expansion of these three polities exploited regional opportunities, while building on the need to establish a presence in the *Sharq al-Andalus*. Though powerful within their continental territories, these taifas remained dependant on the Mediterranean port-cities for a large part of their economic survival. In addition, the riches generated by Mediterranean commerce could only attract the attention of the Hūdid, Dhū ‘l-Nūnid and ‘Abbābid regimes, influencing their foreign policies and the general character of their expansionism.

The taifas of Denia and Zaragoza, more specifically the ‘Āmirid and Hūdid
dynasties, shared shifting and unstable relations throughout the century. Even before Sulaymān b. Hūd came to power in Zaragoza in 431/1039-40, he had forced his way into Mujāhid’s sphere of influence, participating in the rebellion against Labīb in Tortosa and Valencia. This intrusion led to an intense war between Mujāhid and Ibn Hūd, though the eventual outcome, or even if there was one, is not very clear. Tortosa’s weakness meant the taifa had to rely on a more powerful state, possibly playing Zaragoza, Denia, and Barcelona off each other. Bonnassie has postulated the idea of a protectorate by Barcelona and Denia over Tortosa, motivated by the need to limit Zaragoza’s efforts to expand towards the sea.\footnote{P. Bonnassie, \textit{La Catalogne}, 663, n. 55.} Despite this, Zaragoza’s involvement in the region continued, and at least part of the relations between Denia and Barcelona stemmed from the need to protect their interests against a common threat.

Mujāhid and Sulaymān nevertheless recognized the need to maintain a modicum of peace between Muslims, as well as their mutual economic interest in the traffic that flowed between the \textit{Sharq al-Andalus} and the Hūdid territories. Ibn Hūd was especially active in this, when not trying to make gains through less pacific means. Ibn Hūd intervened in the conflict between Mujāhid and ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, specifically citing the need for unity against the Christians.\footnote{Ibn Bassām, \textit{Dhakhīra}, 3:314. Mujahid’s possible use of Catalan mercenaries in this conflict, against al-Maṣāf’s Castilians, may very well have worried Ibn Hūd. He may also have wanted to avoid the possibility of Denia gaining too much power, should the \textit{kāra} of Valencia fall definitively into his hands.} The subsequent marriage alliance between the two powers did little to change their relations, which never went beyond mutual apprehension. There is no record of diplomatic exchange
between the two courts, and archeology provides no conclusive evidence concerning eventual economic exchange. Zaragoza may have depended less on Denia, circulating goods through Tortosa’s port. Nevertheless, some exchange did occur, since biographical dictionaries provide notices for nine different ‘ulamā’ who moved between the two towns. Sources do not mention any further open conflicts between the two taifas before the fall of Denia in 468/1076, but the peace merely covered tensions that built up to the taifa’s annexation.

Mujāhid did not intervene directly in the conflict between al-Musta‘īn and Yaḥyā b. Dhū ‘l-Nūn of Toledo. Nevertheless, Denia’s alignment with Seville at this time, as indicated by Ibn ‘Idhārī, may indicate Mujāhid’s apprehensions concerning Zaragoza’s expansion into the Guadalajara region. Ibn ‘Idhārī clearly states opposition to the Berbers, but does not explain the division among the Andalusīs. One of the principal reasons though, must have been the armed conflict between Zaragoza and Toledo and that ended only with the death of Sulaymān b. Hūd in 438/1047. Yaḥyā b. Dhū ‘l-Nūn was forced to recognize Seville’s false caliph, Hishām II, in exchange for a promise of military aid against Zaragoza. Mujāhid’s adherence to this group came perhaps more from economic interests, but he may also have wanted to mark some distance from Zaragoza. Al-Musta‘īn had rapidly adopted an aggressive foreign policy of enlarging his taifa at the expense of his neighbors. The annexation of Guadalajara is one example of this policy, but Hūdīd interference

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112 Al-Ḥumaydī, no. 182; Ibn Bashkūwāl, ns. 77, 133, 457, 646, 882; ns. 343, 350, 779, 1189; Yāqūt, 5:36-7; Ibn al-Abbār, Ṭāknila (B.A.H.), no. 456; Ibn al-Abbār, Mu’jam, no. 184.
in the *Sharq al-Andalus* indicates their intentions in the region. Ibn Hūd’s peace brokering between Mujāhid and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was supposedly motivated by Islamic unity, but his own annexation of Guadalajara, and use of Castilian mercenaries against Toledo, shows this was not necessarily his primary concern. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s adherence to al-Musta‘īn’s coalition a few years later indicates growing Hūdid influence in the region, and may have been intended to discourage any eventual territorial ambitions on Mujāhid’s part. Zaragoza was involved in heavy conflict with Toledo, and so could not expend substantial effort in expanding eastwards, but it could deter similar efforts by Denia.

Mujāhid proceeded Sulaymān b. Hūd in death by only a couple of years, and while al-Muwaffaq was replaced by the complacent ‘Alī Iqbāl al-Dawla, the successor in Zaragoza, Aḥmad b. Sulaymān b. Hūd al-Muqtadīr was one of the second generation rulers – along with al-Mu‘taḍīd of Seville and al-Ma‘mūn of Toledo – who would remake the taifa map. Sulaymān b. Hūd had divided his lands among his sons, and while Aḥmad received Zaragoza, he had to spend several years rebuilding and consolidating his father’s former territories. He eliminated his brothers in Calatayud, Huesca and Tudela as early as 442/1051, but had to wait until 459/1066-7 to finally take Lerida from his brother, Yūsuf al-Muẓaffar, who was paying *parias* to Ramon Beranger I in exchange for his support.115 In the meantime, al-Muqtadīr did not neglect efforts to increase access to the Mediterranean. In 452/1060-1, al-Muqtadīr annexed the taifa of Tortosa, overturning the *Ṣiqlābī* Nabil,

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placing his own son, Mundhir ‘Imad al-Dawla, at the head of the satellite state.\(^{116}\)

Some historians have taken Ibn Ḥayyān’s narrative of the rebellion against Labīb, in which the inhabitants called on Ibn Hūd, as an explanation of this transfer of power.\(^ {117}\) This interpretation, though, does not fit with the text’s chronological order: Ibn Ḥayyān includes the episode with the events following the death of Mubārak in Valencia, preceding the ascension of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz; the Dhakhīra passage names Labīb, and not Nabīl; Ibn Hūd’s intervention in Tortosa provoked a war with Mujāhid, and not Ibn Mujāhid.\(^{118}\) Considering especially his reaction to the invasion of his own lands a decade later, and his need to ask for help from his peers, it would be hard to imagine ‘Alī b. Mujāhid participating in the war with Ibn Hūd that Ibn Ḥayyān describes.

Sources do not provide precise information concerning the build up to this invasion, but the rapprochement between Denia and Barcelona a few years earlier indicated by the treaty of 450/1058, points to a general ill-feeling concerning Zaragoza’s maneuverings. Prieto y Vives hypothesized that Nabīl might have been an agent for the Banū Hūd, which, if true, would further explain Denia and


\(^{117}\) Ibn Bassām, Dhakhīra, 3:19-20. Cf. P. Guichard, B. Sorvia, Les royaumes de taifas, 69. A. Prieto y Vives comes to the same conclusion using a similar passage from Ibn al-Khaṭīb’s Takmila that also carries Labīb’s name: Los reyes de taifas, 37-8, no. 2.

\(^{118}\) The confusion between Labīb and Nabīl is common in secondary sources, especially since monetary emissions by the latter are unclear: A. Prieto y Vives reads “Nabīl”, A. Vives y Escudero transcribes “Labīl”, and F. Codera y Zaidín hesitates, then changes his mind: A. Prieto y Vives, Reyes, 191, ns. 195-7; A. Vives y Escudero, Monedas, 211-2, ns. 1293-5; F. Codera y Zaidín, Tratado de numismática arábigo-española (Madrid, 1879), 183, 186; “Monedas árabes de Tortosa,” Revista de ciencias históricas (Gerona, 1881): 13-4, ns. 14-5.
Barcelona’s worries. Though Denia did not have the resources to oppose Zaragoza’s annexation of Tortosa, al-Muqtadir had to face Catalan troops during his conquest of the taifa. Tortosa was a tributary state of Barcelona, paying regular *parias*, and Ramon Beranger could hardly have appreciated this encroachment into his sphere of influence. The attack on Barbastro two years later may even have been motivated in part as a reprisal for al-Muqtadir’s taking of Tortosa.

Though the “crusade” character of Barbastro can certainly be questioned, it did serve to galvanize the attention of the Peninsula’s Muslims on al-Muqtadir. The ruler of Zaragoza deftly turned the situation to his own advantage, building an image of himself as a protector of Islam. He had missives sent to his fellow *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif*, exhorting them to contribute to efforts to retake the city in the name of Islam. ‘Alī b. Mujāhid’s principal contribution was a letter written by his principal *kātib*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, in which the inhabitants of Barbastro called their Muslim brothers to *jihād* to protect the borders of Islam against the infidels. Many *mujāhidūn* answered the call to augment al-Muqtadir’s forces, including 500 horsemen sent from Seville, and Barbastro was brought back under Hūdid rule the next year, in 457/1065. At a time when many taifas were reduced to paying *parias*, following not long after the loss of Coimbra and the battle of Paterna, al-Muqtadir’s

victory against the Christians considerably consolidated his power: it was in fact after Barbastro that Aḥmad b. Sulaymān b. Hūd adopted the laqab al-Muqtadir. Ibn ‘Idhārī highlights the renown that he gained, while Ibn Bassām writes that there was not a single king (malik) who did not desire to enter into relations with him.¹²³ Thus strengthened, al-Muqtadir was able to push his brother, Yūsuf, from power in Lerida, and turn back to his march towards the sea.

THE FALL OF DENIA AND CONQUEST OF THE COAST

More than a decade separated Barbastro and al-Muqtadir’s entry into Denia in 468/1076-7. Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Idhārī and Ibn al-Khaṭīb both immediately follow their descriptions of Barbastro with the conquest of Denia.¹²⁴ There is certainly some telescoping going on here because of the years separating these historians from the events they describe, but al-Muqtadir’s momentum coming off his great victory must be taken into account in analyzing subsequent conquests. Ibn Bassām provides more details concerning Denia’s fall, but the passage in his Dhakhīra also communicates a very rapid succession of events, of a short amount of time between Ibn Hūd’s initial advances and Ibn Mujāhid’s capitulation; ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn insists on an element of surprise that allowed Ibn Hūd to take the city with few difficulties.¹²⁵ The invasion did, however, represent the culminating moment in a series of preparations, and ‘Alī b. Mujāhid had been aware for quite some time of the approaching danger.

He had witnessed the ease with which al-Ma’mūn of Toledo had pushed his son-in-law, ‘Abd al-Malik, from power in Valencia in 457/1065–6, and probably did not have any illusions concerning his own brother-in-law’s expansionist ambitions. Ibn Bassām transmits a letter written by Muḥammad b. Muslim, kāṭib in Denia’s court, to Aghlab, governor of the Balearics, in which he describes a diplomatic tour of the courts of Almería, Granada, Cordova and Seville to solicit their aid against al-Muqtadir b. Hūd.126 Given the distances travelled, the time spent in each court, and complications along the way, Muḥammad b. Muslim’s tour must have taken several months. No mention is made of any aide coming of this diplomatic mission, but it shows that ‘Alī had some warning of Ibn Hūd’s impending invasion, or at least the fall of Denia was not the result of a simple conversation, as intimated by Ibn Bassām or ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn.

Al-Muqtadir initially campaigned to annex certain fortresses to the territory of his son, the emir of Tortosa.127 Ibn Bassām does not specify which fortresses were targeted, but, as discussed above, the episode does point to the non-linear nature of taifa borders and their fragmentary territories. It is not clear whether al-Muqtadir was after territories that Mujāhid may have taken during his conflict with Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Qāsim of Alpuente, or whether he was treading on Denia’s core lands. ‘Alī’s reaction, in any case, seems to indicate that the fortresses in question were not essential to the taifa’s operations, since he ordered his governors to evacuate those

127 Ibn Bassām, Dhakhîra, 4:184.
districts. Their lack of importance is also indicated by the fact that Granada’s earlier efforts to take the fortress of Baeza were met with fierce resistance, requiring considerable investment to finally dislodge Denia’s agent there.

‘Alī’s advisors beseeched him to change his mind, and he sent out letters to countermand the previous order, now commanding his governors to prepare for combat. This may be the moment when he sent Muḥammad b. Muslim to ask for aide from his potential allies. The rest of the story, reported by Ibn Bassām, and alluded to by ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, is anecdotic, but certainly indicates the generally perceived weakness of Denia, as well as the reticular system of taifa fortifications. Al-Muqtadir seems to have penetrated directly into Denia’s core, without taking the time to methodically reduce outlying fortifications. This, the authors intimate, because he did not intend to conquer the taifa itself. When Mu’izz al-Dawla, ‘Alī’s son, met al-Muqtadir to capitulate, asking what would be done with them, the Hūdid ruler did not understand what he meant, and one of his advisors had to explain to him what had just happened. Al-Muqtadir quickly then accepted their surrender, received the bay’a from Denia’s inhabitants, and settled ‘Alī in Zaragoza with an iqṭa’ for his needs until his death in 474/1081. ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn wrote that territorial conquest required the slow and fastidious reduction of the castles that constituted a taifa’s defensive network. Yet, despite its outlying fortifications, and networks of ḥuṣūn, the entire taifa of Denia fell in a direct attack on its capital. ‘Alī b. Mujāhid

128 Ibn Bassām uses the term bilād, indicating that the fortresses served to define a territory, but the word choice may have been simply the result of the author’s rhyming prose.
129 ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, Tibyān, 92.
had in fact neglected military affairs, as both Ibn Bassām and ʿAbd Allāh b. Buluqqīn
write, to the point that the heart of his defenses was hollow, and without exterior aide,
he could not resist al-Muqtadīr’s advances.

The events that follow illustrate the indirect nature of taifa authority. The
taifa’s territory was defined by the governors or elite who had sworn the bay’a to
Mujāhid’s, then ʿAlī’s, ‘Āmirīd dawla. Al-Muqtadīr had to receive this oath after his
conquest of Denia to assert his power. This was also the opportunity to confirm those
governors in their posts, as was the case with Ibn Ṭahir in Murcia.131 It was likewise
an opportunity for ḥuṣūn to break away from central authority. One of ʿAlī’s sons,
Mujāhid Sirāj al-Dawla, whom his father had appointed ‘āmil of Segura, declared
himself independent, and with Catalan help, was able to retake some districts before
al-Muqtadīr had him poisoned in 469/1076-7.132 Sirāj al-Dawla’s successors in
Segura, Ibrāhim and ‘Abd al-Jubār, were family clients, whose father had been
captured during the Sardinia invasion. The two brothers were able to play off
rivalries between Zaragoza and Seville, eventually negotiating their surrender to the
ʿAbbādīds.133 Segura’s independence and later capitulation to Seville demonstrate
the possibility, within logical limits, for the ‘ummāl and other governors to choose to
whom they would swear oaths and submit territories under their control. The

131 Al-ʿUdhrī, 16.
ʿAlī Sirāj al-Dawla issued dirhams from Segura to emphasize his independence, and probably to pay
his Catalan mercenaries: A. Canto Garcia, T. b. Ḥ. Ibrāhim, “Supplemento”, 157, no. 91. Note that
Mujāhid b. ʿAlī was one of the signatories for the 1058 treaty with Barcelona.
133 Ibn al-Abbār, Kitāb al-hulla al-siyarā’, 2:149-51. Guichard and Soravia remark the lack of clarity
for these events, and that Ibn Şaʿīd mentions another independent governor in Segura, but it seems
there is simply a chronological confusion, especially since the “reign” of the Banū Suhayl in Segura
lasted no more than two years; Les royaumes des taifas, 96.
conquest of the capital had tumbled the taifa and its dawla, but local authorities did not have to follow the capital’s lead.

The Balearics likewise split from the former taifa of Denia under the lead of its governor, ‘Abd Allāh b. Aghlab al-Murtaḍā.134 The Almoravids conquered most of the taifas before the end of the century – Zaragoza, though, fell in 503/1110 – the Balearics were the last taifa, entering Almoravid authority only after the Pisan and Barcelonan attack in 508/1115. ‘Abd Allāh al-Murtaḍā did not issue coins in his own name while his former patron was still alive, his first dirhams appearing in 480/1087-8, avoiding thus official claims of sovereignty before that date.135 The ambiguity of this situation is perhaps the reason why he is not clearly designated in the sources, often amalgamated with his successor, Mubashir b. Sulaymān Nāṣir al-Dawla, also a Denia ‘Āmirid client, who was more assiduous in building and exercising his authority.136 The diminished number of ‘ulamā’ passing through the Balearic port points to changes in maritime traffic, with more direct routes to the East emerging.137 This change did not, however, interrupt the port’s intense naval and pirate activity, and the poet Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. ‘Isā b. al-Labbāna knew how to flatter the basis of his patron’s power in praising the size and warrior-like aspect of the fleet

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134 Al-Qalqashandi, 256.
137 See annex.
anchored in Majorca’s bay. According to Ibn Khaldūn, Mubashir incessantly sent out maritime raids, an activity that eventually provoked the combined Barcelonan and Pisan attack on the Islands. Majorcan ships preyed on maritime lanes, while also descending on the Catalan, French and Italian coasts. The author of the *Liber maiolichinus* mentions church spoliations, pillaging and burning of villages and castles in the name of the Prophet, and trafficking in human booty – the Pisans supposedly liberated 30,000 Christian slaves during their invasion – leading up to the Pisan-Catalan response in 508/1115. The political split from Denia does not seem to have marginalized Majorca from continental circuits. The Banū Hūd, perhaps too busy consolidating their coastal possessions, did not seek to reintegrate the Balearics into the taifa of Denia, now under the authority of Mundhir, son of al-Muqtadīr and emir of Tortosa, and exchange continued within the former taifa’s maritime space. Mubashir, it seems, had easy contact with members of the Banū Maymūn, a family that occupied important positions on the continent, in Denia, Alcira, and Onteniente, and who would become the sixth/twelfth-century equivalent of the Banū Rumāḥīs.

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140 The monastery of Lérins was again destroyed in 1107, despite new fortifications begun in 1073: *Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Lérins*, ed. H. Morris, E. Blanc (Paris, 1883), 2:xv.
under the Almoravids.142

Denia’s political body was broken, its continental territories shared between Seville and Zaragoza in the short interim before Almoravid invasion, while the Balearics would prolong certain aspects of the ‘Āmirid dawla into the sixth/twelfth century. Al-Muqtadir associated Denia and Tortosa under his son, Mundhir; in Murcia he confirmed the wilayat of Ibn Ṭahīr. He also bought Alfonso VI’s complacence in preparation for expansion into Valencia, though in the end he accepted the submission of the governor, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, without annexation.143 Mundhir b. al-Muqtadir maintained the maritime importance of his new lands, becoming himself involved in Mediterranean commerce.144 Ships from Denia were still arriving in the port of Alexandria in the middle of the century.145 Nevertheless, rivalries between Zaragoza and Seville, along with ‘Abbādid conquests of Cordova, Segura and Murcia, must have disrupted continental traffic and economic networks. The conquest of Toledo by Alfonso VI created a sudden influx of refugees to Denia, but it also ruptured trade patterns, especially since the intensification of conflicts between Christians and Muslims, following the arrival of the Almoravids, continued to trouble commerce with the former taifa capital.146

Denia’s brilliance had been the effect of specific policies. Within a larger ensemble,

145 Geniza TS 10 J 14, f. 16.
146 R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islâmica, 415.
without the specific dynamic that had created and maintained the taifa and made it a conduit between the Peninsula and the Mediterranean, the great port began to fade.
CHAPTER VIII

PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

This study began by describing the geographic, human and historic space of Denia and the Sharq al-Andalus before the rise of the taifas (or fall of the caliphate), and we have investigated how Denia grew from these antecedents. In the same logic, this final chapter will examine how those elements changed over the course of the fifth/eleventh century, and to what extent the taifa and its Mediterranean policies had any influence over those changes. The taifa of Denia emerged as a continuation of forces already in place under the Cordovan caliphate, accentuated under the ‘Āmirid regime, and brought to fruition by Mujāhid and ‘Alī. Mujāhid established his polity on caliphal foundations, and the maritime and Mediterranean orientation of his policies reflects a vision in development since the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III of the possibilities offered by the Andalusī littoral. The taifa’s rise and its implication in the Mediterranean networks was the result of Mujāhid’s conscious decisions, but these were part of a continuation from the caliphal period, not a rupture. This final chapter will thus reprise the taifa’s evolution as an extension of caliphal precedents, tracing how the polity exerted its own influence over an ensemble of factors.

This evolution is visible not only in events, in political choices, but also in regional structures, settlement patterns and networks of fortifications and roads. Regional settlement had already begun a period of important change at the end of the
fourth/tenth century under pressure from Cordova and Islamicizing and urbanizing forces. Urbanization and rural restructuring would continue during the taifa period, though now under the influence of heightened participation in the Mediterranean and localized adaptations of ‘Āmirid financial policies. Though piracy and booty financed the taifa court, changes in the balance of Mediterranean power forced Denia’s rulers to adopt more conventional fiscal solutions based on territory and settlements. The fiscal administration, implemented most often through the binomial ḥiṣn/qarya, had an essential effect on settlement patterns, especially since Denia’s rulers pursued colonizing policies meant to better exploit the terrestrial resources of their taifa.¹ At the same time, the development of Denia’s port, the coast and possibilities offered by secondary ports invigorated road networks, extending roads from the coast and reinforcing ties between these ports, their hinterlands and territories further inland.

POLITICAL STRUCTURES, URBANIZATION, AND ISLAMICIZATION

The taifa of Denia and its population, along with the rest of al-Andalus, underwent profound changes over the course of the century. Regional Islamicization had a profound effect on settlement during the caliphal period, and continued to do so during the taifa period. Fiscal practices under the former caliphate and Manṣūrid regime contributed to, and adapted to these changes. In fact, along with the effects of urbanization on rural districts, many of the changes considered emblematic of the

¹ See below.
taifa period had begun before the caliphate’s fall. By the turn of the century, rural populations were abandoning isolated elevated sites, grouping in urban centers, while also establishing new settlements in heretofore neglected zones. Innovative agricultural techniques also added to political and fiscal factors in shaping population patterns, leading to two successive, and sometimes simultaneous, movements, with the abandonment of former villages and lands followed by, or concomitant with, the creation of new settlements.

Population density in the *Jibāl Balansiya* was low before the fifth/eleventh century because of the region’s mountainous terrain and the poor extension of regional road networks. The population was concentrated in the south along the Segura and Vinalopó valleys, while to the north people had collected around Ondara and the coastal plain, as well as in the few valleys that pierced the mountains, around Bocairent, Cocentaina and the Seta and Gallinera valleys. Caliphal implication in this area evolved over the fourth/tenth century, imposing administrative and fiscal structures, while promoting the occupation of new sectors. However, extending cultivation to new areas was not a simple expression of state policies, and the government also had to react to popular efforts to appropriate virgin lands beyond its influence.

The principal sites in the Lower Segura were closely tied to cultivating the alluvial plain and ample possibilities for irrigation. The *ribāṭ* of Guardamar existed in relation with these settlements, serving as a conduit to the Mediterranean as well as a
regional pole for Islamicization, along with Orihuela and Murcia. In the lower and middle Vinalopó, the urbanizing effects of Elche become visible from the fourth/tenth century in sites around Alicante, Novelda, Petrer, Sax and Villena, while the Vinalopó corridor that linked Murcia and Valencia explains in part regional fortifications and their associated villages. In the Jibāl Balansiya, Umayyad power was reinforced after the conquests of 316/928-9 through fortified sites at Almiserat, Cocoll, Sant Antoni de Oliva and Cocentaina; besides these, settlement remained sparse in the region until the end of the century. Ondara acted as an administrative

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3 Azuar Ruiz has refuted Rubiera Mata’s “fantastical” idea of a network of fortifications resembling a Byzantine limes, but did note the military role of these fortifications, especially in helping consolidate Umayyad power and controlling roads. He subsequently retracted this state-based vision, adopting a more “general” dynamic in line with the ḥisn-refuge definition expounded by Bazzana, Cressier and Guichard in their Château ruraux d’al-Andalus. For the Vinalopó, see in particular the following articles by R. Azuar Ruiz: “Panorama de la arqueología medieval de los valles alto y medio del Vinalopó (Alicante),” Lucentum, 2 (1983): 349-383; “Formación y consolidación de los territorios castrales en época islámica. Les ḥusūn del Vinalopó,” in Fortificaciones y castillos de Alicante. Valles del Vinalopó (Petrel, 1991), ed. C. Navarro Poveda (Petrel, 1994), 67-102; “Fortificaciones de taifas en el Ṣarq al-Andalus,” in Castillos y territorio en al-Andalus, ed. A. Malpica (Granada, 1998), 116-40. Despite Azuar Ruiz’s change in opinion, the importance of this route linking Murcia and Valencia, followed by both ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and al-Manṣūr during their military campaigns, cannot be ignored when analyzing fourth/tenth-century fortifications in the Vinalopó valleys. Cordovan power had imposed itself in the region through military conquest, and the state must have required a subsequent physical presence there.

center along the coast, exploiting Denia’s anchorage, and the Peñon de Ifac may have been the site of a fortification, but coastal populations were likewise sparse.\textsuperscript{5}

Governmental initiative is palpable in the fourth/tenth-century fortified sites, tied to the region’s recent conquest and the imposition of caliphal power on rebellious local clans. In parallel, another population or settlement shift was tied to the Islamicization of rural areas and the imposition of the caliphal fiscal system. Over the course of the fourth/tenth century, with an acceleration at the beginning of the taifa period, new establishments appear associating state power and village collectives, \textit{sulṭān} and \textit{qurā}.\textsuperscript{6} Fortified sites dating from the first half of the


\textsuperscript{6}It is extremely difficult to establish a precise chronology for this restructuring of rural settlements. Without coins or dated markers, such as funeral steles, and besides vague and often debatable indications provided by construction methods and materials, archeologists use ceramic markers to date sites. Certain ceramic types, such as \textit{flores de loto entre metopas}, seem solidly associated with the caliphal period, or at least do not go past the beginning of the taifa period, but those in \textit{verde y manganeso} are not as clear. This glazed process originated in the Peninsula in the workshops of Madīnat al-Zahrā’, and even after regional diffusion, indicates a certain level of affluence and urbanization. Major diffusion began towards the end of the caliphal and Maṣūrid periods, and the fragmentation of Cordovan elites towards the taifa capitals brought this ceramic technique. Thus, during the period bridging the caliphate and the taifas, workshops in Denia, Murcia, Valencia and elsewhere were producing “caliphal” ceramics in \textit{verde y manganeso}, imitating Madīnat al-Zahrā’s more sober motifs while introducing the more luxurious patterns associated with the taifas. These ceramics can thus indicate a fairly wide chronology, from the second half of the fourth/tenth century to
fourth/tenth century were generally abandoned in conjunction with these new settlement patterns. An administrative framework that translated juridical, fiscal and military aspects of the caliphate came to bear on the *Sharq al-Andalus* lands. This process was not unique and appears a few decades earlier in other Andalusī regions. The system was essentially comprised of an association between rural collectivities, *qurā*, and an administrative fortified site, the *ḥīṣn*, the whole forming an administrative district, the *juz*. Through this system, the state received taxes, collected by its representatives and collectively paid by the *qurā*, ensured the regular observance of legal codes and maintained a military presence. Cressier describes a dense network of sites in south-west al-Andalus towards the end of the fourth/tenth century, a system of “rigidly structured territorial divisions, with a castle in the center [of each].” The development of this system of *ḥuṣūn* coincided with a colonization of the end of the taifa period: only the absence of ceramics in *cuerda seca*, a technique more solidly associated with the fifth/eleventh century, can eventually justify dating that does not go past the first half of the taifa period. The majority of the sites associated then with this restructuration can only be vaguely dated, offering *verde y manganeso* ceramics, but without other chronological indicators. Our analysis is thus dependent on the work of archeologists working in the area, negotiating between sometimes conflicting interpretations. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish patterns of change over time that are part of a larger continuity and due to more than one factor. For ceramics indicators, see for example the chart by A. Bazzana, *Maisons*, 1:56. J.A. Gisbert Santonja noted that the ceramic kiln in Denia produced during the same period *verde y manganeso* ceramics in both caliphal and taifa styles; “Cerámica califal de Dénia,” in *Cerámica califal de Dénia* (Alicante, 2000), 26.  


8 P. Cressier, “Agua, fortificaciones y poblamiento : El aporte de la arqueología a los estudios sobre el Sureste peninsular,” in *Aragon en la Edad Media*, 9 (Zaragoza, 1991), 409. In a later publication, Cressier situates this threshold at the beginning of the fifth/tenth century, demonstrating the ambiguous chronology of which he writes, “this profound restructuration of the Andalusian mountains dates from the tenth century, though we cannot be sure if it should be attributed to the caliphal or beginning of the taifal period.” P. Cressier, “Remarques sur la fonction du château islamique dans l’actuelle province d’Almería, à partir des textes et de l’archéologie,” in « L’Incastellamento ». *Actes des rencontres de Gérone (26-27 novembre 1992) et de Rome (5-7 mai 1994)*, ed. M. Barceló and P. Toubert (Rome, 1998), 247; P. Cressier, “Châteaux et terroirs irrigués dans la province d’Almería (Xer XV siècles),” in *Castrum 5*, 452. Sénac has noted a reorganization of settlements in the Upper March that speaks to processes of Islamicization. However, he specifies that the modeled observed in the *Sharq al-Andalus* does not apply well there, underlining the influence of local elites and dissimilar choices for site
of agricultural lands by rural collectivities, possibly stimulated and planned by elements tied to the central power.\(^9\) Without denying the idea that these qurā were in many cases collectively owned by their own free peasants, urban and governmental power began to extend over the countryside in the second half of the fourth/tenth century, with even limited appropriation of lands by private individuals in some areas.\(^{10}\)

In the Jibāl Balansiya, Cocentaina’s castle remained its district’s ḥiṣn, but all the other sites in that juz’ were abandoned; new husūn and qurā emerged according to new settlement patterns.\(^{11}\) Lands colonized at the end of the caliphal period can be noted in sites at Castellar d’Alcoy, Tossal del Moro, and in the Laguart and Gallinera valleys. All of these sites arose towards the end of the fourth/tenth century, and continued on into the next. A funerary stele from Alcoy is dated from 374/984, and the presence of ceramics in verde y manganeso, as well as cuerda seca, confirms

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\(^{11}\) R. Azuar Ruiz, “Fortificaciones de taifas en el Šarq al-Andalus,” 119-22.
continuity from the caliphal to the taifal period.\textsuperscript{12} The \textit{qarya} of Tossal del Moro, also with ceramics in \textit{verde y manganeso}, sat at the junction of the Seta and Serpis valleys, as well as the only routes between inland regions and the Guadalest valley and Marina Baja littoral.\textsuperscript{13} Guichard has identified the site, situated in the Pla de Petrocha zone near Benilloba, with the \textit{qarya} of \textit{Butraš/Bitrūsha}, cited by Yāqūt and Ibn al-Abbār as the home of two jurists in Denia in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries; the quantity and quality of ceramics discovered at the site seems to coincide with an important \textit{qarya} with urbanizing structures susceptible of hosting a family of jurists.\textsuperscript{14} Over the course of the century, the fortification of Peñaguila was built overlooking this crossroads, serving as an administrative center and representative of state interests.\textsuperscript{15} In the Serpis valley farther north, a funeral stele from 388-404/998-1014 and discovered in Alcocer de Planes indicates a settlement there, possible associated with the \textit{hiṣn} of Cocentaina.\textsuperscript{16} The caliphal fort at Almiserat bears witness to the strategic importance of the Gallinera valley following

\textsuperscript{13} R. Azuar Ruiz, \textit{Denia islámica}, 93.
\textsuperscript{14} Yāqūt, 1:443; Ibn al-Abbār, \textit{Kitāb al-tākmila} (Husaynī), n. 635. Following Guichard’s theory, this site may also be associated with the \textit{juz’} of Banū Ghatīl, mentioned by al-‘Udhrī (p. 20) and the Sierra de Benalcatil, mentioned by al-Rāzī (p. 70). In a 1976 article, Guichard noted family ties between jurists in Játiva and Denia who carried the same clan name of Ibn Ghattīl, while two jurists in Denia originally from Butrūsha/Bitrūsha carried the names Ibn ‘Attāl and Ibn Ghattāl; P. Guichard, “Un toponyme historique de l’ancienne \textit{kūra} de \textit{Tudmīr}: Benicadell,” \textit{Murgetana}, 45 (1976): 44-5.
\textsuperscript{16} C. Barceló, \textit{La Escritura árabe en el país valenciano}, 1:139-40, no. 9; R. Azuar Ruiz, \textit{Denia islámica}, 137.
the conquests of the fourth/tenth century.\textsuperscript{17} A funerary stele discovered at Alpatró, at the other end of the valley and dated from 331/942-3, indicates the beginnings of settlement during the same period.\textsuperscript{18} A new phase of colonization, including the qarya of Benirrama, coincided with the abandonment of Almiserat and construction of Gallinera castle at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{19} In the Laguart valley, the site of Atzavares resembles Gallinera castle, and seems to share the same chronology.\textsuperscript{20} The two ūṣūn coincided with districts, juz’ al-Ghalinar and iqîlim Laqwār, named by al-‘Udhrī.\textsuperscript{21} This entire region of the Jibāl Balansiya, from Cocentaina, through the Serpis, Seta, Planes, Gallinera, Ebo, Laguart and Guadalest valleys until the coast, was colonized over the course of the taifa period, and castle sites multiplied to integrate new settlements into a governmental framework.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{17} A. Bazzana, “Un fortin omeyyade dans le Shark Al-Andalus,” 87-108; J. Torró i Abad, “Fortificaciones en Ūibāl Balansiya. Una propuesta de secuencia,” in Castillos y territorio en al-Andalus (Granada, 1998), 394, 398, 400.

\textsuperscript{18} C. Barceló, La Escritura árabe en el país valenciano, 1:126-7, n. 2. The early date may, however, also point to a settlement from an earlier period.

\textsuperscript{19} R. Azuar Ruiz does not date the castle before the thirteenth century, while A. Bazzana proposes caliphal origins: R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 77; A. Bazzana, Maisons, 1:419. A stele from Benirrama dates from 456-64/1063-71; C. Barceló, La Escritura árabe en el país valenciano, 1:170-1, no. 27. Alcalá castle, at the western end of the valley, dates probably from the fifth/eleventh century; J. Torró i Abad, “Fortificaciones en Ūibāl Balansiya,” 404; A. Bazzana, Maisons, 1:397.

\textsuperscript{20} A. Bazzana, Maisons, 1:403.

\textsuperscript{21} Al-‘Udhrī, 11, 20. At one time, R. Azuar Ruiz proposed Cocentaina as the ĥishn for the district of Ghalinar; Denia islámica, 107.

Littoral settlements likewise appeared during the taifa period, from the Marina Baja continuing to Denia. A *qarya* near Villajoyosa has produced ceramics in *verde y manganeso* and a mosque. Yāqūt wrote that the *qarya* of Altea father north produced a scholar in the fifth/eleventh century, and Idrīsī cites the *Jabal Kalb* on the coastal sailing route between Denia and Alicante. The Gorgos valley plain, as well as the area around Jávea’s harbor, were densely populated, with settlements scattered throughout the zone from the end of the caliphal period.

In the southern parts of the taifa, in the heart of the kūra de Tudmīr, the extension of urban influence is notable especially in the Lower Segura, where the creation of an irrigation system in the Orihuela *huerta* led to the abandonment of several sites from the fourth/tenth century. Sonia Gutierrez Lloret has shown that archeological signs of Islamicization and urbanization, culminating under the late

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23 Near Villajoyosa, in the Tapida valley, J.R. García Gandía directed a dig at the Foietes de Dalt site, which dates from the fourth/tenth century. During the taifa period, the population grew and established a new *qarya* at Tossal de l’Almisserà. Among the ceramics unearthed at this site was a “North African” *ataifor* and another piece in *verde y manganese* decorated with the term “al-mulk”; J.R. García Gandía, S. Llorens Campello, G. Pérez Botí, “L’Almisserà: territorio castral y espacio rural en época islámica,” *De la medina a la vila: Actas II Jornadas de Arqueología Medieval*, ed. F.J. Jover Maestre and C. Navarro Poveda (Alicante-Petrer, 2004), 83-105.


25 Numerous sites in the Gorgos valley have produced ceramics in *verde y manganeso*, and a funeral inscription from Jávea dates from 380-404/990-1014: C. Barceló, *La Escritura árabe en el país valenciano*, 137-8, no. 8; R. Azuar Ruiz, *Denia islámica*, 66; J. Bolufer Marqués, “Aproximación al poblamiento islámico de los término municipales de Xàbia y Benitatxell (Marina Alta, Alicante),” in *II Congreso de Arqueología Medieval Española*, (Madrid, 1987), 2:477-90; J. Bolufer Marqués, “Les necròpolis andalusines de Xàbia,” *Aguait*, 21 (2004): 137-142. We would like to thank J. Bolufer Marqués, director of the Jávea archeological museum, for a helpful discussion and providing us with unpublished information on many sites throughout the Pexet valley that have produced taifal-style ceramics, including: Capsades, Rodat, Cansalades, Poet, Pous de l’Abiar and la Lluc.

caliphate, are visible for the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century.27 None of the sites in the lower Segura valley show signs of post-caliphal occupation, and for the Vinalopó, only Castillo de Salvatierra near Villena consolidated as a *hiṣn* in the taifa period.28 The Castillo de la Murta, near Agost, while in relation with a meager settlement, seems to have existed more for surveillance of the Vinalopó and Alicante plain.29 Although settlement remained sparse in the Upper Vinalopó, Castalla and Salvatierra emerged as *ḥuṣūn*, and a series of *qurā* began to reclaim lands abandoned for centuries.30

This overview of settlements in the caliphal and taifal periods has to be understood in the context of a larger, peninsular evolution. Rural settlements were incorporated into governmental and fiscal systems, while new agricultural and irrigational practices also shaped new patterns. Fortified sites from the early caliphal period correspond more with state or strategic needs, tied to the consolidation of Umayyad power in recently conquered areas. Urban influence over rural areas began to spread from the mid-fourth/tenth century, leading to the abandonment of rural sites and the integration of rural populations, as seen around Orihuela and its developing *huerta*. In the taifa of Denia, urban growth accompanied this movement, as with Elche, Alicante and Denia, in conjunction with the colonization of new lands through

27 S. Gutierrez Lloret, *Cora de Tudmīr*, 310.
new qurā and ḥuṣūn. Recent historiography and archeological work confirms this phenomenon of abandonment and regrouping in the taifal period.

**EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Analyses of taifal period settlement refer to several associated factors: urbanization and Islamicization, new agricultural techniques and state intervention most often through fiscal action. Denia’s Mediterranean policies also contributed, but within the gradual movement that began in the caliphal period. Innovations in irrigation and the association of secano and regadio lands often influenced choices for new sites, but did not determine the overall dynamic.31 An examination of fiscal policies, under the caliphal then taifa courts, can help shed further light on the subject.

Studies on settlement patterns in this region have benefited, and perhaps suffered in part, from a text by Ibn Ḥayyān that describes fiscal abuses by the ‘Āmirid rulers of Valencia, Mubārak and Muẓaffār.32 Ibn Ḥayyān writes that these abuses pushed peasants to flee for the cities and abandon their lands, which urban elites

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subsequently took over, taking on the former owners as hired workers. Guichard and Prémare published a translation and habile analysis of the passage to underline the effects of these practices on Andalusī society, and the article has since held broad influence over regional historians and archeologists. The authors point out the introduction of private domains (diyā‘ mustakhlaṣa) into a system that had heretofore known mostly collective village properties, though they also note “there was no profound transformation of the rural landscape, only a modification in the social and legal condition of peasants.”

Guichard insists moreover that rahals and other forms of private agricultural property remained an exception in the Sharq al-Andalus. Nevertheless, regional settlement changes are often presented in conjunction with the fiscal practices of the ʿĀmirid clients.

Azuar Ruiz specifies that the abandonment of rural sites should not be tied to the disarticulation of the Umayyad state, since such events usually provoke flight from the city to the country, the opposite, in fact, of what is observed here. Azuar Ruiz uses Guichard’s work, Ibn Ḥayyān’s text, and another by Ibn Ḥazm on the abuses of the mulūk al-ṭawā‘if to write that “the abandonment of sites by peasants at the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century may be the result of high and excessive taxation applied by the first taifas.” The archeologist Navarro Poveda applies this interpretation to Novelda in the Vinalopó. Gutierrez Lloret, however, in her long-

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34 P. Guichard, Musulmans de Valence, 379-83.
term analysis sees the culmination of urbanization begun under the caliphate in the appropriation of lands by cities representative of fragmented taifal power. This last analysis seems more in line with patterns of abandonment and colonization observed in the Sharq al-Andalus in the fourth/tenth-fifth/eleventh centuries, and taifal practices seem more a continuation than a rupture of caliphal policies.

Ibn Ḥayyān’s description of fiscal abuse should in fact be placed in relation with al-Ṭurtūshī’s near contemporary description of changes introduced under the ‘Āmirid regime. He explains that Ibn Abī ‘Āmir established monthly monetary payments to the army, paying for them with a tribute on the land, impoverishing the people and devastating their farms. Rural populations fled, leading to lower agricultural yields and so lower tributes raised by the state, weakening the army and allowing the Christians to take over Muslim territories, until the Almoravids reestablished iqṭā’ concessions as in the past. Ibn Allāh b. Buluqqūn describes in similar terms reforms introduced under al-Manṣūr, explaining that he freed Andalusīs from their military responsibilities in exchange for financial contributions through land-based tribute.

Both texts clearly show the ‘Āmirid regime paying for a professional army through property taxes. They both also show the army directly collecting their pay.


38 Abū ’Abd Allāh b. Buluqqūn, Tibyān, 58.
Al-Ṭurṭūshī claims these new fiscal practices, and their abuse by the army, forced peasants to flee their lands, a process analogue to the situation Ibn Ḥayyān describes for taifal Valencia. ‘Abd Allāh b. Buquqīn specifies that the *mulūk al-ṭawā’if* followed this precedent and continued these policies, and is seconded by al-Ṭurṭūshī who links the ‘Āmirid reforms to taifal decadence before the arrival of the Almoravids. In his analysis of territorial concessions in al-Andalus, Chalmeta ties these texts to Ibn Ḥazm’s description of fiscal abuse under the taifa rulers with the resulting impoverishment of the rural Andalusī population. An increase in caliphal property taxes thus effected rural settlement. Ibn Ḥayyān’s description of rural flight during the taifa period is matched by al-Ṭurṭūshī’s own text on Umayyad and ‘Āmirid fiscal policies. These policies were continued, and probably extended under the taifa rulers, but have their roots in al-Manṣūr’s reforms.

Fiscal policies under al-Manṣūr and then the *mulūk al-ṭawā’if* thus influenced rural settlement between the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries. These practices seem to have contributed to the extension of urban influence over rural zones, at times through the transfer of these lands to the hand of urban elites. Sénac and Picard have noted a process of privatization of lands in the Upper March and surrounding Seville beginning in the fourth/tenth century. Sénac uses the texts by Ibn Ḥayyān and al-Ṭurṭūshī to explain the massive and precipitous emergence of *almunias* and *raḥals* north of the Ebro as documented by post-Reconquista documents. Likewise,

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Guichard uses *Reconquista* documents from the seventh/thirteenth century to note private suburban properties, *raḥals*, around Valencia.\(^{42}\) However, though these *repartimientos* may indicate properties that date from the fifth/eleventh century, they require more precaution than documents from the Upper March more or less contemporaneous with the end of the taifas.

Ibn Ḥayyān describes the plundering of peasant lands by Mubārak and Muẓaffar as a personal act, and recognizes neither the legality nor the legitimacy of their power. Nevertheless, the *fityān* were the *de facto* representatives, possessors even, of the *sulṭān*. The appropriation of lands abandoned by owners in debt to the *sulṭān* was certainly not without precedent. The jurist al-Wansharīshī notes specifically for the region of Valencia in the fourth/tenth century the confiscation of lands by the *sulṭān* who then conferred them to someone who would pay the property taxes instead of the original owner.\(^{43}\) This case certainly resembles Ibn Ḥayyān’s description, though Mubārak and Muẓaffar seem to have subjected successive landowners to this treatment. Should we assume that the abandonment of lands resulted in their incorporation into state properties, worked for the benefit of the *bayt al-māl*, distributed as concessions or sold? Al-Wansharīsī also transmits a *fatwā* justifying the sale of lands belonging to the public fisc, *bayt al-māl al-muslimīn*, by the Banū ‘Āmir, Banū Ṣumādiḥ and Banū ‘Abbād, perhaps akin to the Valencian situation where abandoned lands were redistributed among members of the taifal


Denia is not specifically mentioned in these examples, but Ibn Ḥayyān, Ibn Ḥazm, ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn and al-Ṭurṭūshī attribute these practices to the *mulūk al-ṭawā‘if* as a whole. We can thus prudently trace to this period at least some of the *rahals* mentioned in the *repartimientos* for Denia.

Nevertheless, the appropriation of abandoned lands was not the most important change in settlement patterns. The majority of caliphal sites were abandoned and were not reoccupied before the end of the taifa period. Rural flight coincided with singular urban growth, as well as the colonization of new lands. Regional urbanization in response to caliphal expansion appears as early as the second half of the fourth/tenth century, though the process culminated under the taifas. The cities of Orihuela, Elche, Alicante, Denia, Valencia and Madīnat Mayūrqa were subjected to considerable demographic pressure, manifest in a wave of construction and reordering of urban structures. This urban development sprang at

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44 Al-Wansharīsī, Mi’yār, 6:97-8; V. Lagardère, *Histoire et société*, 184.
45 *Repartimientos de los reinos de Mallorca, Valencia y Cerdeña*, ed. Próspero de Bofarull y Mascaro (Barcelona, 1856), 346-7, 367, 401, 460. Properties are mentioned near Denia, Peñaguila, Ontinyent, and Albaida between Denia and Játiva.
least partly from the rural exodus tied to fiscal oppression.

Lucie Bolens has argued that taifa decentralization was a positive force in the development of al-Andalus. She maintains that the personalization of private property rationalized production and taxes, contributing to a “policy of growth in agricultural production.” She likewise notes that the colonization of new lands intensified beginning in the fifth/eleventh century, and that the choice of new fields was a theme often treated in agricultural treatises from the time. It seems in fact that we can analyze taifa settlement patterns through this idea of localized power, fiscal administration and agriculture, and the “psychological motive for growth.” Reduced to a regional existence, and so limited economic resources, the taifa rulers sought to better exploit the lands under their authority, expanding lands susceptible of providing fiscal income. The redistribution of lands described by Ibn Ḥayyān points to efforts to preserve state income, while ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn and al-Ṭurṭūshī indicate a process that would have led to the extension of cultivated lands. The taifa state thus intervened directly in the repopulation of rural zones, encouraging the colonization of new lands through its own agents and inciting the elite to do the same through territorial concessions. This interpretation implies impetus from the top, and although the possibility for popular initiatives did exist, they would have been in

48 L. Bolens, Agronomes andalous, 10.
49 For Granada, at least, fiscal or landed concessions (inzālāt) seem to have been the primary means for maintaining the taifa’s military forces: ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn, Tībyān, 145-7/138-40 and passim; P. Guichard, Musulmans de Valence, 368.
reaction to influence exercised by the state. The margins for independent action by rural populations was limited, and even when lands were colonized independently, the state would have made its presence known sooner or later, through its fiscal agents and administration structure by the qarya/hisn complex.

Ceramics with verde y manganeso and cuerda seca decoration, luxury and caliphal ceramics, can serve as indicators of urban intervention in rural production, of the role of elites in relations between qurā and the sultan. For example, investigations at Tossal de l’Almisserà, near Villajoyosa, a site created ex novo in the fifth/eleventh century, have produced verde y manganeso ceramics, including an ataífor bearing the term “al-mulk.”

According to Barceló, in caliphal al-Andalus, ceramic instances of al-mulk were “a strict and rigorous expression of Umayyad legitimacy.” The diffusion of this technique followed the exodus of Cordovan elites to the taifa capitals, and Denia was no exception. Archeological work in Denia in 1990s revealed a pottery oven active during the fifth/eleventh century that produced caliphal ceramics in verde y manganeso. The close association between authority and these decorations reflects a similar relation between the capital and rural settlements, while the presence of

50 J. R. García Gandía et alii, “L’Almisserà : territorio castral y espacio rural en época islámica,” The piece is currently part of the archeological museum collection in Villajoyosa.


52 Cerámica califal de Dénia (Alicante, 2000).
luxury ceramics at such sites points to an elite exhibiting its social and political status. Luxury ceramics at fortified sites can probably be associated with quwwād, troops and other representatives of the sultān. This was not the case for all sites, and the consensus among historians and archeologists is that the majority of these rural fortifications, albacars, were shelters for rural communities. Nevertheless, state intervention, or at least the possibility, through these structures was common. Fortifications dependent on rural populations could later be the object of governmental attention, with the construction of central towers or celoquias, while troops occupied them only in time of need. ‘Abd Allāh b. Buluqqīn thus ordered the restoration of several sites (ma‘āqil) during his conflict with Almería, while ‘Alī b. Mujāhid ordered governors to fortify their posts when threatened by al-Muqtadīr b. Hūd. Ibn Bassām uses the term ‘ummāl for these governors, a title related more to fiscal administration than military duties, though they obviously were expected to exercise such duties when ordered. The term likewise indicates the presence of governmental agents, not local representatives acting as intermediaries between the qurā and the sultān. Finally, as Azuar Ruiz has noted, changes in settlement patterns, the continuous establishment of new rural fortifications and the normalization of

53 Guichard has argued that the presence of luxury or “caliphal” ceramics does not in fact indicate the presence of aristocratic groups: Musulmans de Valence, 218. General theories on the subject should indeed be avoided, especially for village sites, but as physical emanations of the state, huṣūn offer a more stable terrain for analysis. Fortified sites having produced verde y manganeso ceramics include: Castillo de Cocentaina, Pla de la Casa, Peñaguila, Salvatierra, Castalla, Castellar d’Alcoy, Pop, Gaianes, Tarbena, Las Atzarvares: R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 98, 111, 134-64, 165-7; E. Cortell Perez, J. Torró Abad, “Dos yacimientos medievales en Serrella,” Revista del Instituto de Estudios Alicantinos, 38-2 (1983): 107; Châteaux ruraux d’al-Andalus, 101; J.M. Segura Martí, J. Torró Abad, Torres i Castells de l’Alcoià-Contat (Alcoy, 1985); A. Bazzana, Maisons d’al-Andalus, 403.
taifal monetary emissions should all be understood in relation with taifa fiscal policies. To more efficiently exercise fiscal pressure on rural communities, the taifa rulers, and ‘Alī b. Mujāhid specifically, established agents through rural and semi-urban fortifications to collect taxes via coins struck specifically for that purpose.

DEVELOPMENT AND THE SEA

Settlement patterns under the taifa regime answered not only to new agricultural techniques and lands, but also to the attraction exerted by the coast and communications axes. Settlement would logically follow valleys and paths, but the ensemble of networks created over the course of the century points to singular interaction between inland sites and production zones and growing ports and harbors.

A mutual stimulation existed between the interior and the coast, since ports emerged in relation to the possibilities offered by the hinterland as a zone of production and consumption. Coastal development largely contributed to demographic expansion along the roads that tied the ports to junctions in the Jibāl Balansiya. In the fourth/tenth century, al-Rāzī mentions only Denia as a regional port, with Pechina to the south and Tortosa to the north, and speaks of Alicante only as an agricultural district. The coast was neglected and settlements clung to areas served by the viae Augusta and Hannibal. The dynamics behind this settlement changed over the course of the fifth/eleventh century, and the littoral began once again to exert its influence. Al-Bakrī notes six harbors between Tudmīr and Denia –

58 Al-Rāzī, 70-1.
Qabṭīl Tudmīr, Santa Pola, Alicante, Moraira and the Montgó –, while archeological work and other texts have identified El Campello, Villajoyosa, Benidorm, Altea, Calpe and Jávea.\(^{59}\) Denia’s coast was thus accessible to ships, and communities grew along the littoral as a result. Near Denia, the Gorgos valley, from Teulada to Jávea, emerged as a densely populated area, explained in part by the proximity of the capital, but also by Jávea’s excellent natural harbor.\(^{60}\) In the hinterland of Villajoyosa, the qurā grouped around Almisserà were in easy contact with the major urban centers via the coast as well as the route towards Būṭrūsh and Peñaguila ḥiṣn, a major communications junction for the Jibāl Balansiya. Altea served as the maritime outlet for the iqlīm al-jabal, cited by Yāqūt, of which the rural fortifications of Confrides, Guadalest, Tarbena, Pla de la Casa and Castell de Castells speak to the importance of these secondary routes to the sea and underlining their fiscal and military importance.\(^{61}\) Secondary ports created opportunities for economic exchange with other zones along the coast, as well as the greater Mediterranean. Archeological signs from Denia’s littoral attest to these communications: North-African ceramics in

\(^{59}\) Al-Bakrī, 81-2/164-6. We were unable to identify Qabṭīl Tudmīr, especially since Cartagena, Murcia’s maritime outlet, appears just before. For El Campello, the site “La Isleta” has produced archeological markers comparable to those from Castellet de la Murta d’Agost: E. López Seguí, Arqueología en Agost, 136. J. R. García Gandía kindly showed us unpublished ceramics in verde y manganeso from near Villajoyosa. A shipwreck of the coast of Altea adds to Yāqūt’s mention of the site as the origin of a late-fifth/eleventh-century jurist, while Benidorm has produced a Fatimid coin hoard from the taifa period: Yāqūt, 1:349-50; S. Martínez Lillo, “La arqueología y el mar,” 218, 220; C. Domènech Belda, Dinares, dirhames y feluses, 195. Idrīsī cites Ifac in the sixth/seventh century as a harbor between Denia and Alicante: Caminos, 70/96.


\(^{61}\) Yāqūt, 1:349-50; R. Azuar Ruiz, Denia islámica, 356.
 Jávea, Villajoyosa and Almisserà indicate ships conducting commerce while following the coastal route to Denia, ships found near Altea transported ceramics from the Balearics and North Africa, while a fifth/eleventh-century Fatimid coin hoard discovered in Benidorm points to similar relations.62

Roads and routes emerged to link these qurā and ḥuṣūn with the secondary ports, and then through coastal shipping with Denia, Alicante, Madīnat Mayūrqa and the Mediterranean. Interior routes likewise tied them to regional urban centers. Al-‘Udhrī and al-Idrīsī describe routes that show a connection between littoral growth and communications networks; the road from Tudmīr to Valencia passed through Onteniente, encouraging the emergence of staging villages, such as Aspe and Biar, and facilitating ties between Denia and Alicante. Established roads linked Denia with Valencia and Játiva, Bocairente served as a juncture for routes to Tudmīr, Cordova and Toleda, while Alicante attracted traffic from Orihuela, Elche and the Vinalopó valley.63

Denia thus emerged as a madīna and regional capital, stimulated by maritime and interior traffic and supported by the fiscal power of the state. The city’s principal urban structures were begun under the taifa and its rulers’ political programs. The city walls, the foundations of the qaṣaba noted by al-‘Udhrī and Idrīsī, and Denia’s urban layout were already in place by the end of the taifa period.64 Inside the walls,

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63 Idrīsī, Caminos, 64-6; Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 5:556-7; al-‘Udhrī, 10, 17, 20.
64 Al-‘Udhrī, 19; Idrīsī, Opus geographicum, 5:557; al-Ḥimyarī, 76/95; J.A. Gisbert, “Dāniya y la Vila de Denia. En torno al urbanismo de una ciudad medieval,” in Urbanismo medieval del país
Archeological investigations have found taifa period shops and workshops – including the aforementioned pottery kiln – and urban growth led to the construction of a new mosque by the end of the century. At least two cemeteries served the city, one near the gate for Ondara, the other in the new urban zone known as El Fortí, associated with commercial and artisanal activities there. Demographic growth stemmed in part from the rural exodus, but this does not explain the rapid urbanization. The construction of emblematic state structures, such as the qaṣaba, city walls and dār al-ṣinā’a could only come from the sulṭān, and depended on its economic resources. Similar growth appears along the entire Sharq al-Andalus littoral, which profited from the decentralization of peninsular economic networks concomitant with the renewal of Mediterranean markets. These urban constructions likewise speak to the success of taifa fiscal administrations that drained rural surplus as much as maritime profits. It would be simplistic to reduce taifa politics to their fiscal policies and desire to assure their financial needs. Ḫuṣūn also served rural populations and strategic military needs; monetary production played a central role in communicating


65 Results for these investigations have not yet been published, and were graciously communicated by the municipal archeologist, J.A. Gisbert Santonja. Ibn al-Abbār notes that Abū al-Walīd al-Waqqashī (d. 489/1095) was buried near the old mosque; Tākmila (BAH), 606, n. 1691; C. Barceló Torres, La Escritura árabe en el país valenciano, 1:49; J.A. Gisbert Santonja, V. Burguera Sanmateu, J. Bolufer i Marques, La cerámica de Daniya, passim.


political legitimacy while responding to market needs; the construction and maintenance of road and communications networks was the implied responsibility of any ruler. Nevertheless, together, these different factors evoke fiscal policy. The state exercised its influence on many levels on settlement patterns through its policies, imposing taxes directly on peasant lands, conceding tax receipts to members of the elite, increasing revenues through improved agricultural production, sometimes even promoting expanded rural colonization. The dynamics of this process were influenced in turn by the taifa’s larger Mediterranean policies, stimulated by the maritime communications in which the Mujāhid and ʿAlī directly participated.
CONCLUSION

Denia’s policies may seem, at first glance, to have failed. The state that Mujähid and ‘Alī built on the base of their Mediterranean resources fell under the control of rulers relying on more solid foundations. The taifa’s commercial and maritime orientation, especially under ‘Alī, left it vulnerable and militarily hollow. ‘Alī’s active involvement in Mediterranean dynamics may have kept him from fully understanding the realities of the Andalusī political situation. His hope that the economic role he had refined in service to his allies would protect his kingdom against Zaragoza fell short, and they refused to come to his aid at the decisive moment. The taifa of Denia ceased to exist politically, divided and absorbed by the Banū Hūd and ‘Abbād.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī played a direct and guiding role in the Denia’s rise to major status among the Western Mediterranean ports. Their essential contribution in fact comes through in the port’s return to secondary standing over the following centuries. Despite this, and although the ‘Āmirid dawla ended, the structures and networks developed under the taifa continued beyond its fall. Denia had been an isolated harbor at the end of the caliphal period, its hinterland sparsely populated, just beginning to reconnect with maritime and peninsular routes. By the end of the century, Mujāhid and ‘Alī had integrated their taifa into the Mediterranean and Andalusī networks on many levels. Intensified traffic within their territories resulted partly from their efforts to stimulate rural production through rural colonization. The growing number of ports points to increased exchange along the coast in conjunction with relays towards other zones of Mediterranean trade. Idrīsī describes maritime activity in Denia that sprang from measures taken by Mujāhid and ‘Alī. The qurā and
husūn glimpsed during the taifa period continue to grow, while the fabric of rural settlement becomes tighter and denser. Roads guessed at for the beginning of the century are clearly there by its end, integrating urban and rural centers into more widespread communications networks. The port’s mercantile activities continue on the Mediterranean, its ships travelling between coasts, as far as Palestine, and continuing to appear in the Cairo Geniza the following century. The success of its pirate policies may not be quantifiable, but one hundred years later, Italian ports were still claiming their efforts against Mujāhid to justify their territorial rights in Sardinia, Idrīsī had a large-scale raiding fleet based in its port, and Barcelona and Pisa had to join forces to stop the guerre de course coming out of the Balearics. Beyond this, Denia’s rulers knew not only to build their capital into a major commercial and maritime center, but also to ensure its place as a cultural center. Denia appears in no biographical dictionaries for the caliphal period, but after Mujāhid and ‘Alī’s patronage and support of Koranic studies, the city remained a renowned intellectual center until its fall during the Aragonese conquests two centuries later.

The sea exercised a permanent influence on Denia, on its rulers’ policies, their relations with the other mulūk al-ṭawā‘if, changes in settlement patterns, underlying almost all aspects of the taifa’s existence. Nevertheless, Denia’s involvement in the Mediterranean, and the sea’s involvement in the taifa’s entire society often resulted from casual, even random relations easily lost behind better documented and so more tangible mainland events and relations. Even so, the Mediterranean policies of Denia’s rulers, their will to fully exploit the taifa’s maritime resources, were the very basis of their state, informing and shaping their behavior in other domains. More than anything else, the taifa of Denia was that city’s port, from which Mujāhid and ‘Alī established their mamlaka over the hinterland and strategic inland points, and through
which flowed the riches of both the Mediterranean and al-Andalus. The taifa should not be reduced to just one of its facets, and it did resemble on more than one level other Andalusi kingdoms, but the sea gave Denia its specificity. The omnipresence of the sea and coastal growth were present at its origin, determined its development and inspired its fall.

Mujāhid and ‘Alī, each for his own reasons, sought the foundations of their power in the Mediterranean. Mujāhid’s actions at the beginning of the fitna were a continuation of the caliphal period, inspired by Umayyad and ‘Āmirid visions of the potential offered by the Mediterranean, especially for maritime jihād. He used the Sharq al-Andalus ports to pursue the guerre de course in which he had likely participated under the ‘Āmirid regime. As the central administration disintegrated and peripheral territories drifted off, Mujāhid placed himself in a position to take advantage of Denia’s place as an outpost for maritime conquest. He transformed the instability caused by the Umayyad fall into the opportunity to establish a caliphate centered on decidedly Mediterranean bases. He assimilated the sea to a territory over which he could spread Islamic political control. Extrapolating from ‘Āmirid maritime strategies and even political theory, Mujāhid’s new ambitions are remarkable in fact for how much they outdistance and rethink policies of the erstwhile regime. Mujāhid was not claiming to continue or replace the Cordovan Umayyad caliphate (his candidate did not even belong to that branch of the dynasty), but was creating a new Islamic political space based on the Mediterranean Sea and the perpetual expanding frontier of jihād and conquest.

Mujāhid had been educated alongside the sons of al-Manṣūr to serve in the highest spheres of the caliphate. The ism given to the young protégé indicates even the path intended for him, one of more than palatine service. How much of his later
actions were driven by this early education is difficult to say, but it does seem to have informed his decisions and policies, placing his taifa apart from those of his peers along the *Sharq al-Andalus*. The rulers of Tortose, Valencia and Almeria reaped profits from their coastal locations, and their ports expanded during this period, but none followed the same path as Mujāhid. The other *fityān* rulers, as ambitious as they may have been, thought of their states in relation to the fallen regime, “Andalusī-centric” and peninsular. Mujāhid, at least during the initial stages of the *fitna*, turned from Cordova and established his state on the borders of the *dār al-Islām*.

Mujāhid’s failure in Sardinia and his decision to end his caliphate forced the ruler to limit and redirect his ambitions, now expressed through piracy and territorial conflicts inland. Denia remained an outpost for maritime *jihād*, and its ships continued their aggressive campaigns, but the port’s role as a relay between the Mediterranean and Andalusī markets became its primary focus. The taifa would remain at the intersection of both spheres until its end, and its port, barely mentioned before the fifth/eleventh century, became one of the principal transit points for goods and people travelling between al-Andalus and the Muslim Mediterranean. Mujāhid’s peninsular conquests certainly were motivated by territorial ambitions, but followed also the flux of communications inland. The conquest of northern Tudmīr can be seen as the simple extension of taifa boundaries, but it also integrated new ports and routes essential to the taifa’s expanding control of peninsular and maritime networks. The sea was increasing its draw on resources from the interior, and Mujāhid worked to ensure that his territories funneled that growing attraction.

This Mediterranean policy likewise dictated Mujāhid’s diplomatic relations, leading him on a double program to safeguard his interests along trade routes while anticipating the ambitions of this peers. Diplomatic alliances filled these needs,
bringing Denia closer to interior taifas, namely Seville, and working to isolate the threat of the expansionist Banū Hūd with their own Mediterranean plans. The sea thus drew not only resources, but also envy, and Mujāhid’s diplomacy addressed both.

Changes in Denia’s Mediterranean politics appear already under Mujāhid, as the taifa relied less on booty from piracy and more on taxation and commerce. Pirates continued to ply the waters from Denia’s port, but the increasing power and interventionism of Christian ports negatively affected the fiscal feasibility of booty as a state resource. Perhaps, as Guichard suggested for the Umayyad caliphate, a normalized and stable regime, along with an “international stature” may have made Denia’s rulers ill at ease with pelagic robbery as a state activity. The reprisal of monetary production towards the end of Mujāhid’s reign, though tied also to other factors, does point to state finances derived from commerce and taxes. Nevertheless, the sea still was dominant in this new political equation.

‘Alī did not abandon his father’s guerre de course, though he seems to have confided its direction to others, namely the Balearic governors, concentrating his personal attention on maritime commerce. Changes in the Mediterranean dynamic meant an expanded field of action for Denia’s interests. The western basin remained the taifa’s sphere of interest, but the eastern shift of markets towards Egypt restructured maritime networks. Mentions of Ibn Mujāhid and Denia in the Cairo Geniza after the middle of the century attest to this change, as well as to ‘Alī’s efforts to adapt to the evolving markets.

‘Alī inherited his father’s diplomatic constructions and conflicts, though he showed himself to be a less habile statesman. He also had to deal with the threat of Zaragoza’s growing power, and in particular the Banū Hūd’s desire to obtain
territories along the littoral. ‘Alī took care to maintain relations with the Banū ‘Abbād of Seville, conscious of commercial ties, but also of a shared mistrust for Zaragoza. He likewise pursued parallel relations with Barcelona, following this same logic of economic interests and geo-political strategy. This diplomatic policy ultimately failed, overly relying on allied support and mercenary forces, leading to the taifa’s fall, provoked in part by the taifa’s economic success.

‘Alī worked to improve relations beyond the Iberian Peninsula with his Muslim peers across the Mediterranean. His correspondence with the Ifrīqiyan Zīrīds and the Fatimid caliphal court coincided with the presence of ships from Denia in those same zones, illustrating the association between politics and Mediterranean commerce in Denia’s court. Denia’s networks do not come through fully in the Cairo Geniza, and the taifa’s relations with the Maghreb are almost totally absent. Nevertheless, through this corpus of documents, it is clear that ‘Alī and other merchants from Denia traded regularly through circuits linking the taifa with Ifrīqiya and Egypt. These relations worked not only through physical networks of ships, routes and ports, but also through human ones, as shown by ‘Alī’s close association with the trading house of Nahray b. Nīssam. Denia fed this Mediterranean commerce with products drawn from its hinterland and inland economic centers, serving largely as a point of redistribution between the two systems. Mediterranean products must also have travelled inland through Denia’s port, though their nature and quantity is not clear. The North-African ceramics and Fatimid coins found throughout the taifa, as well as the bronze objects from Denia itself, speak to the presence of Mediterranean goods in Andalusī markets, and their transfer through the taifa’s ports.

The sea’s influence on settlement patterns in the taifa stemmed from economic development begun in the fourth/tenth century, the extension of caliphal
power along the littoral and ‘Āmirid maritime policies, all of which were continued under Mujāhid and ‘Alī. Regional urbanization resulted from many factors, among which were rural Islamicization and governmental fiscal policies, but exchange between the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula likewise left its mark. The *Sharq al-Andalus* ports experienced significant growth, and the material markers, such as luxury ceramics and urban structures, indicate economic development in conjunction with Mediterranean renewal. Besides long-distance trade, the growth of secondary ports points to closer ties with heretofore isolated hinterlands through coastal shipping. Rural population movements show not only flight from abusive taxes, but also the possibilities offered by maritime participation. Rural settlement responded not only to the need to regularize the tributary relation between the state and villages, but also the development of road networks implicating interior markets, rural areas and Mediterranean ports.

Denia’s rulers understood their taifa as a junction between the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula. Denia was an integral part of the fragmented Andalusī dynamic while fully participating in the Mediterranean world. Acting as bridges between the sea and mainland, ports like Denia made possible the almost organic circulation so characteristic of the Mediterranean.
Appendix A

Maps
Map 1. The Taifa of Denia in the Andalusī Road Network
Map 2. Land and Maritime Routes in the Sharq al-Andalus
Map 3. Cities and sites associated with the taifa of Denia
Appendix B

‘Ulamā’ having lived in, studied in, or travelled through the *Sharq al-Andalus*
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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1 Almería and Pechina are grouped together, as well as Tudmīr and Murcia.

2 Data for this decade is somewhat faulty because of Mujāhid’s death in 436. When I were unable to determine a scholar’s death, but knew whether or not they had served under Iqbāl al-Dawla, I fixed their death as <436 or >436.
Appendix C

Dirhams minted by the rulers of the taifa of Denia
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<td>الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين الموبد بالله</td>
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<td>Vives, 821; Prieto, 136</td>
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**Hasan b. Mujāhid Sa‘īd al-Dawla**

<p>| ? | Denia | لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بدانية سنة حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | Vives, 1323; Prieto, 198; Rada y Delgado, 468 |
| ? | Denia | لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بدانية سنة حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | Vives, 1324; Prieto, 199 |
| ? | Denia | لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بدانية سنة حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | Prieto, 200 |
| 430 | Denia | لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم بدانية سنة ثم و أربع | حسن الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين | Prieto, 201 |
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| ? | Denia | لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم ثم و أربع | سعد الدولة الإمامة هشام أمير المؤمنين حسن | Prieto, 203 |</p>
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 السعد الدولة
الإمام هشام
أمير المومنين
حسن | Vives, 1325; Prieto, 204a, 204b; Canto et al., 2241 |
| 432  | Denia | لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله جهور
سعد الدولة
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أمير المومنين
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**Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī al-Muwaffaq**

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| 435  | Madīna Dāniya | على لا الله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ﷺ
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| 435  | Mayūrqa | على لا الله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ﷺ
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| 436  | Denia | على لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله ﷺ
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حسن | Vives, 1299; Prieto, 207e; Barceló-Morgenstern 2, 3 |
| ?    | Denia | على لا الله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له ﷺ
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أمير المومنين
حسن | Vives, 1300; Prieto, 208 |
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*Mujāhid b. ‘Alī b. Mujāhid Sirāj al-Dawla*

| ? | Segura | سراج لا الله إلا الدولة الدراهم بشكورة... مجاهد محمد رسول الله أمير المومنين عامر | Supplement Prieto, 91; Ibrāhīm, 7 |
Appendix D

Dinars minted by the rulers of the taifa of Denia
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Appendix E

Dirhams minted in Denia in the collection of the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid
Figure 1
Hasan b. Mujāhid Saʿīd al-Dawla
Denia
43?
M.A.N. III-82-2
15.15mm, 0.98gr.

Figure 2
Mujāhid
Denia
435
M.A.N. III-82-6
26mm, 3.355gr.

Figure 3
Mujāhid
Denia
435
M.A.N. III-82-7
21.45mm, 1.91gr.

Figure 4
Mujāhid
Denia
43?
M.A.N. III-82-8
22.75mm, 3.56gr.
Figure 5
‘Alī Iqāb al-Dawla
Denia
442
M.A.N. III-82-18
23.2mm, 3.87gr.

Figure 6
‘Alī Iqāb al-Dawla
Denia
449
M.A.N. III-82-30
24.95mm, 3.981gr.

Figure 7
‘Alī Iqāb al-Dawla
Denia
467
M.A.N. III-82-39
26mm, 3.777gr.

Figure 8
‘Alī Iqāb al-Dawla
Denia
468
M.A.N. III-82-40
24.3mm, 4.408gr.
Appendix F

Historiography
To understand to which spaces, Iberian and Mediterranean, Denia belonged, and to understand its lines of tension is also to better understand its history. It is also to understand to what extent exchange between Denia and Pisa, for example, was intra-cultural, if we consider that these two ports formed part of the same maritime cultural space; it is to understand what was the contribution of this Mediterranean maritime culture vis-à-vis the political decisions of the rulers, themselves products of a Cordovan culture which they established within their court. Indeed, should Denia be examined according to the precedents of Spanish or Islamic historiography, or from an Ibero-Muslim point of view, or did Denia represent a share of a Mediterranean space in continuity or “rupture,” marked by the “commercial revolution”? Lastly, how does Denia’s multiple memberships question the identity of the Mediterranean space, as well as the historiography on the subject?

The definition of Mediterranean space has been revisited by historiography for the ten last years, in particular under the influence of work questioning a monolithic vision of the Mediterranean. In the same way, Spanish historiography was confronted with the contribution of Christian, Muslim and other components to the Iberian identity, often through new methods and intellectual approaches. Denia has rarely been treated as belonging simultaneously to these two historiographical spaces. To show the Mediterranean character and implication of Denia passes thus initially by the reinterpretation at the local level of this double identity, beyond the characteristics hitherto developed in the historiography of the Iberian and Muslim peninsula. It also implies a description of membership to logics of various networks. This work has thus
profited from the clarification, on the part of other historians, of these two aspects of the taifa of Denia.

“Hispanity”: Continuity or Rupture?

The historiography of the taifa period and of Muslim Spain has generally been defined by the research interests of Hispanists, and thus, by the stakes of Spanish cultural identity vis-à-vis its history, as well as by the internal mechanisms of this history. This historiography has thus been a captive of questions of national, regional and cultural identities. A great part of this debate concentrated indeed on the influence exerted on the Spanish identity by the almost eight-century existence of al-Andalus, and particularly on questions of continuity or rupture. Although the two terms are insufficiently nuanced to express the subtleties of the debate, the question refers to the possible apprehension of the Muslim invasion and subsequent occupation of the Iberian peninsula in 711 as a decisive rupture in Spanish history, with the identification of the persistence of the fundamental elements of the Spanish identity guiding research on the period of Islamic domination.

Traditional Spanish historiography of the nineteenth century regarded the Muslim period as a parenthesis, marked by the idea of devastation due to the invasion, as well as by the survival of a few noble Visigoths in their northern mountain refuges, nobles who preserved their “inherent” Spanish singularity. The Reconquista, which could anachronistically be seen as a Hispano-Catholic variation on the principle of the “manifest destiny,” became thus the inevitable process that expelled the foreign Muslim culture, restoring that which was native, Spanish, and Christian. Although historians
have largely given up this interpretation, its resonance is still present in certain popular visions of Spanish history and identity.¹

The last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an evolution of these opinions concerning Spain’s Islamic past. The work of Spanish historians was supplemented by a movement of Spanish Arabists, themselves inspired by the Dutch Reinhart Dozy and his *Histoire des Musulmans d’Espagne*, published in 1861.² Authors began to recognize and understand that the majority of the indigenous population, whether subsequently converted or not, remained after the Muslim conquest.³ These works, however, were also characterized by an exaggerated stress, even a glorification, of the Christian elements that survived the Muslim domination. This movement was represented best by the work of Francisco Javier Simonet, whose *Historia de los mozárabes de España* was a real effort to use a broader selection of documents in order to study the Christian communities that remained in Islamic territory.⁴ Although its use of Arabic sources was innovative, and its analyses caused a reorientation of historiography, its interpretations remained within the limits expressed by feelings of Spanish nationalism; its use of the term “el cautivero,” the captivity, to describe the Islamic period clearly indicates the direction of these interpretations. In his *Historia*, as well as in his *Glosario de voces ibéricas y latinas usadas entre los Mozárabes*, Simonet argued for a strong influence of the Romano-Visigothic subjects on the dominant elite, which

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minimized the concept of rupture caused by the Islamic invasion. In this way, Simonet revalorized the “Spanish” aspect of history, and the Andalusī past was revitalized within historiography according to the idea that Andalusī Islamic culture was in fact produced by the indigenous Hispano-Christian population, the Ibero-Muslim culture thus having little to do with the “oriental” influence of the invaders. “This idea of an unbroken continuity in Spanish culture from the most remote ages, including Roman, Visigothic and Arab rule, was to become the main battle-cry of traditionalism.”

In the decades that followed historians denied even the originality of the period of Islamic rule. One of the great Spanish historians of the twentieth century, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, did not reject the importance of Islamic culture in Spanish history, especially compared to what he called the decadence of the North, but delved back to its Byzantine and even Alexandrian roots to deny its Islamic specificity. At the same time, he continued to insist on the uniquely Hispanic nature of Andalusī Islamic culture, incorporating it into the eternal flow of Spanish history.

Claudio Sánchez Albornoz also supported the idea of an eternal Spain, but saw the Islamic invasion as a defining moment in Spanish history. Sánchez Albornoz’s decidedly nationalistic, and sometimes even racialistic, tendencies led him to decry the devastating effects of the Muslim conquest, claiming that it deviated his “fatherland from its true course” as one of the great nations of Europe. For Sánchez Albornoz, the only effects of Islamic civilization were the reactions of the homo hispanus against the

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5 P. Guichard, Structures, 10.
7 J. Monroe, Islam, 100.
8 J. Monroe, Islam, 252.
9 C. Sánchez Albornoz, España y el Islam (Buenos Aires, 1946), 14-15.
occupation, leading to an increased warlike spirit and intensified religious intolerance. The culture and essence of Spain were thus untouched.¹⁰

In a debate that characterized Spanish historiography throughout much of the twentieth century, Sánchez Albornoz’s interpretations were contested by another Spanish medievalist, Américo Castro. Castro was the first Spanish historian to argue for an active dialogue among the Muslims, Christians and Jews of the Spanish Middle Ages, and that the interaction between these three “castes” produced a distinctly new identity. He argued for a total Arabization of the indigenous Iberian population, without denying that the unique character of Andalusí Islamic culture was shaped in part by pre-existing characteristics.¹¹

Although Castro’s contribution to this debate was significant, it did not succeed in dissipating the traditionalist belief that the Islamic invaders had little to no influence on the essential core of Spanish culture or even on its ethnicity. Insisting on the numerical inferiority of the invading forces, as well as the relatively recent, and so unstable, Islamic conversion of most the Berber soldiers, historians argued for a rapid integration through inter-marriage with indigenous women and alliances with local nobility. In this way, the dominant elite superficially imposed its religion and language, but was quickly “digested” by the numerically superior, and “racially pure,” subjugated levels of society. “From an ethnic, cultural and linguistic point of view, the lower social levels continued to be the same as before, without any substantial alteration.”¹²

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¹⁰ J. Monroe, Islam, 258.
¹¹ J. Monroe, Islam, 259-60.
¹² A. García y Bellido, La península ibérica en los comienzos de su historia (Madrid, 1953), 59 (cited by P. Guichard, Structures, 13).
One the most curious examples of this interpretation was the book *Les Arabes n’ont jamais envahi l’Espagne* by Ignacio Olagüe. Olagüe claimed that Spain was in fact never invaded, that the various historical accounts of the invasion were attempts to provide a satisfactory explanation for the slow and chaotic conversion of Hispano-Arian society to Islam. As absurd as this theory may sound, it was not without its supporters, and is only a slight exaggeration of the theories of a strong cultural and ethnic continuity between pre- and post-Islamic Spain.

**PIERRE GUICHARD AND THE CASA DE VELÁZQUEZ: THE BERBERS OF AL-ANDALUS AND THE STRUCTURES OF SETTLEMENT**

Although he was not the first to oppose these exaggeratedly continuist theories, Pierre Guichard’s work has been the most controversial contribution to the debate. Rather than concentrating on Spain as a whole, Guichard’s work has centered on the Spanish Levant, or *Sharq al-Andalus*. Beginning with an article published in 1969, Guichard sidestepped any refusals of the rupture of the Islamic conquest, directing the debate into a completely different realm. Using the techniques that would characterize his work for the following decades, Guichard studied not only the Arabic sources traditionally applied to the subject, but also employed post-*Reconquista* documents as well as an in-depth examination of the toponymic and onomastic evidence of the region. He thus held that not only was the region of Valencia deeply Arabicized, but also the dominant aspect of that process was the Berber character of the conquering settlers.

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Guichard’s article went relatively unnoticed until the 1976 publication of his *Al-Andalus: Estructuras antropológica de una sociedad islámica en Occidente* and the subsequent French edition *Structures sociales “orientales” et “occidentales” dans l’Espagne musulmane* (hereafter *Structures*) in 1977.\(^{15}\) The foundation of Guichard’s working thesis was therein laid out, forming the base from which he, along with a team of researchers from the Casa de Velázquez, would develop their theories on the structure and settlement of Islamic society in the *Sharq al-Andalus*.

Guichard’s approach to the subject was typical of the French *Annales* school, through a variety of historical and research tools he sought a global image of the situation, collaborating with, among others, the archeologists André Bazzana and Patrice Cressier. In *Structures*, however, Guichard’s approach was mainly anthropological, or ethnological. Like many students of the *Annales* school, his work was heavily influenced by structuralism, notably that of the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, and he proposed an application of ethnological schemas to compare the indigenous social structures to those imported by the Arab and Berber conquerors. He described the indigenous “Occidental” culture as one based on the couple, bilinear, and whose family lines lack firmness. Marriage practices tend towards exogamy and the circulation of women, while wealth and honor ease and signify social success. In this society, there is no rigorous separation between the sexes and women seem to play some kind of public role. “Oriental” culture, on the other hand, is segmentary, patrilineal, and endogamous. It lacks a central power, and bases its internal political organization on territorial groups and family lineage. Clan integrity and cohesion are protected through endogamous

marriages (the ideal marriage is between a son and his uncle’s daughter). Women are strictly excluded from public life and the sexes are separated.\textsuperscript{16}

Using these two models Guichard attempted to define the nature of the structure that prevailed in al-Andalus. During the first four chapters, Guichard remained within the framework of “Occidental” and “Oriental,” and showed quite determinedly that Muslim Spain was characterized by tribal groups, separation of the sexes, and honor based on the person rather than possession or rank. He also showed that the invading forces were much larger than previously estimated and that their families accompanied them. Guichard concluded that there were few reasons to accept the traditionalist hypothesis, that the patrilineal and endogamous structure of the invaders’ society negated the effects of intermarriage with indigenous women.\textsuperscript{17} Islamic Spain marked a rupture with the past and was the result of the structures imported by the conquering Muslim forces.

Guichard’s findings were indeed conclusive, but it was the hypothesis presented in the second half of \textit{Structures} that would establish his reputation. Building on the toponymic and onomastic evidence already presented, Guichard expanded on the Berber hypothesis introduced in his 1969 article “Le peuplement de Valence…. “ The invasion is placed first within the context of the general economic and demographic decline of the early Middle Ages. Specifically, Guichard argued for an abandonment of the Spanish Levant by the Romano-Visigothic inhabitants, and a shifting of communication routes from the eastern coast towards the plateaus of the interior. This, coupled with the relatively large contingent of Berber warriors that Guichard estimated accompanied the

\textsuperscript{16} P. Guichard, \textit{Structures}, 19.
\textsuperscript{17} P. Guichard, \textit{Structures}, 175-6.
Arab leaders of the expedition helps to explain his argument for an early, intense Berber settlement of the *Sharq al-Andalus*. This theory went against not only the traditionalist view of the Muslim presence, but also challenged the equally traditional account of the occupation in which the richer coastal plains were settled by Arab groups while the Berbers were pushed into the barren mountainous regions of the interior. Faced with an indigenous population in decline, both numerically and socio-politically because of the “pre-feudal” evolutions resulting from the disintegration of Visigothic authority, the “strong structures” of the Berbers enabled them to dominate and redefine the east Andalusī landscape. The *Sharq al-Andalus* then was transformed and determined by the structuring agnatic, endogamous, and clannish characteristics of the Berber tribes that settled the region, producing a segmentary, tribalized society.

The basis for Guichard’s arguments in *Structures* was largely textual, leaving aside material culture, in keeping with his training as a historian. In addition to historical texts, however, Guichard also made important use of the region’s toponymy, showing that place names reflected the socially organizing patrilineal structures of those who had settled the region. The best evidence for this is the high concentration of tribal toponyms with the prefix *Beni* (from *Banū*, “descendant of” in Arabic) plus a marker derived from a specific Berber or Arab clan or confederation. Benicasim, for example, is derived from *Banū Qasim*, an important Berber group from northern Morocco. Such places names are common in Algeria and Morocco, but also in southeastern Spain.

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Over the next twenty years, however, his original thesis would be integrated into an intensive research campaign that relied heavily on a close juxtaposition of textual and material evidence. In addition, *Structures* had concentrated on the first three centuries of Islamic rule, whereas his subsequent research, in close conjunction with the newly formed Casa de Velázquez research team “Islam d’Occident. Peuplement, habitat et culture matérielle” with André Bazzana and Patrice Cressier, attempted to analyze the structure of society and settlement throughout the entire period of Muslim rule, extending even into the first years of post-Reconquista Valencia.

This expansion towards material culture and settlement patterns was neither a spontaneous nor an isolated undertaking. In 1973, Pierre Toubert had published what was to become one of the most innovative works on history in the latter half of the twentieth century. In *Les structures du Latium médiéval*, Toubert introduced the concept of *incastellamento* that shifted attention from castles as objects to the space delimited by them.21 Toubert questioned the uniquely military-strategic function of the castle, showing castle placement and space to be a product of a civilization, an integral part of the social, cultural, and political structures of that civilization. Far from being an isolated phenomenon, the theories of *incastellamento* were applied throughout Western Europe and the Mediterranean. In addition to the research conducted by the Casa de Velázquez, Toubert’s hypothesis served, for example, as the founding principle for the international

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archeology congress series Castrum co-sponsored by the Casa de Velázquez and the École française de Rome.\footnote{22}

One of the major components of Toubert’s *incastellamento* theory was the use of “extensive archeology.” This new technique was based on space, not sites, and therefore differed from stratigraphic archeology, in which a thorough, in-depth, and costly dig is carried out on a site. Extensive archeology uses detailed terrain observation, aerial photography interpretation, and methodical gathering of surface materials such as ceramics to provide a global view of the logic and dynamics of rural settlement over a large area.\footnote{23}

Guichard’s concentration on rural settlement patterns of Islamic Valencia was thus not “parochial,” but situated within a larger historiographical context. This does not diminish, however, the impact that his work had on Spanish historiography. *Structures* and Guichard’s subsequent work provoked a debate that shifted historians’ attention from the “Pan-Hispanic” political history favored under the Franco regime to the study of rural settlement patterns: “as drastic or polar a change as one could possibly conceive in historical research.”\footnote{24}

Over the course of the next fifteen years, Guichard’s theory evolved into a complex model and explanation of society and settlement in the *Sharq al-Andalus*. An


\footnote{23}A. Bazzana and P. Guichard, “Archéologie extensive dans la région valencienne (Espagne),” in *Castrum* 2, 3-28; P. Toubert, “Préface” to *Les Châteaux ruraux d’al-Andalus*, cited infra, n. 33.

\footnote{24}T. F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle*, xiv-xv.
essential part of the theory behind this model was that of a tributary society. In 1974, the Catalan historian and archeologist Miquel Barceló introduced the community of Spanish history to the works of Samir Amin, a French-trained, Egyptian, neo-Marxist social scientist and his theories of economic development. From a social-political point of view, this tributary formation was organized around two principles: a state structure and local rural communities, the relation between the two being based on the collection of taxes. This model was particularly important in that it helped historians to distinguish Andalusī society from a feudal society in which a “noble” social class holds rights over land and disrupts the direct relation between a state-controlled organization and the majority of the population.

Although it had not yet begun in earnest, Guichard’s work on the rural settlement patterns of Islamic Valencia predated the publication of Structures. The first in a long series of articles and books co-published with the French archeologist André Bazzana was presented at an archeology colloquium in Palermo in 1974. The article, entitled simply, “Recherche sur les habitats musulmans du Levant espagnol,” placed Guichard’s theories on Berber settlement within an archeological context, setting the stage for his and Bazzana’s subsequent studies.

Over the next fifteen years, Bazzana and Guichard produced a corpus of work that archeologically demonstrated that the Sharq al-Andalus was a segmentary tribal society

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25 S. Amin, Sobre el desarrollo desigual de las formaciones sociales (Barcelona, 1974). Note that Barcelo’s Spanish translation of Amin’s work alters slightly the original format of the French edition, isolating and emphasizing the chapters on the tributary mode of production. Guichard uses the Spanish translation, in keeping with his Spanish and Catalan colleagues.


functioning under a tributary government organization. They showed that the rural Muslim settlements in the plains and mountains were organized into vast, stable, and coherent territories, measuring between 50 and 80 km². Within these territories, small *alquerias* (from the Arabic *qaryā*; pl. *qurā*) or farms were inhabited by free peasant farmers who owned their land. Each of these territories had a perched fortification, or *ḥiṣn* (pl. *ḥusūn*), that served as both refuge and habitat. According to Guichard, these *ḥusūn* were strictly defensive installations that served as refuge in the event of troubles. The occasional *qāʾid*, or military administrator, present in these castles was a direct representative of the government, and is in no way to be seen as a feudal figure. The *ḥusūn* were horizontal in nature, rather than vertical, in keeping with traditional Berber architecture. They also consisted of three elements: the *celoquia* or central rudimentary dwelling for temporary residence; the central wall; and the *albacar*, a fortified open space on the lower edges of the *ḥiṣn* where the majority of the population would gather. The village communities were relatively autonomous vis-à-vis the urban centers and were themselves responsible for the construction of rudimentary collective fortifications in the form of large walled refuges called *albacars*, often associated with the *ḥusūn*. These rural settlements were thus “collective tribalized communes.”

This interpretation of autonomous, collective rural communities and fortifications escaping direct governmental control refuted any ideas of a feudalistic society. Guichard, in fact, rejected any interpretation that could be construed (or even misconstrued) as feudalistic. This explains in part his refusal to see the *ḥiṣn* as anything other than a

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28 See bibliography for both individual and collective publications by A. Bazzana and P. Guichard.
community based construction, excluding any possibility of their having been used by local independent powers. This refusal is at the base of most contentions between Guichard and his more reconcilable critics, such as Rafael Azuar Ruiz.

Guichard’s interpretation also went against the traditional notion of an urban-based Islamic system. Prior to the *incastellamento* movement, historians considered Islamic fortifications to be the result of an urban power, intended to survey and protect maritime and terrestrial frontier zones. Not only did this approach reduce rural fortifications to a uniquely military function, but it also relied heavily on the traditional cultural model in which the *madīna* was the dominant, structuring element of Muslim society.\(^{30}\) While this interpretation was perhaps accurate elsewhere in the Muslim world, it was principally the result of the nature of Islamic sources. As an explanation of this, the French Islamicist, Claude Cahen, wrote that:

> This civilization is fundamentally urban: not that the majority of people do not live off of the earth, even during moments of maximum commercial expansion, but because the city is the seat of all institutions… and as a result the literature that we depend on is a town literature that scorns or forgets peasants, or is only interested in them in so much as they bring in supplies, taxes and rents.\(^{31}\)

Thus, Arabist historians relying uniquely on textual sources had produced a model of Islamic society in which “the *ḥiṣn* as well as the villages and settlements were related to the state, and their psycho-social context was the defining network of small and large cities.”\(^{32}\) In this system, the *huṣūn* acted as seats for the military or administrative

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governor appointed by the central ruler, and the *albacars* served to stock taxes paid in kind.

The culmination of Guichard and Bazzana’s work on the rural fortifications came with the 1988 publication of *Les Châteaux ruraux d’al-Andalus*.

In *Châteaux*, Bazzana and Guichard’s work on Valencia was complemented by that of another member of the Casa de Velázquez research team, Patrice Cressier, applying the same extensive archeology techniques in Andalusia. *Châteaux* provided a forum in which the authors could address the critiques leveled at their theories and explicate, with detailed examples, their “paradigm” of rural settlement. They insisted on the fact that the role of the *ḥuṣūn* was not purely military, and that they were not necessarily the seat of a feudal, seigniorial, or governmental official. The *ḥuṣūn* were more the link to the needs of the rural, unfortified, and open *qurā*. The authors refuted any idea that the *ḥuṣūn* were part of a frontier network, arguing that frontiers did not affect in any way their general organization. The distribution of rural fortifications in the region of Valencia and Andalusia seemed independent of both the need to survey roads and also of any imperatives that might have been imposed by the existence of a frontier. The network was at its densest where human settlements were more numerous and sparser towards the political and military limits to the north.

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34 *Les châteaux ruraux d’al-Andalus*, 153-4; also A. Bazzana, P. Guichard and Ph. Sénac, “La frontière dans l’Espagne médiévale,” in *Castrum* 4, 35-59. In recent years, this “French school” has adopted the idea of a constantly moving and permeable frontier, especially that espoused by the American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner.
In his *Maisons d’al-Andalus* (hereafter *Maisons*), Bazzana also evokes this possibility of a shared Mediterranean tradition. Like Guichard’s *Musulmans de Valence*, *Maisons* was Bazzana’s dissertation for the doctorat d’état, which often represents over fifteen years of research, and while Guichard’s dissertation was, like *Structures*, largely text and document based, *Maisons* represented a uniquely archeological dissertation. Although Bazzana referred the reader to previous works, such as *Châteaux*, for details of the *ḥiṣn* paradigm, his objective was to show “that material culture, rural landscape, habitat structure – from the *ḥiṣn* macrostructure to the familial habitation microstructure – could also provide proof” of the segmentary Berberized society of the *Sharq al-Andalus*: “The results of the archeological investigation led me to vigorously underline the indirect ‘Oriental’ influence that al-Andalus received; the Maghribī screen had modified the contributions of the Arabic and Omayyad Middle East.”

Another area that has served to illustrate the segmentary tribalized society of the *Sharq al-Andalus* is irrigation. Although the French school has not been the most influential in irrigation studies, they understood early on the implications that irrigation patterns could have for their models. Karl Wittfogel established the traditional view of irrigation systems in his 1957 book *Oriental Despotism*. Wittfogel explained that the existence of complex irrigation systems indicated centralized political systems. The control of water imposed both economic and social constraints; large irrigation projects demanded equally large funding and a large mobilization of labor, neither of which are
possible without a strong centralized and bureaucratic authority. Wittfogel considered then that Muslim Spain, being a highly irrigated region, was one of these “hydraulic societies.” Subsequent study has shown that Wittfogel’s theories do tend to be correct for large irrigation projects involving large rivers and seasonal flooding. They are not, however, as applicable in the case of smaller, localized systems and semi-arid regions.  

The American archeologist Thomas Glick was one of the first to question Wittfogel’s theories in the case of Muslim Spain. He showed that nothing indicated that the Valencian irrigation systems had been created during the Muslim occupation and that Muslim Spain could be characterized as an “oriental despotism” only under the seventy odd years of the Caliphate. Glick’s work helped to redirect the debate from the chronology to the relations between irrigation and the social-political system. Glick was, in fact, one of the early critics of Guichard’s segmentary society, although not the most vehement. In his more recent publications, however, he admits having been convinced both by the overall logic of the system, and by newer evidence being produced by the next generation of historians.

André Bazzana built on Glick’s work and included irrigation systems in his study of the Valencian region. Guichard also uses toponymic markers of irrigation sites, alongside those of rural settlements to illustrate the rupture between the end of Antiquity and the beginnings of the Muslim occupation, an attestation of the large-scale Berber

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38 T.F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle*, 67.
41 T.F. Glick, *From Muslim Fortress to Christian Castle*, xvii.
migration. Archeologically, Bazzana discussed in several articles, as well as in his *Maisons*, the similarities between Valencian and North African irrigation systems, especially techniques. Patrice Cressier, whose work in the extreme southeast of Spain has produced many of the same results, has seconded Guichard in this analysis. Bazzana and Guichard demonstrated that some technology used was typical of segmentary communities, although in the process they made a distinction between “rudimentary” and “complex” systems that has been criticized by even their own supporters. The distinction opposed elementary designs by peasants to the presumably complex river-fed systems of the Valencian *huerta*. Mateu and Barceló have both remarked that there are not necessarily qualitative differences between the two systems.

Despite this criticism, the most adamant use of irrigation systems to support the Guichard theory is that of Miquel Barceló, whose work concerns primarily the Balearic Islands. The Catalan archeologist and historian was present from the beginning as a supporter of Guichard’s theories, and probably played no small role in their formulation; Barceló translated Samir Amin’s work into Spanish and was also the editing director of Barral, the publisher of the Spanish edition of Guichard’s *Structures*. Barceló’s work

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45 A. Bazzana and P. Guichard, “Irrigation et société dans l’Espagne orientale au Moyen Age,” 126-30
echoes Guichard’s in that he makes extensive use of toponyms to demonstrate the segmentary and tribal nature of Islamic Majorcan society, advocating the Berber theories of Guichard. His work differs however, in that it is highly archeological, much more so than Guichard’s. Barceló argued early on that the documentary sources were insufficient and that simple inventories of place names and techniques are not meaningful in themselves. He has also called for a maximum integration of the “human irrigators” into the analyses, criticizing any efforts to reduce irrigation systems to “technological units.”

Moreover, Barceló maintained that if the ḥuṣūn were not the result of an official state policy, their study could not then explain the political structures of society; in addition, the differentiation between rural fortifications produced by rural elements, and those representing the interests of the state, differentiation often ignored in Guichard’s work, should be noted.

Thus, it was in their total negation of a state presence in these segmentary structures, using ḥuṣūn as illustrations, that Guichard and its partisans provoked the most disputes. Among these critics, Arabists were most vehement, their uniquely textual approach presenting the country as subjected to the urban world. The most enthusiastic of these critics was Mikél de Epalza, professor of Arabic at the University of Alicante, who, often with his colleague María Jesús Rubiera Mata, countered Guichard through a series of articles and publications, defending his vision of an urban Islamic society.

Epalza maintained that Al-Andalus “was an urban and urbanized space, with agricultural zones always dependent on the cities,” considering that “this new perverse

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49 See bibliography for Epalza’s and Rubiera Mata’s publications.
historiographical tendency” was a rejection of the “fundamentally urban institutions of Arabic-Islamic society.”

Epalza refused the tribalized and segmentary nature of the network of the ḥuṣūn proposed by Guichard and his partisans, in particular proposing a different interpretation for the toponyms. He intensely defended the traditional vision of an Islamic society within which the fortifications extended along borders and roads structured by a policy of State, portraying the albacars as storage places for taxes paid in kind, i.e. rural tribute towards the centers of urban power. This interpretation, mainly based on the information provided by contemporary Arabic documents and texts, clearly illustrates the remarks of Claude Cahen on the urban focus of these same sources. Thus, it appears impossible to reconcile the two models, segmentary and tribalized on the one hand, and urban and politicized on the other, each one dependent on the methodology employed, without the support of the two approaches, both material and documentary.

Rafael Azuar Ruiz, director of the archeological museum of Alicante, following the evolution of his theories on the phenomena of settlement in Sharq Al-Andalus, offers a middle ground between theses interpretations. Following the analyses advanced by Barceló’s research team, in particular by Helena Kirchner, and according to the idea of the fiscal pressures as a driving force in the evolutions of settlement suggested by Guichard, Azuar Ruiz described the structure of settlement in Sharq Al-Andalus as tribalized and independent, but related to the State and the urban centers by strong bonds. Thus, according to the historical evolution of the sites, Azuar noted that the

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51 See R. Azuar Ruiz, “Del Hisn a la Madina en el Sharq al-Andalus, en época de los reinos de taifas (s. XI),” in De Toledo a Huesca. Sociedades Medievales en transición a finales del siglo XI (1080-1100), ed.
fortifications related to settlement sites were in fact the expressions of a State seeking to impose a fiscal structure on a network that was dissociated from it. As we will see, this “historicizing” approach is better adapted to the analysis of the fifth/eleventh century, recognizing a role, both reactive and active, for the state. Thus, this reading makes it possible to include the influence of rulers on settlement changes in their taifa, as well as their restructuration of the taifa in response to these changes and the reaffirmation of its place in the Western Mediterranean.

THE TAIFA PERIOD

If the questions of identity and societal structures have benefited from intense and profitable debates, the taifa period has received an incomplete treatment. Reinhardt Dozy’s *Histoire de des Musulmans d’Espagne* was certainly innovating in its nineteenth-century context, and it is true that the author dedicated one of the four books to the “small sovereigns,” but, as Lévi-Provençal noted in 1950, the work appeared out-of-date, for lack of “rationalism,” or its anecdotal treatment of events, and especially because of the later discovery of texts which renewed knowledge on Muslim Spain.52 Given the interest of his studies relating to previous centuries, precisely using these new sources that he himself had often discovered, it is regrettable that Lévi-Provençal could not supplement


his own *Histoire d’Espagne musulmane* with the fourth volume planned for the taifa period.

Indeed, the historian of this period long had to be satisfied with the introduction provided by the Spanish numismatist Antonio Prieto y Vives for his study on the monetary emissions of the *reyes de taifas*, which in fact gives only a rudimentary analysis in support of the numismatic part of the work.\(^53\) It was only with the publication of the David Wasserstein’s University of Oxford thesis in 1985 that a historian undertook to examine the taifa period thoroughly.\(^54\) Wasserstein’s approach was typical of historians of al-Andalus, in that his analyses started from a strictly Ibero-Muslim point of view, and the book thus concentrated on the taifas that had a policy and history at the heart of these issues. *The Rise and Fall of the Party Kings* is a political history of the taifas, and the examined aspects are exclusively dependent on that theme. Economic history, especially out of the Iberian framework, is not treated there, and the taifas outside of the circles of the former Cordovan power receive less attention less than those that sought to appropriate that power. Moreover, because of historiography on the subject, Wasserstein followed the structures of the debate on ethnic divisions between the taifas and the importance of these divisions within the policies of the taifas, which then limited his margin of movement in the interpretation of their internal and external relations. Likewise, his later work on the political institution of the Andalusī caliphate remains in

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this political field, as announced by the title.\textsuperscript{55} The chapter on Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī, although innovative in its treatment of legitimacy through documentary sources and numismatics, offers nothing beyond this political and Andalusī framework.

Following this same Ibero-Muslim model, Peter Scales concentrated on the \textit{fitna}, the civil war that marked the years between the fall of the ‘Āmirid regime in 399/1009 and the end of the caliphate of Cordova in 422/1031.\textsuperscript{56} This period is among the most complicated and inscrutable of the history of al-Andalus, and Scales’ work is an important tool for the historian of the period because of the clearness of its chronology, as well as its critical presentation of the sources and their contents. However, the author’s analysis is also almost strictly political, sometimes integrating social aspects into the spheres of the Iberian elite, and, like Wasserstein, treats outlying zones only in their relations with the center. Denia is granted a place in the geography of the subject, but only because of the importance of its ruler, Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī, among the Ṣaqāliba, and this only compared to the other members of the ‘Āmirid faction. The subject is not easily adaptable to an opening on the Mediterranean, especially from a political point of view, but the absence of economic aspects and especially of the sea in his analyses on the coastal taifas is regrettable. Scales is in some respects a prisoner of his sources, because, like the work of Maria Jesus Rubiera Mata, \textit{The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba} is that of an Hispanist-Arabist, and although he tries to show the limits of his sources, especially concerning the role which they assign to the Berbers in the disintegration of the caliphate, his point of view remains limited by the geographical framework of his authors.

\textsuperscript{56} P. Scales, \textit{The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba: Berbers and Andalusis in Conflict} (Leiden, 1994).
Specifically for our subject, one can wonder why Scales does not lend more importance to the role of the revival of the Mediterranean and the implication of the coastal cities in the early fragmentation of these zones at the beginnings of the *fitna*.

One of the more innovative subjects in recent historiography on Muslim Spain is legitimacy. This approach to the policy of the Umayyads, then taifa rulers, has contributed greatly to the comprehension of their motivations as well as their actions. Certain historians have shown that the construction of an ideology of legitimacy dictated by the expectations of the Muslim Iberian and Mediterranean worlds was one of the major concerns for the Umayyad, Āmirid, and then taifa regimes. Gabriel Martinez-Gros has demonstrated the importance of ideological construction through literary sources for the caliphal period, using authors who wrote in support of the Umayyads, whether during the caliphate, or nostalgically under the taifas. His study testifies to the language and the symbols that these authors used in their search either to establish the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordova, or to deplore the perceived absence of this legitimacy in the taifa period. More recently, and thoroughly, the Italian Arabist Bruna Soravia masterfully showed the importance of the discourse of legitimacy for the Ibero-Muslim historian Ibn Ḥayyān, and how this structured his account of Umayyad and taifa Spain. Janina Safran has also examined the symbolism of legitimate power under

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the Umayyad caliphate, succinctly connecting literary production, court ceremony and external and domestic politics under the light of legitimacy.\textsuperscript{59}

Denia’s importance in post-Umayyad al-Andalus was such that sufficient secondary works concerning the taifa are available to aid in interpreting its history. Although three monographs have been written on Denia, there is still substantial work to be done on the subject. These works are Ibero-centric in their interpretation, leaving aside Mediterranean aspects while neglecting the social and economic history of the taifa.

The canon Roque Chabas’ work must be placed at the heart of the Valencian \textit{renaixença}, a movement that sought to defend an idea of regional autonomy vis-à-vis the centralizing forces of the dominant Hispano-Castilian culture. Indeed, at the end of the nineteenth century, faced with a Spanish historiography that sought to define the Spanish nation by its history, a group of historians, although more conservative that their Catalan counterparts, worked to “save” Valencian history.\textsuperscript{60} It is in relation to this movement that it is necessary to interpret not only Chabas’ 1874 \textit{Historia de la ciudad de Denia}, but also his other efforts, in particular his journal of Valencian history entitled \textit{El Archivo}.\textsuperscript{61} Chabas’ work was thus limited in its vision to the geographical framework of the region, or at best of the peninsula. The objective of demonstrating regional importance or specificity placed the taifa in a regional, not Iberian nor Mediterranean, point of view.

His history of Denia, from antiquity to modern times, devotes few chapters to the Muslim history of Denia, and even less to that of the taifa. Likewise, the articles of \textit{El Archivo} address little of the Muslim history of the area. These limits to Chabas’ work

\textsuperscript{61} R. Chabas Llorens, \textit{Historia de la ciudad de Denia} (Denia, 1874) (3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. Alicante, 1972).
come partly owing to the fact that the canon learned Arabic late in life, and this only partially. The historian thus had to limit himself to either published translations or those that he could get through his contacts in the university world of the time. In spite of this, Chabas made a noticeable effort to include the Muslim presence in his regional studies, to the point of undertaking a laborious training in Arabic. His history of Denia, despite his lack of university training, shows a concern for veracity, as well as a positivist approach which could only improve knowledge on the subject; thus the documentary analysis is augmented as much as possible with lapidary, archeological, and numismatic sources. In spite of these efforts, the scale of Chabas’ analysis is inevitably reduced. Limited to Latin and translated Arab sources, it could only present an incomplete version of this history, and this at the time when, under the same nationalizing impetus that the Valencian renaixença sought to counter, Arabic Iberian sources began to appear in the collection of the Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana in Madrid. These publications, in addition to later discoveries and editions of sources, rendered much of Chabas’ analyses incomplete and sometimes even incorrect. Moreover, in spite of his efforts and concerns, Chabas was a product of his time, and probably of his vocation. His history of Denia, thus, transmitted the mistrust and even the scorn of nineteenth-century Spain for the Muslim world, especially with regard to the fragmented structures of post-caliphal al-Andalus.

In 1961 Clelia Sarnelli Cerqua published, in Arabic, her thesis at the University of Cairo on Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī. Like her article three years later, Sarnelli Cerqua’s work

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concentrated on the literary aspects of the Denia court. The author used many Arabic texts, of which several were then unpublished, to build her narration of the history of the taifa. This narration was used to examine the intellectual and literary life of the taifa in its political context in relation to the other taifas. Although this regrouping of information relating to Denia is useful, the work sometimes lacks analysis and detachment vis-à-vis the sources, and is satisfied in transmitting details. Moreover, the bibliography and the citations sometimes lack professional standards that could have made its use more practical.

Regrettably, a lack scientific rigor also characterizes the María Jesús Rubiera Mata’s book, *La Taifa de Denia*, which remains, nevertheless, relevant for this study. Although Rubiera Mata consulted what seems to me to be the near totality of the sources treating the Iberian aspects of the taifa, its bibliography is rudimentary, and citations are non-existent. This lack of scientific method sometimes makes the verification of the author’s assertions impossible, and frustrates the reader. Notwithstanding, the author arranges the many Arab sources in a manner to make an often obscure history coherent. Rubiera Mata thus reports the political history of the taifa in preparation for the final section of the book on the literary culture of Denia in which she briefly introduces the various figures that made Denia a focal point of the Andalusī intellectual world in the fifth/eleventh century. The author demonstrates the relation that existed between political power and this literary court, although she does not push this analysis as far one might wish. Indeed, Rubiera Mata avoids problems such as the legitimacy of power, sometimes

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evoking them, but generally being satisfied with a simple description of the events or a literary work. Moreover, *La Taifa de Denia* is limited to the strictly Arabo-Iberian aspects of this history, and thus did not use more Mediterranean Arab sources, not to mention Latin or non-documentary sources. This treatment of the subject is somewhat surprising given that the author’s introduction states that the taifa’s interest comes precisely from its international nature.\(^{66}\) The absence of the social or economic history of the taifa is also regrettable, although both are difficult to treat with only literary or narrative sources. *La Taifa de Denia* can thus only be a synthesis of the political history of the taifa.

Indeed, whether for Muslim Spain, the taifas, or especially for Denia, historiography has for the most part been sequestered by the limits of a political geography which does not answer the reality of the facts. Although the different studies do describe the failed conquest of the island of Sardinia and Mujāhid al-‘Āmirī can be sure of his reputation as prince of the pirates from the Christian chronicles to contemporary historians, Denia and its history, however, remain too often fixed in an Iberian context that contains only one part of the elements necessary to understand them.

**THE MIDDLE SEA**

The Mediterranean is its own subject, generating volumes of analyses and history. It is also used as framework of studies or as a reference for its littorals. However, as a definition or framework, the Mediterranean is often intangible. The majority of “Mediterranean” studies are in fact studies of the lands that surround this sea, with more

attention given to these lands and their internal histories than their relations with the Mediterranean. Historians often see in this space the extension of that with which they are most familiar. Historians of Christian Europe, the Muslim world, or the Byzantine Empire cross and meet but their fields remain distinct. Because of this, Mediterranean history is often regarded as “interdisciplinary,” as if the historian was crossing barriers and not simply studying an area with its own integrity. However, one of the principal questions of this work is to what extent this space has a coherence, and what was Denia’s place in that space.

Mediterranean unity seems obvious at first, and the term is so present, in popular as well as academic cultures. However, when examined more closely, this obviousness is not so clear. This space has no political unity and this for seventeen centuries, since the division of the Roman Empire under Diocletian. It is true that Roman domination left cultural, legal or archeological traces, but those alone do not unify. Linguistically, there are dozens of languages from completely different families spoken on its coasts, while religion is equally a factor of division, among not only Christians, Muslims and Jews, but also within these communities. Thus, is this Mediterranean a reality, or only an a posteriori construction? Or worse still, is it a political and social vision of the same order as “Orientalism,” allowing historians of the Western and Northern world, “advanced” and “various,” to distinguished themselves from the south, “backwards” and “uniform?” In what way, then, can we speak of Mediterranean unity?

Forty years ago Fernand Braudel published the second edition, reviewed and expanded, of his famous *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, initially published in 1949. Although obviously this sea and its components had been the subject of former studies, it is with Braudel that one finds the history of the Mediterranean, and not in the Mediterranean, a distinction later espoused by Peregrine Holden and Nicholas Purcell and their book *The Corrupting Sea*. Braudel clearly introduced the defining characteristics of this space that frames his, and our, historical study. Indeed, following his concept of the “*longue durée*,” Braudel structured his book between the almost imperceptible historical phenomena, i.e. the environment, the “*moyenne durée*,” i.e. the institutions and the structures of society, then finally event-driven history. Braudel enumerates in his study of the Mediterranean the qualities that distinguish and define it, make its unity. He bases this unity on environment and communication.

Thus, the environment, terrain, climate and, obviously, the sea itself are determining factors in the construction of Mediterranean unity. Broken, peninsular and insular terrains define and delimit this space. Alongside this relief is the climate, hot and dry in summer, warm and rainy in winter, and the vine and the olive tree mark the traditional limits of this Mediterranean climate. From these determining characteristics, Braudel analyzes human adaptation, how the “*moyenne durée*” adapted to the “*longue*.” Thus, Braudel considered that the homogeneity of this climate imposed the same survival reaction on those who lived there, that this climate created a cultural unit through agriculture and products and thus also through the trade of these. This was to the point

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71 P. Horden and N. Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 2.
where a Mediterranean traveler could journey from port to port without feeling transplanted or expatriated.\textsuperscript{72}

This homogeneity is not however as monolithic as it may appear. It is true that the Mediterranean climate is so specific that it lends its name to six other “Mediterranoid” climatic zones.\textsuperscript{73} However, another characteristic of this Mediterranean is precisely the highly erratic nature of its climate, so much so that annual precipitation averages have no sense.\textsuperscript{74} Moreover, in southern Europe within this Mediterranean, climatologists have recognized more than twenty-two climates by degree of dryness.\textsuperscript{75} In addition, this heterogeneity is amplified by an exceptional variety of terrain and topography, whose own diversity in fact distinguishes the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{76} It is in fact this diversity which brings us to the Mediterranean’s second defining characteristic: communication.

In \textit{The Corrupting Sea} Horden and Purcell examined to what extent Mediterranean unity existed before the period studied by Braudel, i.e. before the sixteenth century. Although their analyses confirm this unity, it takes a somewhat different form from that of Braudel. Thus, against the theory of a homogeneous climate, and so a homogenized economy, where it would be difficult to understand the motivations of those merchants who are so important in the Braudelien construction, Horden and Purcell propose that of “micro-regions” distinguished by their topography, whose excesses and

\textsuperscript{72} F. Braudel, \textit{La Méditerranée}, 216.
\textsuperscript{73} A.T. Grove and O. Rackham, \textit{The Nature of Mediterranean Europe. An Ecological History} (New Haven, 2001), 47.
\textsuperscript{74} A.T. Grove and O. Rackham, \textit{The Nature of Mediterranean Europe}, 27.
\textsuperscript{75} A.T. Grove and O. Rackham, \textit{The Nature of Mediterranean Europe}, 25.
\textsuperscript{76} P. Birot, \textit{La Méditerranée et le Moyen Orient}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Paris, 1964), 3; P. Horden and N. Purcell, \textit{Corrupting Sea}, 78.
deficiencies stimulate economic exchange. They present a kaleidoscopic Mediterranean, in which the structures of maritime communication overcome tendencies towards fragmentation. Holden and Purcell criticize “the almost mystical attachment” of French historians, such as Braudel or Lucien Febvre, for the concept of routes, as well as a perceived dualism between “ocean-going trade” and coastal traffic. Instead of this linear vision, *The Corrupting Sea* presents an alternative of small interlaced and superimposed accidental networks. Despite these differences, however, the two approaches converge on the same vision of the Mediterranean, and Horden and Purcell espouse the “movement in space” and “quasi-organic circulation” that Braudel describes.

This idea of communication and exchange so central to *The Corrupting Sea* dominates so much in recent historiography that this “Mediterranean” model, that of a zone characterized by major and transforming exchanges between different cultures, has been used to compare areas as distant and different as the Sea of Japan, Polynesia, and the Caribbean. According to this definition, a certain Mediterranean culture must have existed, built through the communication, while preserving the specificities of each area.

If we accept then that communication is the major characteristic of this space, we must also ask what a suspension or reduction in this activity would mean. About what kind of communication are we speaking? Was it motivated by economic, cultural or

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78 P. Horden and N. Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 79.
79 P. Horden and N. Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 144.
80 F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, 254; P. Horden and N. Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 144.
81 D. Abulafia, “Mediterraneans,” 65 and passim.
religious reasons? And what was the effect of this communication on the littoral and bordering areas?

The medieval Mediterranean economy has occupied a position of privilege in historiography since the publication in 1937 of Henri Pirenne’s *Mahomet et Charlemagne*. No study on the role of the trade in the general economic evolution of the Early Middle Ages can be unaware of the controversy associated with Pirenne’s name. Medieval historiography is often characterized by pointed studies, but Pirenne’s work caused one of the most important debates in this field by its general theory on the economic evolution of the Early Middle Ages. The work is divided into two parts, the first explaining why, up to a certain point, Roman unity had been preserved despite the Germanic invasions. In the second part, Pirenne advances his analyses on the consequences of the Muslim conquests, explaining why “Islam ruptured the Mediterranean unity that the Germanic invasions had left intact,” leaving two hostile civilizations on the banks of the Mediterranean between which there were only exceptional communications. The central topic of the book is structured around the changes that insulated the Merovingians in the West, causing the economic separation of the Carolingians from the Mediterranean, and thus that “without Mohammed, Charlemagne is inconceivable.”

Pirenne’s theories are historiographically important, but his work was quickly questioned. Some of the book’s problems can be explained by its posthumous

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84 H. Pirenne, *Mahomet*, 120.
publication, and the fact that it was Pirenne’s son, Jacques Pirenne, and his disciple Ferdinand Vercauteren, who brought it to the public. However, even if Pirenne could not refine his explanations before its death, the book is a rather explicit example of his theories.\textsuperscript{86} Pirenne’s work benefited from new documentation in the form of new critical editions of sources not readily available before, but his examples sometimes lack weight and references. However, the criticism of Pirenne is often focused on his exaggeration of, or his lack of attention to certain facts – in particular the effects of the Muslims on Mediterranean trade – but such problems are inherent in the formulation of generalizing remarks. In addition, Pirenne was a product of his time, reproducing thus certain analyses with which a modern historian cannot agree, in particular the glorification or the nostalgia of the Roman, Byzantine, or Carolingian empires, especially vis-à-vis their invaders. Following evolutions in the idea of the state and government over the course of the nineteenth century, as well as at the beginning of the twentieth century – i.e. the construction of the modern state – historians sometimes preferred the grandeur of empires or kingdoms to smaller or less considerable polities.\textsuperscript{87} The result, frequently, was that those who disturbed these states were scorned, or that the importance of minor actors was reduced.

The idea of a Mediterranean rupture, a total stop of communications between the West and the East stimulated innumerable studies and responses among Pirenne’s critics and disciples of Pirenne. One need only count the number of articles or books with “\textit{Mahomet et Charlemagne}” in their title to understand the importance of this debate.

\textsuperscript{86} R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, \textit{Mohammed}, 3.
Robert Lopez was among the first to respond to the problems raised by Pirenne, in particular with his article “Mohammed and Charlemagne: a revision,” in which he showed that the disappearance of the products like papyri, textiles, spices and gold was not contemporary to the Arab expansion.88 Given the quantity and the quality of the sources available for the period, Lopez considered that the Pirenne debate was unsolvable, but his work over the next half century showed that while a “general depression, as much under the Merovingians as the Carolingians, had affected trade,” the level of exchange between West and East was more important than Pirenne had believed.89

Although Lopez’s remarks are largely reserved, Maurice Lombard was enthusiastic with respect to medieval Mediterranean exchange. In response to the theory according to which Islam would have ruptured trade, Lombard presented Islam as the instigator of a new Mediterranean dynamic.90 He saw the Muslim world as an enormous common market, whose urban consumption nourished the needs for the raw materials that the West had in abundance, such wood, iron or slaves.91 Lombard maintained that new circuits developed to provide for these needs and that the gold received from the East in exchange for these staples brought an economic renewal to the West. Lombard’s

work had the merit of proposing an alternative system to Pirenne’s, and not just specific criticisms. However, Lombard’s system was criticized for a lack of traces, in particular that of gold coins in the West, as well as for a lack of documentation. Lombard reproduced, in addition, the same error as Pirenne, in that he exaggerated certain facts while neglecting others. We see moreover, with both Lombard and Pirenne, this tendency towards a linear interpretation of trade routes and Mediterranean exchange from one point to another, rather than in networks, focusing on ocean-going trade as a major indicator of Mediterranean health.

More recently, Michael McCormick’s study on the origins of the European economy brought this subject back to the historiographical forum with innovative tools and a quantitative and qualitative widening of sources used. Like Corrupting Sea, McCormick’s work concentrated on communication as a Mediterranean indicator, in this case of the economy, and the two books are best read as two volumes of the same unit. Although this book addressed the problem of the early medieval European economy, and not the Mediterranean in its entirety, it does demonstrate continuity, although somewhat reduced, of Mediterranean communications in the Early Middle Ages. Instead of a rupture caused by the Islamic invasions, the deceleration, according to his analysis, was felt as of the third century, and especially beginning with the sixth, well before the disturbances of the seventh and eighth century. Moreover, McCormick identified through the study of trade that had hitherto been neglected, in particular that of religious relics or slaves, the continuous even reinvigorated pulse of communications under the

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92 A. Verhulst, “Marchés,” 26; R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, Mohammed, 8.
Carolingsians. Moreover, we should note his use of “illicit” exchange, such as piracy or the slave trade, in addition to “traditional” indicators of economic exchange, with both the licit and illicit forming parts of the communicative tool that used in this study as a major characteristic of this space.

Olivia Remie Constable’s thesis described the inversion in the balance of Mediterranean power, specifically in connection with the Iberian Peninsula. Constable demonstrated al-Andalus’ historical and historiographical isolation vis-à-vis the Mediterranean world, especially from the moment when the Reconquista extirpated the Iberian economy from Muslim and Mediterranean circuits, integrating it with Europe and the Atlantic. Although her study concentrated more on the fourth/tenth to fifth/eleventh centuries, overflowing on each side, and although Constable referred to Denia several times, the scale of the work prevented a thorough treatment of elements evoked and often lost in the framework of the subject. One of the major merits of Trade and Traders was to show that, in spite of reserves or doubts on the part of several historians, it was possible to make an economic history of this area for this time period, and this through, and thanks to, a variety of sources offered to the historian who is ready to extend their nets beyond the locality and the punctuality of their subject.

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