CHAPTER 1

Al-Dawla al-ʿĀmiriyya: Constructing the ʿĀmirid State

> Al-Manṣūr was a man of great strength [of character], indomitable, decisive, a good governor, worried for his subjects, and for the fortification and pacification of the frontiers, [concerned] to bring justice to its logical conclusions and to promote good works and virtues. His period was the best for al-Andalus [as it would have been] for any other country, in terms of order, good government, security on the roads, and the conservation of the rights of temporal power.
>
> *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus* 1:180 [11:191]

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Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿĀmir was born in 326/938–9, the same year as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's disastrous defeat at the Battle of Simancas-Alhándega: the later historian Ibn al-Abbār (1198–1260) describes his birth as the revenge brought by God upon the Christians.[1] Ibn Abī ʿĀmir was born on the family estate of Torrox, in the province of Algeciras. His family had come to al-Andalus at the time of its conquest, when his ancestor, ʿAbd al-Malik al-Maʿāfirī, distinguished himself by capturing Carteya, the first city to fall to the Muslims in 711 – as Hugh Kennedy observes, this means the Banū Abī ʿĀmir had been in al-Andalus longer than the Umayyads.[2] On his father's side, he was a member of the Arab tribal group Qaḥṭān, while his mother was a member of the Banū Tamīm, of the tribe of ʿAdnān; thus 'he found himself noble by one line and the other'.[3] While they were members of the Andalusi nobility, they were not one of the patrician families (see the genealogy in Appendix 1).[4] Several of al-Manṣūr's forebears had held important posts in the Cordoban administration: his great-grandfather, Yaḥya ibn ʿIshāq, was a distinguished doctor at ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's court, and held many important posts, rising to the rank of vizier; his grandfathers were both *qāḍī*s, his maternal uncle was chief-*qāḍī* of Cordoba from 992 to 1000 (during al-Manṣūr's administration), and his father was a theologian and *faqīh*, who died in Tripoli on his way back from the Hajj. On his mother's side, al-Manṣūr was related to the Banū Bartal, a family of distinguished theologians and *qāḍī*s. Al-Manṣūr's early career continued this family tradition: he received a typical education in Cordoba for someone on their way to a career as a *qāḍī*.[5] His first appointment in 355/966 was as assistant (*kātib*) to the chief-*qāḍī*, Muḥammad ibn al-Salīm, one of al-Ḥakam II's most favoured councillors.[6] Ibn al-Salīm brought him to the attention of the vizier, Jaʿfar ibn ʿUthmān al-Muṣḥafī, who introduced al-Manṣūr into the *ahl al-khidma*, the personnel at the direct command of the caliph al-Ḥakam II. Here al-Manṣūr's natural talent coupled with the patronage of al-Muṣḥafī and the

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

2 Kennedy 1996, 109.

3 *Bayān* II:294 [translation, 456].

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

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

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

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

It is important to recognise from this quick survey of al-Manṣūr's early career that he did not rise from nowhere: stories of his ambition,[9] of bribing his way into office with rich gifts (such as the model of the silver palace made for Ṣubḥ, Chapter 6),[10] or by becoming Ṣubḥ's lover,[11] betray a perception that al-Manṣūr was motivated from the very beginning by greed for power. This teliological tendency in the historiography of al-Manṣūr's rise to power sees significance in every detail of his early career, indicating – sometimes explicitly – that he was marked for power from a young age. In fact, his early career progressed as would be expected for the son of a noble family. As Ana Echevarría points out, the fact that al-Manṣūr was nearly 30 when he was first appointed to a significant role in the royal household belies the 'vertiginous' rise with which some historians have credited him.[12] Moreover, he was supported and sustained by family ties and networks, as Eduardo Manzano has reconstructed.[13] Through his great-grandfather's links to the Banū Ḥudayr, al-Manṣūr was connected with one of the old Andalusi families who held important positions in the caliphal administration, and as Manzano observes, it cannot be incidental that it was a member of this family – Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr – who lent al-Manṣūr money when he was charged with embezzling from the mint.[14]

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

7 On whom see Marín 1997.

8 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:176 [11:186–7]. The dates for his incumbence of that office are slightly different from those provided by other sources. The *Dhikr Bilād* also tells us that, as a result of his successful embellishment of Seville, Ibn Abī ʿĀmir was appointed supervisor of public works, *nāẓir al-banā'*, which is not noted by other sources. In this role he was responsible for constructing buildings, a job 'in which he showed capacity and diligence'.

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

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

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

12 Echevarría 2011, 43.

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

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

15 Manzano 2019, 120–121.

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

Moreover, as Manzano has discussed, al-Manṣūr was careful to give a greater role in government to the major families of the Cordoban elite – what Hugh Kennedy has called the 'mandarin dynasties'.[17] These families claimed descent from Umayyad *mawālī*, and had long occupied the most important posts in the administration (secretaries, treasurers, *aṣḥāb al-madīna*, etc.), as well as providing the corps of viziers, a 'general purpose title given to the highest ranks … One gets the impression of an exclusive and very influential clique'.[18] Family ties were crucial: uncles and brothers were frequently employed in the administration at the same time, sons succeeded fathers. During the reign of al-Ḥakam II, their importance as hereditary incumbents of high office and positions within the caliphal *shūra* was steadily undermined by the appointment of a freedman and then a Berber as the caliph's *ḥujjāb* – the two Jaʿfars: al-Ṣiqlābī and al-Muṣḥafī – and an increasing reliance on the Ṣaqāliba faction who entered the court bureaucracy in ever greater numbers. By the end of al-Ḥakam's reign this rich and powerful group was said to number nearly four thousand. The big families lost the role they had enjoyed under ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III. As we saw above, al-Manṣūr already had family ties with the Banū Ḥudayr, and he was clearly conscious that he needed their support in order to maintain the new political status quo. Ultimately they supported him in his takeover of al-Muṣḥafī's position as *ḥājib*, and in exchange they were able to make a comeback to their historic positions of power (if not necessarily influence).

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

16 Fierro 2005, 125–131.

17 Manzano 2006, 489–90; Manzano 2019, 105; Kennedy 1996, 85. The 'Seven Families' were the Banū Abī ʿAbda, Ḥudayr, Shuhayd, ʿAbd al-Raʿuf and Futays.

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

1 Succession Crisis

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

It seems that al-Ḥakam was all too aware that the succession of a minor would lead to the potential instability of the state, nevertheless he chose to enforce his young son's inheritance. As Alejandro García Sanjuán discusses, Umayyad rule in al-Andalus had passed directly from father to son since the arrival of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I, except for a couple of extraordinary circumstances.[21] The other option for al-Ḥakam was to let the caliphate pass to one of his brothers, an idea that occurred to some of his courtiers as well, as the plot to replace Hishām with al-Mughīra, the middle of al-Ḥakam's three brothers, shows (discussed below). However, García Sanjuán observes that no Umayyad sovereign had willingly deprived his own son of the succession, and this seems to have been more important to al-Ḥakam than the future stability of the realm. Of course he could not have expected to die when he did, and perhaps hoped that Hishām would be older by the time the responsibility of rule fell upon him.

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

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

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

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

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

23 *Anales*, §60.

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

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

In 974, Hishām fell ill with smallpox for a month and half – something that may have had profound implications on his health in later life, as we will see – and his recovery was celebrated with an official reception at the Cordoban palace, at which all the grandees of the state were present.[27] This signals a greater presence of Hishām at court which underlines his status as heir. At the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā ceremony, Hishām sits at the same level as his father and receives for the first time the dignitaries of the state. This official presentation marks a phase in which Hishām starts to appear alongside al-Ḥakam in the acts and decisions of government, even acting for his father during al-Ḥakam's first major illness at the end of the year 974. Vallejo has suggested that these double ceremonies were reflected in another physical intervention in the architecture of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, the unusual palatial model of two halls facing each other – the Hall of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (the so-called Salón Rico) and the Central Pavilion, which was constructed in front of it. Vallejo notes that this arrangement recalls the model created at the Fatimid capital of Mahdīya where the palace of the caliph ʿUbayd Allāh and that of his son and heir al-Qāʾim were located on either side of a great square. On the basis of this model, he hypothesises that during the great remodelling of Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III in the 950s, he constructed the so-called Central Pavilion facing his new Salón (called in the sources the *majlis al-sharqī*) so that his son, al-Ḥakam, could participate in caliphal ceremonial and receive the respect appropriate to his status as designated heir.[28] He believes that this 'double ceremonial' took on an even greater importance during the caliphate of al-Ḥakam and the desperate need to assure the continuation of the dynasty after his death. During the celebration of Hishām's recovery from smallpox in 974, the caliph is said to have given his audience in the *majlis al-sharqī*, identifiable as the so-called Salón of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, while the crown prince received salutations in the 'western hall', also called the 'Hall of the Princes' (*majlis al-ajrāʾ* or *al-umarāʾ*).[29] This was the last location on the ceremonial route, after which visitors descended again to the Dār al-Jund. Vallejo

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

26 Vallejo 2010, 501.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 Vallejo 2010, 497–8, 501.

31 García Sanjuán 2008, 57–8.

32 *Bayān* II: 249; Ávila 1980, esp. 80–81; García Sanjuán 2008, 60. On the institution of the *bayʿa*, see Tyan 1954, I, 315–352; Marsham 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

he did so by his ruthless quashing of a plot to make al-Ḥakam's younger brother, al-Mughīra, caliph in Hishām's place.[37] Al-Mughīra was the obvious choice to succeed al-Ḥakam, or at least to act as regent until Hishām's majority. He was said to have been ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's favourite son, and since his older brother, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, had died a short while before al-Ḥakam (ill health seems to have run in the family), he was next in line. Al-Mughīra was in his early 20s and popular at court. His very existence threatened Hishām's chance at rule, since even if he had become his regent, there was a clear risk of him superseding Hishām as caliph, as another Qurayshi with support at court, in particular among the Ṣaqāliba faction. Even the strongly pro-Umayyad historian, Ibn Ḥayyān, would later castigate al-Ḥakam for being too blinded by love for his son (possibly because of his love for Ṣubḥ) not to see that his heir should have been named from among his adult brothers.[38]

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

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

38 García Sanjuán 2008, 70; Ávila 1980.

Iberia's Christian kingdoms, indeed that it was an 'accepted situation'.[39] While he gives no examples or further information, two queens who would have been familiar to the Cordoban caliphs provide interesting contemporary precedents. Toda of Navarra (fl. 928–59) was mother to García Sánchez of Pamplona, who was only six years of age at the death of his father. She ruled during his minority. Toda was also paternal aunt to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, through her mother's marriage to the Umayyad amir ʿAbd Allāh (r. 888–912). As Glaire Anderson has recently discussed, relations between Toda and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān can be documented at least since 933–4 when they negotiated a treaty. In the late 950s, Toda turned to the caliph to help her grandson, 'Sancho the Fat' (r. 955–57 and 960–67), regain the throne of León. He was treated in Cordoba for obesity, but died only a few years later.[40] His sister, Elvira of León (d. 986?) ruled during the minority of her nephew, Ramiro III. Elvira would also have been known to the caliph, this time al-Ḥakam himself, since she and her brother had negotiated the translation of the relics of San Pelayo from Cordoba to León, where they finally arrived in 967.[41] It is highly possible that al-Ḥakam had witnessed from these precedents among his neighbours that regencies could work. It would be interesting to think about the possible influence of the contemporary politics of León or Navarra on that of Cordoba at this time.

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

39 García Sanjuán 2008, 69.

40 Anderson 2014, esp. 22–27.

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

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

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

44 Bariani 1998, 89.

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

Technically, Hishām's accession as a minor was illegal in terms of the requirements established within Islamic law for the heir to the caliphate. Amalia Zomeño discusses the Islamic jurisprudence on 'coming of age'.[46] In Islamic and especially Maliki law, until a boy reaches the age of 7, he is considered 'incapable of conducting himself as an independent person and of looking after his possessions'.[47] After the age of 7, a male child is considered to have discernment (*tamyīz*), defined as the capacity to understand what is said to him and to respond in a coherent and reasonable manner. In principle, and in all Islamic legal schools, full legal capacity is attained with the onset of puberty (*bulūgh*).[48] However, full legal maturity (*rushd*), or the aptitude of an individual to administer his possessions, is considered to be between the ages of 15 and 18.[49] When a young man comes of age under the guardianship of his own father, he attains legal capacity automatically, without recourse to judicial mediation. However, the same does not occur when the minor is under the guardianship of a representative appointed by the father before his death (*waṣī*), or when a judge has appointed a guardian because the minor is fatherless (*muqaddam*). In these cases, a notarised document needs to be produced which officialises the emancipation (*tarshīd*) of the youth. In principle, the legal guardian is the only person with the legal right to decide on the capacity or lack thereof of his ward.[50] In Hishām's scenario, the *ḥujjāb* appointed by al-Ḥakam could be seen in this role of legal guardian.

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

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

46 Zomeño 2004.

47 Zomeño 2004, 87. In Shafiʿi law, this age is considered to be 9.

48 Zomeño 2004, 89.

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

50 Zomeño 2004, 92.

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

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

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

54 Monés 1964, 84–85.

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

García Sanjuán sees Hishām's succession as the beginning of the end for the Umayyad caliphate.[59] This situation destabilised the mechanisms of government and political control that had pertained in the Umayyad caliphate hitherto. It led inevitably to the growth in power of al-Muṣḥafī, and the unprecedented development of a regency government.

2 Regency

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

55 García Sanjuán 2008, 75.
56 Ávila 1980, 99–100: Ballestín 2004a, 40–1.
57 García Sanjuán 2008, 75.
58 Ávila 1980, 99–100, citing *qāḍī* ʿIyāḍ's *Tartīb*, II:548.
59 García Sanjuán 2008, 76: 'A mi juicio, esta proclamación supuso, de hecho, el factor inicial que incidió en la crisis del califato, cuya primera manifestación fue, por lo tanto, de índole política e institucional' – by which he refers to the *ʿulamā'*s silent appeasement of the situation.
60 Meouak 1999, 181. The most detailed account of al-Muṣḥafī's career is the biography given in Meouak 1999, 185–189.
61 Meouak 1999, 163, 165.
62 Meouak 1999, 185.
63 Meouak 1999, 185, gives the dates between 320/932 and 329/940–1, while Manzano 2019, 110, is more specific that this appointment occurs in 939.
64 Manzano 2019, 110.

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

Al-Muṣḥafī had been appointed to the highest position on al-Ḥakam's *shūra* (council), over and above the big families who traditionally held an exclusive monopoly on the high offices of the civil administration and the army. The fact that al-Muṣḥafī did not belong to one of the ministerial families and, worse, was a Berber, was already enough to alienate the 'mandarin dynasties' from supporting him; but he compounded this situation by his 'flagrant nepotism', by starting to give posts that by tradition belonged to the great families to members of his own family.[67] He thus began to break down the cohesion and traditional power of this group, who felt their status threatened. He also reduced the number of posts that could be shared among the members of the corps of viziers (*qawm al-wuzarāʾ*).[68] Ballestín cites a passage from Ibn Bassām (following Ibn Ḥayyān), in which this status is played out through the interesting metaphor of carpets: '[Al-Muṣḥafī] placed his carpet on top of the carpets of his colleagues in the affairs of government … and he substituted linen for silk brocade, according to the precedent of custom … He said: "Certainly I make them red with shame … because I have given myself a better carpet than theirs …"'.[69]

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

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

As Ballestín comments, it can be deduced from this text that the *qawm al-wuzarāʾ* took a unanimous and clear position of support for Ibn Abī ʿĀmir.[71]

65 Manzano 2019, 111.

66 Meouak 1999, 186; Manzano 2019, 111.

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

68 Ballestín 2004a, 121–122.

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

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

71 Ballestín 2004a, 120.

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

Al-Manṣūr's new role as the strong arm of the state opened another crucial phase in his career – the start of his military role. Al-Ḥakam's reign had largely been a period of peace and prosperity in al-Andalus, since the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain had been subdued as much by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's victorious campaigns as by domestic problems.[75] This situation changed after al-Ḥakam's death: taking advantage of the political transition and the weakness created by Hishām's insecure rule, the Count of Castile, García Fernández (r. 970–995), began to conduct raids on Muslim territory.[76] The Christians' new belligerence demanded a response, and it soon became clear that al-Muṣḥafī was not up to the task: he contented himself with ordering the destruction of a bridge over the Guadiana river, to impede their progress into Muslim territory.[77] Not only was a more effective defence necessary, but a military response provided an opportunity to restore the prestige of the caliphate, after the bruising events of the succession.[78] As with the al-Mughīra plot, al-Manṣūr proved the only man willing to act decisively.[79] He was appointed *al-qāʾid al-aʿla*,[80] and on 3 Rajab 366/25 February 977 led a handpicked army on his first raid, at Baños de Ledesma (prov. Salamanca).[81] Victorious, he returned to Cordoba with 2000 prisoners.[82] Thereafter al-Manṣūr personally conducted at least two campaigns a year, in winter and summer, until his death: 'the raids of al-Manṣūr numbered fifty-six and in none of them was he defeated; he was always the conqueror, triumphant and victorious (*manṣūra*) in honour of his name'.[83] (A list of these campaigns is given in the Appendix 2).

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

72 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:178 [11:189].

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

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

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

76 Echevarría 2000, 102.

77 Echevarría 2011, 86.

78 Bariani 1998, 90.

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

80 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:179 [11:190].

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

82 Echevarría 2011, 86.

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

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

3 The Maghrib

Al-Manṣūr had gained his military experience in the Maghrib.[86] As Xavier Ballestín has pointed out, 'the importance of the Maghrib in this period has not received the attention it deserves, both in the career of al-Manṣūr and in the history of al-Andalus'. As he goes on to say, 'In respect of al-Manṣūr, the critical moments in his career did not happen in Cordoba or on the northern frontier, but in the Maghrib, both at the start of his career and when he reached the culmination of his power'.[87] It is significant that al-Manṣūr's first official role in the Maghrib, as *qāḍi al-quḍāt biʾl-idwa*, to which he was appointed in 973, involved the distribution of money and gifts to the Berber notables, in order to carry out al-Ḥakam's policy of *khilʿa* during the war with Ḥasan ibn Qannūn.[88] Here al-Manṣūr first learned his diplomatic skills and the efficacy of gift-giving in securing bonds of loyalty.

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

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

84 Echevarría 2011, 86.
85 Kennedy 1996, 84.
86 Cf. *Anales*, §§128, 129, 145, 200.
87 Ballestín 2004a, 14–15. On the Umayyad intervention in North Africa, see also Vallvé 1967.
88 Ballestín 2004a, 85–88; Manzano 2019, 121.
89 Bennison 2007a, 74.
90 Devisse 1988, 387: 'Of course it was when the Fatimids, the Umayyads and the Almoravids undertook coinage on a scale unprecedented in the Muslim West that the vitality of the trans-Saharan trade became apparent'. For a full panorama of the significance of medieval trans-Saharan trade, see *Caravans of Gold*.

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

Again, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III was the pioneer, and his caliphate saw the first sustained involvement by the Umayyads in North African politics.[93] This was driven by the Umayyads' desire to quell the aggressive expansion of the Fatimids, who, having risen to prominence in the western Maghrib had, by the early tenth century, established themselves in Ifrīqiyya and pursued an aggressive campaign of territorial expansion, enlisting local dynasties, in particular the Idrīsids whose capital was at Fez. As in northern Iberia, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's policy in North Africa was not about conquest or occupation, though he did establish important Umayyad coastal bases to protect al-Andalus's frontier and improve the movement of troops: Melilla, taken in 927; Ceuta – which became the Umayyads' most important base – in March 931; Tangier in 951.[94] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was more concerned with securing a network of alliances among the Berber chiefs, which would prevent the Fatimids from threatening al-Andalus – though the Fatimids were still able to sack the Andalusi port of Almería in 955;[95] and to recruit Berber soldiers – especially their superior cavalry – for his armies.

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

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

91 Devisse 1988, 396.
92 Messier 1974, 38–9.
93 Kennedy 1996, 95 ff.
94 Kennedy 1996, 96.
95 Kennedy 1996, 97. This foray against Almería was in retaliation for the Andalusi capture of a wealthy Fatimid ship in the waters between Sicily and Tunis, carrying a letter for the Fatimid imam al-Muʿizz. After the sack of Almería, an Andalusi fleet was sent to ravage the Fatimid shores of northern Ifrīqiya. See Lirola Delgado 1993, 198–202.
96 Manzano 2006, 446.
97 Canto García 2004, 330.
98 Canto García 2004, 334.

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

Maintaining a standing army in Morocco was extremely expensive, and instead the Umayyad policy was to look to local agents on whom they could rely to further their interests.[103] In this context, it becomes especially significant that the lord of the Miknāsa tribe, Mūsā ibn Abī'l-ʿĀfiyya, was won over to the Umayyad side, and the historic gift sent to Mūsā in 934 – which includes the only mention in a primary source of the famous Cordoban ivories, as we will discuss further in Chapter 6 – was sent as a reward for a victory over the Fatimids.[104] The gift also included four banners, surely intended to display Mūsā's new Umayyad allegiance (we will discuss the significance of banners in Chapter 8). Al-Rāzī's annals are full of accounts of receptions of Berber chiefs at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ, through which it is clear that the Umayyads 'sought to overawe by wealth and splendour those they could not subdue by force'.[105] At the same time, these gifts conspicuously declared Umayyad support of these Berber chiefs, and helped to strengthen their power and prestige over possible rivals as well as their own communities.

By the end of his caliphate, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's North African policy had been largely successful, and he had established a network of alliances which al-Ḥakam used to establish a widespread dominance over Morocco. Al-Ḥakam was faced with a different situation, however, after the Fatimids moved their power base to Egypt in 970.[106] They were no longer quite so much in the Umayyads' backyard, but they had left a deputy in Ifrīqiya, the Ṣanhāja Berber Zīrī ibn Manad (after whom the Zīrids took their name), who built up a major Ṣanhāja tribal confederation in opposition to the Zanāta tribes who in general were loyal to Cordoba. Rivalry between these two confederations became a major factor in the politics of the region in the late tenth century, because the control by these groups of the all-important trans-Saharan trade routes, governing the supply of gold and other luxuries, became a significant factor in the Umayyads' projection of power in the Western Mediterranean. As presented in the primary sources, more important than any campaigns against the Christians of northern Iberia was

99 Messier 2019, 207.

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

101 Canto García 2004, 332.

102 Canto García 2004, 335.

103 Kennedy 1996, 104.

104 Ibn Ḥayyān 1979, §§238–9.

105 Kennedy 1996, 103.

106 Kennedy 1996, 103.

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

This was the background to Ibn Abī ʿĀmir's career breakthrough in 973, when he was appointed as *qāḍī al-quḍāt*, supreme judge, of the Maghribi areas under Umayyad control, a post equivalent to *dhū'l-wizāratayn* in that it encompassed responsibility for both the civil and military administration.[108] As Ballestín notes, al-Manṣūr now received his instructions directly from the caliph, and became the main link between Cordoba and its Berber allies.[109] Al-Ḥakam even personally ordered 'his officers and army leaders that they should do nothing without first passing it by [Ibn Abī ʿĀmir] for his assessment'.[110] Based in Tangier, Ibn Abī ʿĀmir was 'entrusted with shipments of money, jewels, ornaments and presents of honour (*khilʿa*) which he was to distribute abundantly among those … outstanding men among the Berbers who were inclined towards loyalty' to Cordoba.[111] During this posting, which lasted from July 973 to mid November 974,[112] he gained diplomatic skills and learned the importance of strategic gift-giving (*iṣṭināʿ*) to build relationships and political networks. He was in charge of various functionaries sent out from Cordoba, including men responsible for the soldiers' pay, as well as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥudayr as *ṣāḥib al-khizāna wa al-sikka*,[113] a post surely indicating the importance of controlling and regulating the gold supply and turning it into coin. It was also during this mission that Ibn Abī ʿĀmir came to know Ghālib, the Umayyad general whose support was later to be so significant to him, and to learn how to deal with the leaders of the Umayyad army, experience which prepared him for his campaigns against the Christians. He also engaged in architectural commissions, by ordering the construction of a defensive wall at Ceuta.[114] As Ibn ʿIdhārī recognised, this sixteen-month-long mission in the Maghrib 'was the beginning of his triumph'.[115]

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

107 Manzano 2019, 177–8.
108 Ballestín 2004a, 57; Kennedy 1996, 109–110.
109 Ballestín 2004a, 54.
110 *Bayān* II:268, cited in Ballestín 2004a, 86.
111 Ibn Ḥayyān 1965, 123, cited in Ballestín 2004a, 56.
112 Ballestín 2004a, 62.
113 Ballestín 2004a, 57–8.
114 Though this construction probably took place during al-Manṣūr's *ḥijāba* as it was still unfinished when he died: Ballestín 2004a, 136.
115 *Bayān* II:269, cited in Ballestín 2004a, 60.
116 *Anales*, §183.
117 Canto García 2004, 332–4.

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

From the date of Ibn Abī ʿĀmir's first appointment as *ṣāḥib al-sikka*, the *kunya*, *ʿāmir*, designating him as the governor, appeared on every coin minted in al-Andalus until 972, when he was sent to the Maghrib (Figure 4).[118] Once he was reappointed *ṣāḥib al-sikka* in 363/974, *ʿāmir* reappears on coins the same year, and occurs on the coinage every year until 996, when it significantly disappears as we will discuss below (8 'Rupture' and 9 'Restoration'). By this late date, it is not likely that al-Manṣūr's *kunya* on the coins still signified his governorship of the mint, especially since it continued on the new type minted from 387/998 onwards, which introduced on the obverse the names of men who certainly were *aṣḥāb al-sikka*.[119] Wasserstein is therefore probably correct in his assessment that 'the presence of the name *ʿāmir* [on the coins] reflects [Ibn Abī ʿĀmir's] status both as a minister of the caliph and as effective ruler of the country'.[120]

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

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

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

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

4 Conspicuous Piety

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

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

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

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

121 Ballestín 2004a, 60.

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

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

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

125 Bongianino 2017, 34.

of rule.[126] However, it is important to properly contextualise the purge. In Shiʿism – as represented by the Umayyads' enemies, the Fatimids – the repository of religious knowledge and the interpretation of Islamic law was embodied in the ruler himself, as the infallible imam-caliph;[127] however, in Sunnism, this role was played by the *ʿulamāʾ* and *fuqahāʾ* – the religious scholars who, in al-Andalus, followed a strict Maliki doctrine. The council of Maliki jurists (*shūra*) was led by the chief *qāḍī* (the *qāḍī* of Cordoba) and was consulted on important legal matters; the chief *qāḍī* was appointed by the ruler, but this appointment often merely acknowledged the *status quo*.[128] This group exercised control and power over the arbitration and interpretation of religion,[129] defining the boundaries of legal and religious scholarship and practice, and thus playing a determining role in legitimising the power of the Sunni ruler.[130] We have already seen the decisive role that the Andalusi religious scholars played in the controversy surrounding Hishām II's succession, and there are numerous other instances in the history of this period where we see the ruler carefully negotiate his relationship with the religious scholars. As Maribel Fierro has written, Malikism was the backbone of the Islamic system in al-Andalus and, while the amir could act as a brake to its most extremist elements, at the same time he could not do without its support.[131] Under the Umayyad caliphs, Malikism became the official state doctrine, and was used to curb the influence of Fatimid propaganda and to contain internal currents of heterodoxy, such as those propounded by followers of the Andalusi Neoplatonic philosopher, Ibn Masarra (d. 931). These doctrines were seen by the Maliki jurists as coming too close to the esoteric views of Ismailism: as Stroumsa notes, 'the main cause of Umayyad anxiety was … the possible affinity of Ibn Masarra's mystical Bāṭinism with the political Bāṭinism of the Fatimids'.[132] Such views were ruthlessly suppressed: a series of decrees accusing Ibn Masarra's followers of 'reprehensible innovation and heresy' was read in the congregational mosques of Cordoba and Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ in the late 950s, culminating in the burning of Masarrī books and writings in the courtyard of the Cordoba Mosque in 961.[133] In Fierro's view, this persecution of the Masarrīs was seized on by the caliphs as an opportunity to proclaim Malikism as the official doctrine of the caliphate.[134]

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

126 Calvo 2012 and its English version, Calvo 2014.

127 Fierro 2005, 127.

128 Safran 2014, 151.

129 De la Puente 2001, 17.

130 García Sanjuán 2008, 74.

131 Fierro 1987, 174; Fierro 2005, 120–131. Fierro writes (pp. 129–30), "For Sunnis, the religious scholars are those responsible for the interpretation of revealed law, and interpretation inevitably gives rise to differences of opinion, thus to religious pluralism … 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's Sunnism was also proved by the fact that he allowed scholars to criticise him, thereby differentiating himself from the impeccable and infallible imam of the Fatimids. Mundhir ibn Saʿid, who was a brilliant preacher, censured the caliph for missing the Friday prayer during the construction of Madinat al-Zahrāʾ and also for the materials used in building it. This criticism did not impair 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's status, on the contrary it was enhanced, for only a pious, devout and orthodox caliph would allow a scholar to upbraid him". On the Andalusi caliphs' policy of 'governing by consent', see also Manzano 2019, 235–242.

132 Stroumsa 2014, 87.

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

134 Fierro 1996c, 99, 105.

135 Safran 2014, 148.

136 Wasserstein 1990–1991, 103.

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

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

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

We actually do not know much about the details of the purge or the books involved, which suggests that it was the act itself that was the most meaningful aspect. Our information primarily relies on Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī (1029–70),[141] who informs us that al-Manṣūr *ordered* the *ʿulamāʾ* most expert in matters of religion (*ahl al-ʿilm bi-l-din*) to extract from al-Ḥakam's library books on ancient sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-qadima*) that treated logic (*mantiq*), astrology (*ʿilm al-nujum*) and other non-Islamic sciences (*ʿulūm al-awāʾil*, 'the sciences of the ancients'). They were to spare books on medicine (*ṭibb*) and mathematics (*hisab*) as well as those sciences that were considered licit (*al-ʿulūm al-mubaha*), i.e. language, grammar, poetry, history, jurisprudence and hadith. Once the selection was made, the censored books were burnt or thrown into the wells of the palace,[142] and covered with earth and stones. Ṣāʿid explains that people who dedicated themselves to the censored sciences were suspected of heresy (*al-ilhad fi l-shariʾa*), and Ibn ʿIdhārī explicitly states that the censored books were *kutub al-dahriyya wa al-falāsifa*, 'books of materialists and philosophers'.[143] This seems to evoke the earlier purge of works by Ibn Masarra, considered the first Andalusi-born philosopher.[144] At the same time there is an undercurrent of criticism of al-Ḥakam II, who assembled this collection. Why? Calvo has written about al-Ḥakam's patronage of the 'ancient sciences' – including philosophy and astrology – as a legitimising strategy for his caliphate, another way of looking to the Iberian Peninsula's Classical past to define his own caliphate as something different from those of the Fatimids and Abbasids.[145] But this also brought him into conflict with the *ʿulamāʾ*, especially when he wanted to use scientifically accurate calculations to reorientate the qibla of the Great Mosque of Cordoba.[146] The whole weight of Andalusi Maliki religious tradition was against the reorientation of their venerated ancestral mosque. Perhaps the *ʿulamāʾ* felt they had not had enough control during the caliphate of al-Ḥakam II and, given the worrying instability of the succession crisis, the library purge provided a means for them to regain this control, by sending a warning against excessive liberalism of thought.

138 Safran 2014, 151.
139 Safran 2014, 152–3.
140 Fierro 1987, 162.
141 Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī 1991, 163–4; 2000, 142–143; Fierro 1987, 161–2.
142 The library was most likely located at the ancestral palace in Cordoba, since Ibn Ḥazm describes it as the *khizānat al-ʿulūm wa'l-kutub bi-dār Banī Marwān*: see Calvo 2012, 154.
143 *Bayān* II:292–3 [translation, 487–8], cited in Fierro 1987, 161.
144 Fierro 1987, 162; Stroumsa 2014, 86.
145 Calvo 2012, 154.
146 Calvo 2012, 153.

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

The library purge aligned al-Manṣūr with some of the strictest and most orthodox of the Maliki religious scholars in al-Andalus, while binding them more closely to his regime. Al-Manṣūr did not have the automatic right to rule that a member of the Umayyad family or the Banū Quraysh would have, so he was heavily reliant on the religious scholars to authorise his position as *ḥājib*. He was always careful in his dealings with the *fuqahāʾ/ʿulamāʾ*, and adopted other strategies for maintaining their support. He constantly showed deference to the chief *qāḍī*s, Ibn Salīm and Ibn Zarb – for example, in the matter of allowing congregational prayers at the al-Zāhira mosque, as we will discuss in Chapter 4. Indeed their very appointments embodied deference to the continuity of the status quo, as Safran points out:[149] Ibn al-Salīm was al-Ḥakam's last appointed *qāḍī* of Cordoba, and even though he objected to the accession of Hishām II, he remained in post until his death. Ibn al-Salīm had acknowledged the preeminent jurist, Ibn Zarb, as his successor, and this was approved by al-Manṣūr, though as chief *qāḍī* he was to rule against al-Manṣūr's personal interests on several occasions. It was only after Ibn Zarb's death in 991 that al-Manṣūr chose his own man, his maternal uncle Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya ibn Zakariyya ibn Bartal. According to Ibn Khaldūn, al-Manṣūr also increased the salaries of the *ʿulamāʾ*.[150] As Cristina de la Puente points out, al-Manṣūr 'never committed the political error of openly opposing the *ʿulamāʾ* in matters of religion'.[151] His continued role as *ḥājib* depended on their support and legitimation.

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

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

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

148 Fierro 1987, 162; Safran 2014, 152.

149 Safran 2014, 152.

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

151 De la Puente 2001, 17.

152 Fierro 1987, 169–170.

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

154 Fierro 2001, 475, 481.

155 Fierro 1987, 165, 170.

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

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

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

5 The Rise to Power

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

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

157 De la Puente 1999a, 26–7.

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

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

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

161 De la Puente 1999a, 35.

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

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

Asmāʾ was al-Manṣūr's second wife, but he used marriages strategically from the beginning of his career. As Ana Echevarría has pointed out, there is no reference to a marriage from within his own clan (endogamy), which could have happened before he entered public life. His first marriage was to a woman of unknown name who would certainly have advanced his position socially and facilitated introductions for him at court. She accompanied him on his rise, between about 967 and 972, after which references to her disappear.[169] His second marriage in 978, to Asmāʾ bint Ghālib, was more calculated: Echevarría calls it 'a fundamental piece in al-Manṣūr's strategy against al-Muṣḥafī'.[170] Asmāʾ can probably be identified with the lady known in the sources as al-Ḍalfāʾ, the mother of ʿAbd al-Malik al-Muẓaffar; she became al-Manṣūr's principal wife, and was important enough to have her own entry in biographical dictionaries. As a result, we have more information about her than his other wives. She involved herself in politics, and after al-Manṣūr's death she hired a *faqīh*, with whom she communicated from behind a curtain, to keep her informed of current events. This allowed her to warn her son of the conspiracy of ʿĪsā ibn Saʿīd al-Yaḥṣubī (below), and she also financed the Umayyad party to rise up against Sanchuelo, whom she blamed for poisoning ʿAbd al-Malik. During al-Manṣūr's absences on campaign, al-Ḍalfāʾ was entrusted with guarding the ʿĀmirids' personal treasury; at the Fitna, she was evicted from al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, but was able to move to another residence (presumably one of the ʿĀmirids' *munya*s), and to maintain her fortune until her death in 1008. As we will see in Chapter 2, with his marriage to ʿAbda, daughter of king Sancho Abarca of Navarra, al-Manṣūr continued to be highly strategic in his use of marriage alliances and kinship ties.

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

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

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

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

166 Echevarría 2011, 88.

167 Echevarría 2011, 88.

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

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

170 Echevarría 2011, 105–7.

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

172 Al-Maqqarī, 183.

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

Soon after al-Muṣḥafi's disgrace, Ibn Abī ʿĀmir's relations with Ghālib soured. The reasons are obscure: according to the sources, Ghālib accused him of degrading the dynasty in order to arrogate all power to himself, though this smacks of historical hindsight; in turn, Ibn Abī ʿĀmir accused Ghālib of jealousy and of trying to engineer him out of government.[176] The two literally came to blows while they were campaigning together in the spring of 980.[177] Though this period is usually seen as a struggle for political supremacy between the two generals, it was nothing less than civil war. Their armies clashed for the remainder of 980 and throughout 981. Initially, it went well for Ibn Abī ʿĀmir, but in the spring of 981 he was badly defeated, in a campaign later called the 'dissolution of the Maʿāfirīs', after the tribal name of his ancestors. It is likely that Ghālib had recruited Christian support for this campaign, since we know that Castilian troops, led by García Fernández himself, were with his army in the summer of that year.[178]

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

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

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

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

176 Bariani 1998, 92.

177 Ávila 1981.

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

179 *HEM* III:80–85.

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

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

182 Kennedy 1996, 116.

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

This period also saw a massive increase in the importance of cavalry: Ibn al-Khaṭīb no doubt overestimates when he says that the cavalry of al-Manṣūr's army numbered 12,000,[184] but this nevertheless gives a sense of the increasing scale and importance of this sector of the army. As Manzano notes, al-Manṣūr's government was marked by a 'radical change of rhythm' in the twice-yearly campaigns which he led himself;[185] Manzano believes that his 'lightning campaigns' would not have been possible if he were not able to rely on an ample cavalry as the principal nucleus of his army.[186] The importance of horses in the culture of the period is seen in the lists of gifts sent between Cordoba and the Maghrib, as discussed by Ballestín, which include horses as well as luxurious tack.[187] The horses themselves are frequently described in detail, such as one example of 'a sorrel horse, golden chestnut, with a white patch on the forehead and mottled black and white on his four legs. This horse used to belong to Ibn Abī ʿĀmir and bore a saddle and a bridle of fine silver'.[188] This high appreciation for horses is also seen in their representation on the Cordoban ivories, including as an example the casket made for ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Abī ʿĀmir, where some of the horses are even branded *ʿāmir*, to associate them with the *ḥājib*'s stable (Figure 126E, Chapter 7 2.1). Another site excavated in recent years, and connected with the suburb mentioned above that might have housed Berber troops, has been identified as 'an enormous stables, complemented by surrounding areas of pasture and various auxiliary buildings' – again the archaeologists suggest a chronology for this in the ʿĀmirid period, though this is entirely speculative.[189]

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

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

6 Al-Manṣūr

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

183 León and Murillo 2014, 25, fig. 14; Murillo et al 2010b, 612.
184 Echevarría 2011, 123.
185 Manzano 2019, 232.
186 Manzano 2019, 144.
187 Ballestín 2006.
188 Ballestín 2006, 65–6.
189 Murillo et al 2010b, 612.
190 Echevarría 2011, 134.
191 The 'Victory Campaign', according to al-ʿUdhrī, §12, cf. Ruiz Asencio 1968, 61; Ibn Ḥazm 1974, 120; *Bayān* II:299 [translation, 464]; Cañada Juste 1992, 376.
192 Ibáñez Izquierdo 1990, 686–688; Bariani 1998, 94.
193 *Bayān* II:291 [translation, 452].

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

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

Contrary to Dozy's remark that taking a throne-name was 'a practice that had hitherto been confined to the caliph alone',[198] al-Manṣūr was not the first *ḥājib* in al-Andalus to adopt one: Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣiqlābī, *ḥājib* of al-Ḥakam from the mid-960s until his death in 360/971–972, had gone by the honorific title 'Sayf al-Dawla', 'Sword of the State'; it is under this title alone, no doubt because of its pre-eminence, that he occurs in the inscriptions in al-Ḥakam's extension to the Great Mosque of Cordoba.[199] Though less militaristic in tone, fifty years earlier ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's *ḥājib*, Badr ibn Aḥmad, had born the title 'Mudabbir al-Dawla', 'Councillor of the State'.[200] The qualification 'dawla', 'state', was likely seen as more appropriate for a *ḥājib*, rather than 'dīn', 'religion', which would indicate theocratic authority. Al-Manṣūr himself was designated 'Sayf al-Dawla' on the new backrest carved for the Andalusiyyīn minbar (Figures 5–7, Appendix 4.4) and a foundation inscription from Lisbon (Appendix 4.6), both dated 985, and as we will see this was the title taken by his son ʿAbd al-Malik. Al-Qalqashandi called such titles 'names of the sword' and said that they were borne by the most important *qāʾid*s and men of arms; they represented the public recognition of their feats on the battlefield, or their victories and triumphs in the practice of jihad.[201]

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

194 *Bayān* II:299–300 [translation, 465].
195 Tyan 1954, I, 483–488; 'Laḳab', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.
196 Guichard 1995.
197 Guichard 1995, 52 n. 4.
198 Dozy 1913, 498 n. 1.
199 *Bayān* II:249 [translation, 385–6], confirmed by six inscriptions from the year 353/964–5, cf. Ocaña 1976, 221–2. Cf. Bariani 1998, 94 n. 12; Echevarría 2011, 95. An inscription recently found at Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ refers to Jaʿfar as 'sayf-hu': Martínez Núñez 2015, #35.
200 Meouak 1994–5, 161; Meouak 1995, 381.
201 Bariani 2003, 207.
202 Echevarría 2011, 95.

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

The *laqab* triumphalised al-Manṣūr's new position as the supreme power in the State. In the same year he transferred his residence and various offices of the State to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, the palace-city he constructed to the east of Cordoba in 978–9.[203] As discussed in Chapter 4, this construction marked a significant aspirational change in al-Manṣūr's career: in the same way that the construction of Madīnat al-Zahrā' had been for ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III the 'architectural equivalent of giving himself caliphal titulature',[204] so al-Madīnat al-Zāhira became the physical symbol of the neutralisation of al-Manṣūr's political rivals. That this symbol was clearly understood by his contemporaries is shown by the author of the *Dhikr Bilād al-Andalus*: 'When he moved to al-Zāhira he gave himself the title "al-Manṣūr"'.[205]

7 The Culmination of Power

Al-Manṣūr's turbulent ascent, between 976 and 981, was followed by a long period in which he established himself not just as *de facto* ruler but as *sovereign* of al-Andalus: that is to say, after his victory over Ghālib, he adopted a truly regal attitude to his administration. Increasingly elaborate protocol was adopted at the ʿĀmirid court, now installed at al-Madīnat al-Zāhira, in which viziers and even members of the Umayyad dynasty were required to kiss al-Manṣūr's hand as if he were the caliph, and to address him with new honorific titles, including 'al-sayyid' and 'mawla', both meaning 'lord'.[206] In this period of stability and prosperity for the state, earned through the success of al-Manṣūr's military campaigns and diplomatic activity, his court flourished and became a centre for poetry and learning. In addition to his architectural projects, al-Manṣūr and his sons commissioned luxury objects that furnished their gardens and apartments.

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

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

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

204 Ruggles 2000, 92.

205 *Dhikr Bilād* I:181 [II:192].

206 Bariani 2003, 173–4, discusses another title 'malik karīm', 'generous king', which is also attributed to al-Manṣūr at this date. The title 'malik' implies absolute dominion over one's subjects which can only belong to God, while 'malik' and 'karīm' are two of the 99 names of Allāh. The title 'al-malik al-rahīm' which the Buyids attempted to adopt was denied them by the Abbasid caliph because it employed two of the names of Allāh. Bariani does not believe that the strict Maliki jurists would have allowed al-Manṣūr to adopt such a title. However, a letter to his grandson, ʿAbd al-Azīz, the Taifa ruler of Valencia who also called himself al-Manṣūr, is addressed 'al-malik al-karīm'. She believes that Ibn ʿIdhārī confused the two al-Manṣūrs.

207 Echevarría 2011, 150.

208 Hitchcock 2014, 96.

209 Echevarría 2011, 119.

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

The 980s were also a period of intense activity in the Maghrib. Even though the Fatimids had moved their capital to Egypt a decade earlier, the Umayyads still had their delegates, the Zīrids, to contend with. Buluqqīn ibn Zīrī (r. 979–985) engaged in vigorous attempts to win territory in the Maghrib al-Aqṣā for the Fatimids. His main targets were Sijilmasa and Fez, the two most important cities on the northwestern route for trans-Saharan trade – as we saw above, the desire to control access to West African gold was a major driver of the competition between the Umayyads and Fatimids in the last decades of the tenth century. Sijilmasa, located at the point where the desert meets the mountains, was the most important terminus of trans-Saharan trade, and was described in the twelfth century as the 'gate of gold'.[212] It also had a particular importance for the Fatimids, as it was where the first Ismaili Mahdī had based himself while his *dāʿī* (and successor) ʿUbayd Allāh established support among the Kutāma tribal confederation and built them into a disciplined army.[213] The Fatimids were the first dynasty to strike dinars at Sijilmasa, *c.* 922.[214] In 979, only a month and a half after Ibn Abī ʿĀmir became *ḥājib*, Sijilmasa was conquered for the Umayyads by Khazrūn ibn Fulfūl, one of the leaders of the Banu Khazar of the Zanāta tribal confederation.[215] Ballestín believes that Ibn Abī ʿĀmir was the inspiration behind this campaign, and the conquest of Sijilmasa brought immense prestige to him and to al-Andalus: now the Umayyads claimed authority over one of the 'extremes of sub-Saharan trade and over a city of incalculable wealth, point of encounter of all the merchants from the Maghrib and the Bilād al-Sudān', as well as a city of crucial spiritual significance to the Fatimids.[216] This conquest humiliated the Fatimids and their representatives in the Maghrib: Khazrūn sent back to Cordoba the head of its ruler, which became the first trophy to be publicly displayed by the new caliph. Ibn Abī ʿĀmir invested Khazrūn with authority over Sijilmasa, a role he continued until his death and then passed to his son Wānūdīn it was only when the Almoravids conquered Sijilmasa in 1055 that the authority of this branch of Umayyad delegates ceased.[217] In 378/988–9, dinars were struck at Sijilmasa for the Umayyads.[218]

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

210 Hitchock 2014, 97.

211 Kennedy 1996, 84–5.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

219 Terrasse 1942, 37.

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

221 Terrasse 1942, 38.

222 Terrasse 1942, 39.

223 Terrasse 1942, 39.

FIGURE 5
Side view of the minbar from the Andalusiyyīn Mosque, Fez, dated 980 and 985

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

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

224 Fierro 2007, 153.

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

At this time, Zīrī ibn ʿAṭiyya, lord of the Maghrāwa tribe, emerged as the pre-eminent Berber leader.[226] As we will discuss further in Chapter 2, in 380/990–1 Zīrī was summoned to Cordoba to meet al-Manṣūr and to be integrated within the Umayyad fold by having bestowed upon him presents of honour (*khilʿa*); he also received a ministerial office with its commensurate monthly salary.[227] But apparently Zīrī did not like to be constrained in this bureaucratic way, and the sources record that his first act on returning to the Maghrib was to put on his turban – symbolising a rejection of the forced Arabisation he had been subjected to in Cordoba. Zīrī also declared, 'ana amīr ibn amīr', reminding his listeners that he had his own authority to rule, and did not need to have it delegated to him from Cordoba. Nevertheless, when al-Sulamī died on the battlefield in 381/991, Zīrī was appointed the Umayyad's new governor, so that for the first time the prestige and authority of Cordoba now resided in a Berber. Zīrī was energetic in pursuing the Umayyad cause, especially where it allowed him to extend his own dominion and authority. Soon after his appointment as governor, two high ranking Zīrids – Abū'l-Bahār ibn Zīrī ibn Manād al-Ṣanhājī, uncle of Manṣūr ibn Buluqqīn, and his son-in-law Khallūf ibn Abī Bakr – abandoned the Fatimids and came over to the Umayyads, and were shown great favour by al-Manṣūr, receiving presents of honour and a power-sharing role in the Maghribi lands now loyal to Cordoba.[228] But soon afterwards they turned coats and went back to the Fatimids. Such treachery could not go unpunished, and al-Manṣūr sent Zīrī against them. Zīrī's victories led him to occupy Tlemcen and the Zīrids' former regions stretching to 'the farthest Sus and the Zab'.[229] This was the dramatic victory which Zīrī reported to al-Manṣūr in 992 and accompanied with a massive gift

225 Ballestín 2004a, 159–161.
226 Ballestín 2004a, 163 ff.
227 Ballestín 2004a, 168–172, following *Kitāb al-Mafākhir*; qv *Bayān* II:299.
228 On this episode, see Ballestín 2004a, 177–185; Idris 1962, I, 79–82; *HEM* II:266.
229 Idris 1962, I, 81–82 gives a date of Shawwal 382/30 November–28 December 992 for the end of the campaign, and gives 15 Shaʿban 383/5 October 993 for Abū'l-Bahār's flight to Ifrīqiya.

FIGURE 7 Side panel of the minbar from the Andalusiyyīn Mosque, with Zīrid inscription and the date 980 © FONDATION NATIONALE DES MUSÉES MAROCAINS

(which arrived in 994) representing all the luxury commodities of the lands of which he – and thus al-Manṣūr – was now master. These diplomatic exchanges and their significance are discussed in Chapter 2. But while Zīrī was al-Manṣūr's most powerful and trusted asset in the Maghrib, he was also his biggest threat, as became all too evident during the crisis of the *waḥsha*.

8 Rupture

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

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

Al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir responded, 'He is not fit to exercise his duties.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the early spring of 996, al-Manṣūr faced the only serious internal crisis of his administration. The ensuing period, known in the sources as the 'waḥsha' or 'rupture', marks another crucial period in the development of his role as *ḥājib*. Aided by her brother Rā'iq and several Ṣaqāliba, al-Manṣūr's erstwhile supporter, Ṣubḥ, stole 80,000 dinars from the caliph's private treasury, removing them hidden inside jars of honey, with which she planned to finance an uprising against al-Manṣūr.[232] The *ḥājib* discovered her plot and summoned the viziers to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira where he told them that the caliph, overly concerned with his religious devotions, had not noticed that the women of his harem had been embezzling from his treasury. The viziers agreed to transfer the whole treasury from the caliphal palace at Cordoba to safe-keeping at al-Zāhira, though this would make Hishām completely dependent on al-Manṣūr. At this moment the *ḥājib* fell ill,[233] and it seems his opponents within al-Andalus took advantage of the temporary political confusion to open up the way for rebellion. Zīrī ibn ʿAṭiyya, al-Manṣūr's powerful North African governor, chose this moment to revolt against al-Manṣūr while apparently remaining loyal to Umayyad suzerainty: one source says that in the subsequent campaign, the battle cry of Zīrī's troops was 'For Hishām!', while that of the ʿĀmirid troops was 'For al-Manṣūr!'.[234]

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

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

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

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

234 Bariani 1998, 98.

235 Bariani 1996a, 46–47.

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

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

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

Bariani consulted a specialist in diseases of the nervous system with this information, who diagnosed the caliph's symptoms as indicative of possible damage to the left hemisphere of his brain, which could explain both motor problems and impaired intellectual ability.[241] These disabilities could have resulted from the attack of smallpox that Hishām is known to have suffered for about a month in 363/974.[242] As we saw above, his older brother, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, obviously suffered from weak health himself, causing him to die in infancy; al-Ḥakam and his brother ʿAbd al-Azīz were both afflicted with health issues that caused their deaths (al-Ḥakam from hemiplegia). Health does not seem to have been particularly good in al-Ḥakam's family. Al-Ḥijārī's observation that Hishām's condition degenerated as he aged would also explain why there is no hint of incapacity in al-Rāzī's annals, which detail his considerable involvement in the life of the court, especially during al-Ḥakam's final illness[243] – though as García Sanjuán has discussed, there were clear propaganda reasons for this presence being emphasised by the chronicle. It would also explain why Hishām was kept hidden from his subjects, rarely appearing in public, and when he did leave the palace he was veiled and hidden among the women of his harem.[244] His condition would have been kept secret out of respect for his person as well as the office of the caliphate. Most significantly, it would

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

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

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

240 Bariani 1998, 102.

241 See Bariani 1998, 102 n. 30.

242 *Anales*, §173–174.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In many respects, the evolution of al-Manṣūr's position continued a process that had begun under al-Muṣḥafī. During the debilitating illness of the last two years of al-Ḥakam's life, al-Muṣḥafī found himself in a position of sole power, and he engineered the murder of al-Mughīra and the accession of Hishām in order to retain control of that position. Had he not lost the support of Ṣubḥ and fallen victim to al-Manṣūr's own rise, we might be discussing the articulation of *his ḥijāba*. But since the caliph's condition was kept a secret, the historiography of this period found it easier to represent al-Manṣūr as the forcible usurper of a sequestered caliph, and al-Muṣḥafī's crucial role in this development was forgotten.

9 Restoration

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

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

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

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

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

248 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:184–185 [11:196].

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

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

251 The repetition of the *bayʿa* is not rare in Islam when the ruler wishes to make a public statement of confirmation in office; it is also renewed in moments of crisis, which is surely how it is to be read in this case: cf. Tyan 1954, 1, 351–352.

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

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

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

252 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:185 [11:196].

253 Ballestín 2004a, 201–2.

254 Bariani 1998, 103.

255 De la Puente 2001.

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

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

Such booty had important religious and symbolic value. The choice of the church of Santiago as the destination for this campaign was not random. As the historiography – including the various poems composed about the campaign by Ibn Darrāj – makes clear, the Muslims understood Santiago's special significance within Iberian Christianity. As Ibn Ḥayyān commented, 'The church of that town is for [the Christians] what the Kaʿba is for us: they invoke it in their sermons and go there on pilgrimage from the furthest countries, [even] from Rome'.[258] The contemporary historiography presents al-Manṣūr's utter destruction of the city and the surrounding regions as the defeat of the whole of Christendom, a clamorous victory for Islam. The attainment of such a longed-for objective would cause men of religion to forget whatever doubt they may have had over the reclusion of the caliph. As De la Puente comments, 'The Santiago campaign granted to Ibn Abī ʿĀmir more than any other victory the qualification "al-Manṣūr bi-llāh"'.[259] This was symbolised by the capture of such religiously significant booty as church bells and doors, and their equally symbolic appropriation within the Umayyad congregational mosque: as Jennifer Pruitt identifies, this 'overtly connect[ed] architectural destruction and construction'.[260] She also speculates that the Santiago campaign had an impact beyond the shores of the Iberian Peninsula: that the Fatimid caliph al-Hākim (r. 985–1021) might have consciously imitated al-Manṣūr's use of jihad as a legitimising policy when he destroyed the churches in his own realm, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, after 1007. She comments, 'al-Hākim's destruction of churches thus may be seen … as part of a larger claim for legitimacy beyond the confines of the Fatimid empire, establishing al-Hākim's caliphate as a rival to those in Cordoba and Baghdad … As the Umayyads were on al-Hākim's doorstep, tales of their own successful destruction of the holy shrine may have inspired his own demolition of the Holy Sepulchre'.[261] The Holy Sepulchre 'acted as a proxy … for the Byzantine empire',[262] in the same way that the church of Santiago was ostensibly a stand-in for the kingdom of León.

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

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

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

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

259 De la Puente 2001, 19.

260 Pruitt 2020, 122.

261 Pruitt 2020, 122–3.

262 Pruitt 2020, 111.

263 Bariani 1996a, 53.

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

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

A further indication of the gravity of the *waḥsha* can be found in the numismatic evidence of the period. As we saw above, al-Manṣūr's *kunya*, *ʿāmir*, had appeared on almost every issue minted in al-Andalus since his appointment as *ṣāḥib al-sikka* in 356/967, until the year 996. In 385/996, after 22 consecutive years, *ʿāmir* disappeared from the Andalusi coins. By this late date, it is unlikely that his *kunya* on the coins signified al-Manṣūr's governorship of the mint. According to David Wasserstein, 'the presence of the name *ʿāmir* [on the coins] reflects [his] status both as a minister of the caliph and as effective ruler of the country'.[268] As we will see in Chapter 4, it is unlikely that al-Manṣūr moved the mint to al-Madīnat al-Zāhira with the other organs of government in 981, since the *sikka* was a fundamental caliphal prerogative.[269] However, *ʿāmir* on the coins clearly had a symbolic potency since it was considered worth replacing: Zīrī ibn ʿAṭiyya began issuing dirhams in his own name at the Madīnat Fās mint in 388/998.[270] When *ʿāmir* reappeared on Andalusi coins in 998, it was combined with the names of the *aṣḥāb al-sikka* on the obverse, where they remained until al-Manṣūr's death (Figure 4).[271]

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

264 De la Puente 2001, 16.
265 Ballestín 2004a, 202.
266 Ballestín 2004a, 202.
267 Ballestín 2004a, 204.
268 Wasserstein 1993a, 42.
269 There are no coins which feature al-Madīnat al-Zāhira as the mint name, and from the moment al-Ḥakam returned to Cordoba at the end of his life, on his doctors' advice (*Anales*, §§214–215), the mint remained 'al-Andalus' until the outbreak of Fitna.
270 Miles 1950, 64.
271 Martínez Salvador 1992, 424–426.

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

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

Al-Manṣūr died in Ramadan 392/August 1002, aged nearly 66 years, while returning from his final campaign. He was buried 'in the spot where he died, in his palace at Madīnat Salīm' (Medinaceli, the capital of the *thaghr al-aʿla*).[272] His son, ʿAbd al-Malik, led the armies home to Cordoba, where Hishām 'treated the son as he had the father',[273] and 'appointed him as replacement in the offices of *ḥājib* and general, confided in him the direction of the kingdom, and invested him with the attributes of rule'.[274]

272 Al-Maqqarī, 221.

273 Al-Maqqarī, 221.

274 *Dhikr Bilād* 1:195 [11:205].

10 Inheritance

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

As we will see in later chapters, al-Muẓaffar was the eager patron of a literary circle, but his fondness for wine and leisure, and the angina from which he suffered,[279] caused him to withdraw from the practice of government. He left the governance of the state to his vizier, ʿĪsā ibn Saʿīd, who manoeuvred to his own advantage and engaged the support of a grandson of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, which revived the Umayyad party. Though Ibn ʿIdhārī saw al-Muẓaffar as the last bulwark of stability in al-Andalus before the descent into Fitna,[280] his neglect of the fine political balancing act which al-Manṣūr had established and maintained sowed the seeds of the state's fragmentation. It is probable that, had he lived, the Fitna would still have broken out. However, after suffering attacks of angina, he died on 16 Ṣafar 399/20 October 1008, during a summer campaign against Castile.[281] After an all-night vigil at al-Zāhira, the *ḥijāba* passed to his younger brother, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, though many harboured suspicions that he had poisoned his brother in order to seize power for himself.[282]

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

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

275 *Bayān* III:16–18 [translation, 23–24]. Cf. Scales 1994, 39.
276 *Bayān* III:17 [translation, 24].
277 *Bayān* III (appendix): 198.
278 Makariou 2001, 50, 59.
279 *Bayān* III:3, 24 [translation, 11, 31].
280 *Bayān* III:36 [translation, 42]; *HEM* II:283.
281 *Bayān* III:21–24, 36–37 [translation, 28–30, 42–43]; *Dhikr Bilād* I:195 [II:205]; *HEM* II:282; Scales (1994): 39.
282 *Bayān* III:38 [translation, 43].
283 Echevarría 2011, 229.
284 Echevarría 2011, 230.
285 Echevarría 2011, 237.
286 *Bayān* III:38, 41–42 [translation, 44, 46–47].
287 On Buyid titulature, see Madelung 1969.

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

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

Thus on Saturday 11 Rabīʿ I 399/13 November 1008, the act of succession was publicly declared and Sanchuelo officially became the *wālī ʿahd al-muslimīn*.[294] Copies of the document were sent to all the provinces of al-Andalus so that Sanchuelo's name would thenceforth be read from the minbars after that of the caliph.[295] The next day, Sanchuelo held a reception at al-Zāhira at which the notables of Cordoba congratulated him, and he proudly wore the *thawb al-khulafā'* with which Hishām had presented him. Sadly, there is no indication in the sources of what this clothing looked like. He appointed his son, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *ḥājib*, though he was only two years old, and gave him the title 'Sayf al-Dawla' that his uncle, ʿAbd al-Malik, had earned in battle.[296] This was open mockery of both caliphate and *ḥijāba*, and it was also political suicide: it definitively alienated the Umayyad faction at court, since it threatened to supplant the Umayyad dynasty forever. Furthermore, Sanchuelo's close association with the Berbers threatened to upset the equilibrium between racial groups in al-Andalus that seems to have been only superficially maintained through al-Manṣūr's political astuteness: Sanchuelo's capricious decision to instruct his court on pain of punishment to abandon their customary dress in favour of Berber costume, especially the wearing of turbans, is described by Ibn ʿIdhārī as 'the worst thing that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān did'.[297]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

294 *Bayān* III:43 [translation, 48].

295 *Bayān* III:46 [translation, 51].

296 *Bayān* III:47 [translation, 51].

297 *Bayān* III:48 [translation, 52].

298 *Bayān* III:67 [translation, 68].

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

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

Al-Andalus had started on the road to Fitna: during al-Mahdī's nine-month-long caliphate, racial animosity between Berbers and Ṣaqāliba on one hand, and the Arabs on the other, built to such a height that the former sought their own pretender in Sulaymān (later 'al-Mustāʿīn'), another great-grandson of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III.[301] The period of civil war that ensued rocked al-Andalus for the next twenty years, until the caliphate was abolished and centralised government fragmented into city-states ruled by the so-called Taifa kings, *mulūk al-ṭawāʾif* (see Conclusion).[302] Once civil war and decentralisation took hold in al-Andalus, North Africa began to slip from Umayyad control. Sanchuelo's brief rule marked 'the beginning of the end of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba'.[303] His determination to make himself caliph in name as well as in fact, and his accumulation of grandiose titles, finally made the ʿĀmirid *ḥijāba* top-heavy, since the person did not live up to the office. With historical hindsight, al-Manṣūr's ability to negotiate the line between the legality and legitimacy of his office is revealed as particularly skilful. He also applied this unique skill to the other ways in which he articulated the power of his office, as we shall explore in detail in the remainder of this book.

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

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

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

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

303 Scales 1994, xi.